“Why is integration still associated with us?”
A Sociolinguistic Perspective on Social Integration of German-Turkish Descendants in Germany

Yesim Kakalic

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University of Warwick, Department of Applied Linguistics

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Abbreviations

BIPOC Black, Indigenous and People of Color
CDA Critical Discourse Analysis
RQ Research questions
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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work except where acknowledgement is given to outside resources. This thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university. Some parts of the work reported and other work not reported in this thesis have been published, as listed below. It is anticipated that further parts of this work will be submitted for publication in due course.


Abstract

The German media landscape is characterised by discourses of ethnic tension, migration, integration and assimilation in relation to Turkish-Germans (Mueller, 2006; Schneider, 2001) and has led to a stereotypical and negative public image of this very group (Mora, 2009). Such discourses typically construct and portray German-Turks as “the Other”, ultimately intensifying discrimination (Bonfadelli, 2007) and feelings of alienation. This thesis aims to understand how mainstream discourses of German-Turks contribute to this Othering and how they influence the identity construction and sense-making processes of social integration of German-Turks.

To date, little is known about how individuals construct and negotiate social integration discursively. Drawing on over 16 hours of audio- and video-recorded focus group discussions and individual interviews, the study investigates the identity construction of Turkish-Germans against the background of mainstream discourses of social integration and provides insights into the discursive function of social integration. For this purpose, narrative inquiry is adopted to analyse narratives and stories derived from the focus groups. Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework to analyse identity with a sociocultural linguistic approach is used to analyse identities constructed within these narratives.

Findings illustrate that participants construct and negotiate their own (and others’) multiple identities by Othering either “the Germans” or “the Turks” and positioning themselves in relation to these larger groups – sometimes embracing and sometimes rejecting membership in them. What is considered to be “the Other” by participants is constantly shifting throughout the processes of identity construction. This highly dynamic nature of identity construction is closely intertwined with issues of social integration. Moreover, I argue that social integration can be understood as a dynamic, multi-participant, ever-changing and interpretive process that is discursively negotiated by (German-Turkish) individuals. The thesis thus contributes to the large number of quantitative studies investigating social integration. It concludes by proposing some theoretical developments around social integration and identity construction and practical suggestions for impact work in Germany and offering recommendations for future research.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This study aims to contribute to the limited literature on the perceptions and experiences of social integration of German-Turkish descendants in Germany. The particular focus of this thesis is the ways in which these individuals position themselves in relation to current mainstream discourses about social integration that circulate in the German media landscape and are reflected in public discourse to explore the discursive construction (and sense-making processes) of social integration and identity.

As one of Europe’s major immigration countries, Germany’s political, academic and media debates on integrating migrants are omnipresent. As the largest ethnic minority in Germany, German-Turks have received special attention within these debates. The overall representation of German-born Turks – both in media and in public discourse – is still predominantly negative and positions Turkish immigrants and their descendants as “the Other”, marked as the figure of “integration-unwillingness” (“Integrationsunwilligkeit”) and as the main cause of disintegration in Germany. This portrayal has been the centre of Germany’s integration discourses (Kontos, 2020).

1 Although throughout the study, the term discourse is written with a little “d”, the study refers to Big “D” discourses that reflect and capture dominant and hegemonic Discourses in societies “that are characterised by social construction, maintenance, and validation of reality” (Allen, 2019).

2 The formulation “German-Turks” is a parallel to the German language formulation “Deutsch-Türke”. Some scholars have critiqued this term because it centres on “Turks” while using “German” as a modifier. This term has been chosen deliberately for the title of the study to mirror what is used in the German context. Throughout the thesis however, I refer to this study’s participants using different terminology. I refer to them as “German-Turks”, as “German-Turkish descendants”, as “Germans with Turkish origin”, as “Turkish-origin Germans”, as “German-born Turks”, as part of the “Turkish community”, and as “Turkish descendants”. In using these labels, I intend to reflect the diversity of labels participants used to describe themselves in the focus groups. It is important to mention, that participants mostly used the German language formulation “German-Turk” and accordingly so does this study.
These debates partially reflect government policies and can be said to racialize migrants and descendants of migrants as “unassimilable”. The representation (or exclusion) of ethnic minorities has a strong effect on the social integration of respective minorities (Trebbe and Schoenhagen 2011). The ways in which these individuals and/or social groups are racialised, labelled and thus othered, intensifies and emanates perceived stereotypes in public perception (Lippmann 2018).

For decades, the wider German society ignored the spectrum of German-Turkish (migrant) identities, referring their cultural representation most largely to “sensationalist dramas and tragedy” (Nickl, 2020, p. 13). Stories of honour killings and domestic abuse flooded the media and books (Weber, 2016). German-Turks were marked as “incongruent with German social values and helped to consolidate certain stereotypes around the physical appearance of Turkish Germans, their behaviour, clothing items like the headscarf, and the alleged lack of ethno-social diversity in the community” (Nickl, 2020, p. 13). To date, racist resentments in large parts of Germany can be observed (Zuber, 2015) which is reflected in contemporary Germany’s current racism debates. This is one of the reasons for the acceleration of societal demand and pressure for “immigrant” integration (or rather assimilation) through all generations.

Although Turkish descendants are already in the third, fourth and fifth generation born and socialised in Germany, they still face calls for integration (Moffitt et al., 2018) and frequent discrimination (Pollack et al., 2016). This situation makes them key to discussions of identity and belonging in contemporary Germany. Being the “audience” of these discourses, German-Turks are forced to deal with these public and media images of themselves (Kontos, 2020). Resulting feelings of “alienness” further aggravate the stigmatisation and marginalisation of German-Turks, hindering full social acceptance (Canales, 2000). Hence social integration becomes a challenge, and already existing (social) integration levels are likely to decline. To combat this downward development, migration and integration discourses in Germany need a reshape in that they highlight the importance of inclusivity, diversity and an understanding of a German identity and Germanness that does not exclusively include “white individuals without a “migration background”” (Moffitt et al., 2018, p. 14).
Much of these discourses represent the scholarship investigating this very group. Debates about Turkish-German individuals’ (failed) integration still pervade the research landscape. An abundance of research investigates the integration of “the Turks” (Schneider, 2018) aiming to identify factors that contribute to or harm integration of this group (e.g. Sauer & Halm, 2009). This aggravates the already stereotypical presentation in the German media landscape. “In education assessments, the lowest scoring Turkish German individuals are used as a paradigmatic example for failed integration in the entire literature on immigration not only in Germany but in the entire western social sciences” (Yurdakul, 2016, p. 141, my translation). Much of this research is shaped by cultural essentialism, and quantitative methods to identify patterns rather than explore individual experiences have been further contributing to debates of how to integrate German Turks as a collective (Abdel-Samad, 2018) treating them as a homogenous group. Those who require no “further integration” are generalised and perish within these negative numbers. Consequently, this aggravated and still aggravates the societal demand for “immigrant” integration across generations and this is extremely problematic when demanded of later generations, such as participants of this study.

The racism underlying this demand creates barriers to social integration. The role of integration policies and debates around these issues to reshape and redirect stereotypical and stigmatising discourses of migrants is crucial. If taken seriously, those “under investigation” can contribute to the recontextualization of these debates to more liberal and diverse versions. The study aims to represent individual voices, their attempts of challenging these victimising and stereotyping discourses and to demonstrate how mainstream and stereotypical discourses of German Turks affect the identity construction of members of this group and sheds light on the different discursive functions of social integration that are used by those who are typically positioned as “the Other”. More specifically, it is aimed to draw attention to “the pressures from above and possibilities of resistance to unequal power relationships that appear as societal conventions” (Wodak 2001, p. 3).

Despite the vast amount of research on the social integration of German-Turks, the prevailing approaches and understandings of social integration appear to lack
empirical evidence for what the phenomenon actually entails and especially how it is
discursively constructed and negotiated. With this thesis, I do not only take a different
perspective to put current approaches to social integration under scrutiny, rather, by
focusing on language use and function whilst considering mainstream discourses
around this phenomenon, I illustrate that social integration can actually be understood
as a dynamic, multi-participant, ever-changing and interpretive process that is
discursively negotiated by (German-Turkish) individuals. Therefore, it is never fully
“completed” but can be deconstructed and constructed discursively. Mainstream
discourses of social integration of German-Turks contribute to the ways in which
negotiating social integration is shaped and reshaped in interaction by individuals.
Closely linked to these processes is the construction of individuals’ identities, which
the study investigates in relation to social integration and against the background of
mainstream social integration discourses. To unpack this, I adopt narrative inquiry as
a research approach and take a discourse analytical and sociolinguistic approach, as
well as an individual perspective to provide concrete empirical evidence to
complement to date largely quantitative approaches to social integration.

1.1 Motivation of the study

The motivation of this study derives from my previous research project in the context
of my MSc dissertation, where I looked at the identity construction of German-born
Turks in in-depth interviews. The dissertation findings showed that participants
constructed themselves in a compelling interplay of German and Turkish identities,
sometimes simultaneously and sometimes in opposition to both in relation to different
aspects. Participants demonstrated the complexity and multi-dimensionality of
identity construction. These findings motivated me to further investigate identity
construction of Turkish-German individuals, but this time in the context of
mainstream hegemonic discourses of German-Turks. While this PhD has been driven
since its beginning by my interest in social identities and stereotypical discourses that
influence them, the exact focus has been evolving over time. The pilot study that I
conducted at the early stages of the PhD shaped the focus of the study critically (see
also 2.6 and 3.2.3). As with all qualitative research the focus of the study has been
further shaped during and after data collection. To be more precise, although the
concept of social integration was not included in the initial research agenda (rather the
focus was on overall hegemonic discourses of German-Turks in the media) it emerged as a core theme during data collection. Social integration played a central role in participants’ discussions and narratives and intrigued my research interest to frame the doctoral thesis around the phenomena of social integration and identity. Lastly, one of the most important motivational factors for an investigation in this research is based on my own socio-cultural background. As a granddaughter of Turkish “guest workers” whose stories have shaped her outlook towards life and a daughter of “Turkish migrants” in Germany, who often questioned her identity, belonging and place in Germany, I pursued personal interests in conducting this study.

1.2 Aim and purpose of the study

The study has two main purposes: Firstly, I aim to shed light on the issues around social integration of German-Turkish descendants in Germany from a sociolinguistic perspective, with a particular focus on identity construction. I wish to better understand how mainstream discourses dominate the German media landscape and often create social “realities”, which in turn influence self-perceptions and identity constructions of German-Turkish descendants, who often find themselves torn between positioning themselves as Germans or Turkish “foreigners”. I am interested in exploring how German-Turks make sense of issues around social integration displayed in current German media coverage and reflected in public discourse and how they talk about their own experiences around these issues. In doing so, I aim to enrich the theoretical understandings of social integration as a discursive construct, but also to gain insights that can inform policies.

Secondly, I aim to seek a better understanding of a group that has been stereotyped through academic, political and mass media discourse (Ramm, 2010). I intend to promote and prioritise the voice of marginalised groups and individuals, allowing for a better understanding of their life realities and lived experiences, with the aim that
these insider perspectives contribute to wider public discourses that promote the diversity that is part of Germany.

1.3 Significance and contribution of the study

Both aims outlined above make important theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions. With regards to social integration, I contribute to the large body of quantitative research conducted around this phenomenon. To date, little is known about how individuals construct and negotiate social integration discursively. This study provides insights into the discursive function of social integration highlighting the processes of constantly (re-)negotiating social integration in and through language and discursive interactions, and how individuals do social integration. This is crucial in understanding factors behind disintegrative developments of ethnic minority groups by considering their individual perspective towards issues of social integration and how and to what extent mainstream discourses influence these processes. Consequently, I will argue that the evaluation of German-Turks’ social integration as a result of much quantitative inquiries fail to provide empirical evidence for their conceptual underpinnings of the complex phenomenon. I thus aim to enrich the limited literature on the effect of integration discourses and its reception of those who are targeted by such discourses (Kontos, 2020). In addition, the study provides insights into the influence of German media discourses on German-Turkish descendants by taking a sociolinguistic perspective and providing much needed qualitative evidence about the (discursive) processes through which members of this group experience, describe and make sense of social integration.

Closely linked to the discursive construction of social integration is identity construction. The thesis provides important theoretical contributions to the functions of identity construction in combination with the discursivity of social integration. The highly dynamic, complex, fragmented nature of identity is highlighted, supporting other work that has been done on identity construction and contributing new insights

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3 It is important to mention that this study does not aim to deliver generalised claims and that my findings only represent the people who took part in this study. It still yields the importance of representing and capturing each participant’s voice to understand their individual perspective.
about identity work of German-Turks against the background of mainstream discourses of social integration.

The Turkish-German community has attracted a vast amount of research, in Germany as well as beyond in many European countries. As integration is traditionally measured by certain factors (i.e., education, language, employment to name but few) much of this research has investigated the social integration of this very group using quantitative methods, which rather identifies patterns. Such research turns “the Turks” into a homogenous group and runs the risk of critical generalisations, which in turn feed into public and political integration debates. I move away from this approach and aim to explore individual experiences and shed light on the insider perspective of issues around social integration in contemporary Germany. Hence, the study makes important methodological contributions.

Finally, the study makes practical contributions by providing concrete examples to feed insights into integration policies. Germany is a culturally diverse country and continues to diversify. It is thus necessary to understand and (re-)conceptualise what it means to be German, not only for policymakers, but for society at large – rethinking what and who makes Germany what it is. Thus, I hope that the study’s insights will be effectively used to feed into Germany’s integration policies and will be deployed as a guidance to shape current debates and discourses of integration. Insights of the study can moreover aid in launching awareness creation to contribute to the promotion of discourses that embrace diversity in Germany.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Following this introduction, chapter 2 provides a detailed review of the literature. The first part of the chapter discusses previous research on the Turkish diaspora in Germany, first by providing a trajectory on the socio-historical context of Turkish migrants starting with the “guest workers” towards recent research on this group and their descendants in contemporary Germany and later by looking at the German media landscape, the social integration of Turkish-Germans and conceptualisations and debates of integration in Germany. The second part offers a review of the conceptualisation of identity followed by the description of the theoretical frameworks
that the study utilised, concluding with the research questions I developed in response and that this study addresses.

Chapter 3 reports on the methodology of the study where the research design and paradigm are addressed. This is followed by detailing the methods of data collection and providing ethical considerations. Lastly, I outline the analytical approach and present a self-reflection on my role as a researcher.

Chapter 4 is the first of three analysis chapters. It provides an analysis of participants overall experiences of mainstream discourses of social integration of German-Turks and lays the groundwork as a reference point and backdrop for chapters 5 and 6. It shows how mainstream discourses are challenged by participants.

Chapter 5 analyses how identity construction takes place whilst *embracing* Germanness and/or Turkishness against the background of mainstream social integration discourses in Germany.

Chapter 6 focuses on the opposite activity – namely *rejecting* Turkishness and/or Germanness in the context of mainstream discourses of social integration of Turkish-origin individuals – and investigates how participants thereby construct their various identities.

Chapter 7, the discussion, brings all three analysis chapters together by summarising the findings and relating them back to the literature. Explicit answers to the research questions are formulated and main contributions of the study are highlighted.

Chapter 8 offers concluding remarks and provides concrete practical implications for impact work in Germany before discussing the study’s limitations and suggesting further potential lines of research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review is divided in two parts. In the first part, I will discuss existing literature regarding German-Turks in Germany. In the field of migration studies, the descendants of Germany’s biggest group of “guest workers” have been intensively studied from various perspectives, considering different aspects and within different research paradigms. I will start by providing a very brief overview of these studies to outline what research in the context of German-Turks in Germany has been focusing on to date (section 2.1). After this, I will turn to studies investigating the representation of German-Turks in the media (and public) and briefly put forward the past and current media landscape with regards to this group (section 2.1.1). I will then outline research focusing on the social integration of German-Turks – highlighting their approach to measure social integration to then conclude this section with identifying the research gap that exists within research of the social integration of German-Turks (section 2.1.2). This part will be concluded by a brief presentation of conceptualisations of integration and Germany’s integration debates (section 2.2).

The second part of the literature review is theory focused. I will start by conceptualising identity in light of the social constructionist paradigm that this study adopted (section 2.3) and discuss ethnic (section 2.3.1) and multi- and bicultural identities (section 2.3.2) in relation to German-Turks. I will then outline the theoretical frameworks utilised to analyse and interpret the data: Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework to analyse identity from a sociocultural linguistic perspective (section 2.4.1) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (section 2.4.2). I will conclude the chapter with my research questions (section 2.5).

2.1 The Turkish community in Germany

The Turkish community composes the largest ethnic minority in Germany (Soergel, 2017) numbering 3.5 million (Lodigiani, 2018). According to King and Kilinc (2014, p. 126) the “Turkish migration to Germany is the second largest international migration in the contemporary developed world, after Mexican migration to the United States”. The substantial cause for this development was the “guest worker”
(“*Gastarbeiter*”) programme (or labour migration agreement), which Germany commenced with several countries, after the post-war era in the early 1950’s to fill in the labour shortage and “boost the country’s post-war ‘economic miracle’” (Çelik, 2015, p. 2). On 30th October 1961, this agreement was signed with Turkey (Thelen, 2017) recruiting a large number of Turkish migrants (exact number to date unknown), who, as mainly uneducated and “unqualified farmworkers” (“*unqualifizierte Landarbeiter*”) (Yurdakul, 2016, p. 138), migrated to Germany (understanding their own migration as temporary) with hopes to secure a better future for their families (Kahn, 2020) and to flee a country with a poor economy and an insufficient social system (Yurdakul, 2009; Yurdakul, 2016). The “*guest worker*” programme was focused on *labourers* who were viewed as necessary for rebuilding post-war Europe, but who were not recognized as humans with lives and needs. This mental image of “*guest workers*” as *labour* that will leave the country eventually was picked up, reproduced, and dramatised by the media and reflected wider German public’s perception of these migrants, which I will elaborate in the subsequent section.

As the term “*guest worker*” indicates, a return of this group to Turkey (as well as “*guest workers*” from other sending countries taking part in the programme) was initially planned. Being envisioned as temporary “guests”, the German government planned their replacement after two years according to the recruitment program’s/agreement’s “rotation principle” (“*Rotationsprinzip*”) (Kahn, 2020, p. 54). Given this plan, the German government had no intentions of integrating “*guest workers*” (Wetzel, 2006) leading to the integration issues that contemporary Germany faces. In addition, official policies such as the “*Ausländerpädagogik*” (“foreigner pedagogy”) were developed to prepare the children of “*guest workers*” to return to Turkey, or in case they stayed, to assimilate them (Faas, 2008). Acquiring citizenship was not possible for “*guest workers*” and their families regardless if they were born in the country, which meant that they remained foreigners, as reflected in this policy (Moffitt et al., 2019). Since the migration debate that evolved with the “*guest worker*” recruitment, the German government did not intend to sensitize society with (current) experiences of racism, antisemitism and xenophobia (Bukow, 2018).
Given that the “return” plan has faded, making these “guests” residents (who did not receive any help or guidance to integrate into society) such policies aggravated the stigmatisation of Turkish migrants and Turkish origin individuals as “the Other”, stripping them of a sense of belonging and a German identity, which to date is faced by Turkish heritage individuals. Remaining “guest workers” were quickly perceived as labourers merely tolerated rather than welcomed (Bukow, 2018). This situation made them a target for racism and discrimination, due to the anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim xenophobia that rose in Germany (Kahn, 2020; Nickl, 2020). The continual movement of Turkish individuals to Germany due to family reunions (Ehrkamp, 2005; Faas, 2007; Ramm, 2010), made these “guest workers” migrants who then became Germany’s (as well as Europe’s) largest ethnic minority (King & Kılınc, 2014).

This development exacerbated the “anti-foreigner sentiment” (“Ausländerfeindlichkeit”) towards Turkish migrants: the Turkish “guest worker” family “increasingly became the targets of xenophobia” (Kahn, 2020, p. 65). In political and media debates about “guest workers” since the 1960’s to date the impression of Germany being the “saviour” of “guest workers” is mostly given. That “guest workers” were exposed to “inhumane” living and working conditions is thereby mostly omitted (Kizilay, 2020). The realisation that the return of Turkish migrants will not happen sparked first debates on integration and multiculturalism, which since then have never dropped the association – to a greater or lesser extent – with “Turks”. However, it was not until 2000 that Germany “admitted” to be a country of immigration to then take serious and official measures towards integration policies (Neumeier, 2017).

This development has led to a vast amount of research on the Turkish-German group (Kahn, 2020; Mandel, 1990, 2008), mostly about the “first” and “second” generation4 (Fertig & Schmidt, 2001). The latter has become a target for criticism with regard to their “failed integration” (Cigirli, 2012, p. 6). Mehdi (2012, p. 11) claims that this

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4 The terms “first”, “second”, and “third” generation are in quotation marks as various definitions within migration research are used leading to confusion and inaccuracies and are thus problematic (Schneider, 2016). This will be addressed in section 3.2.2. I still use these terms in the thesis to reflect what terms other research has used whilst researching Turkish German minority groups.
“could only help in creating stereotypes, rather than leading to any social scientific understanding of the situation on the ground”. Together with new generations born in the country, the focus of research is shifting to the “third” generation of Turkish individuals in Germany.

Literature on this group’s migration-consequences is wide-ranging, concentrating on their ethnic retainings (e.g. Çelik, 2015), social segregation (e.g. Diehl & Schnell, 2006), labour market disadvantages (e.g. Kalter, 2006), withdrawal into their own ethnic groups and unwillingness to integrate (Heitmeyer et al., 1997) drawbacks in education (Pásztor, 2008; Song, 2011) citizenship and belonging (e.g. Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2003; Mandel, 2008), language-problems/proficiencies, unemployment (e.g. Biedinger et al., 2015; Klinkhammer, 2003), and their continued connection to and stronger identification with their native countries (e.g. Karcher & Darity, 2010).

Other studies have explored issues of (perceived) discrimination (e.g. Diehl et al., 2021; Salentin, 2008; Tucci et al., 2014), (issues of) identity, national identification and social mobility (e.g. Cigirli, 2012; Feldmann, 2006; Jugert et al., 2020; Schneider & Lang, 2014), religion (e.g. Bilir, 2004; Ewing, 2003; Karakasoglu, 1996; Mutluer, 2020), (ethnic) media usage (e.g. Simon et al., 2007) and its connection to integration (Janzen, 2009), and the construction of imagined German Turkish communities (e.g. Madenoglu 2020). Sometimes research has identified Islam as a negative and/or disintegrating factor (Zentrum für Türkeistudien, 1995 as cited in Klinkhammer, 2003, p. 4). The literature moreover shows some comparative studies to investigate topics such as integration or labour market position of “Turkish immigrants” in different countries (e.g. Euwals et al., 2007; Tucci, 2004).

In addition, a high number of studies on the integration of Turkish-origin Germans have been published by Zentrum für Türkeistudien and other scholars (e.g. Tucci, 2004). However, in most studies “integration” is “measured only by the present state or the final outcome in different domains, which could be the highest school diploma or the present job” (Crul & Schneider, 2010, p. 1263). While this shows current “states” and “outcomes”, it leaves the process in-between these two situations in the dark. More importantly, “integration” is measured from an “investigator perspective”
by looking at these factors such as education performance, language proficiencies and political engagement to name but few. But to the best of my knowledge not much research has been done from an “insider perspective” on the integration of German-Turks. How do German-born Turks perceive their (social) integration? What influences the processes related to this phenomenon? How do they experience and make sense of social integration?

National discourses play a pivotal role in the construction of “the assimilated” or “the integrated” and who is considered as such in academic as well as public debates (Crul & Schneider, 2010). How do such discourses influence those under investigation? Some research address aspects of the relationship of migration and integration but a profound analysis of the effect of integration discourses and its reception of those who are targeted by such discourses is missing to date (Kontos, 2020). Moffit et al. (2018, p. 14) argue that “[t]he extant work is primarily quantitative and tends to focus on white Germans (e.g., Ditlmann et al., 2011), meaning the lived experiences of diverse individuals have remained underexamined”.

Maria Kontos embarked on a project examining lived realities of migrants in Germany. She investigated public debates on social integration on migrants to explore their social positioning and “biographical act” (“biographisches Handeln”) (Kontos, 2020, p. 7). The author supports the claim that public integration debates in Germany transport negative images of the Self and can be experienced as a symbolic and material-lawful exclusion and as a contempt, and that this experience can lead to “repair reactions” (“Reparaturreaktionen”) which can lead to a change in the social positioning of migrants (Kontos, 2020, p. 19, my translation).

She states that the “analysis of the effects of integration discourses on migrant subjects (reception and processing) are of high importance to understand integration processes and integration dynamics of migrant societies” (Kontos, 2020, p. 19, my translation). This study approaches the social integration of Turkish origin individuals in Germany from a similar perspective – their individual perspective but investigates this issue from a sociolinguistic lens and specifically looks at the discursive (de-)construction of social integration as well as the various identities that are thereby constructed.
Much of the research that has been conducted on “the Turks”, taking an “investigator perspective” and simply reporting on issues such as discrimination and racism to perpetuate them as neutral, fuels into their stigmatisation and aggravates stereotypical perceptions of them in the media and ultimately in public discourse. While research on the integration patterns and developments of Turkish heritage individuals is crucial, much more in-depth qualitative research is needed to understand the individual perceptions and experiences of those who are positioned as integrators. Despite decades of research on German-Turkish individuals’ integration, accompanied with policy recommendations, this group is still the one identified with the highest integration issues compared to other ethnic groups (Neumeier, n.d.). It is thus pivotal to understand and shed light on how German-Turks perceive their own social integration. How do dominant and mainstream discourses around these issues influence and reflect these individual perspectives? To date, little is known about how individuals experience and construct social integration. The study aims to fill this gap and shed light on the voices of Turkish-German descendants born in Germany to Turkish parents.

2.1.1 “The Turks” in the German media landscape

First media attention on Turks in Germany began with the continual movement of Turkish “guest workers” to the country, which started towards the end of the “Gastarbeiter” period in the 1960’s and 70’s, where Turkish workers began to bring their families to Germany (Kilinç, 2013). Together with the growing number of Turkish migrants, the scope of representation of this group in the media has increased accordingly. Not only the quantitative intensity of Turkish people in Germany (Soergel, 2017), but their cultural differences such as “language, religion, physical features, behavioral differences” (Mora, 2009, p. 616) created a negative public opinion of this group to an extent that “[a]mong the foreigner groups, Turks became the most disliked group in Germany” (Mora, 2009, p. 616), taking on the role “of the typical Ausländer” (Schneider, 2001) in the public perception, representing all the

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5 The term “Ausländer” is literally translated as “foreigner”. According to the German ministry for construction and home (“Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat”) “Ausländer” are those
problems attached to the immigration issue” (Ramm, 2006, as cited in Ramm, 2010, p. 185).

This negative opinion about “the Turks” was and is reflected in the German media. In 1973, the German government was facing an oil crisis and decided to stop the recruitment of foreign workers in 1973 (Soergel, 2017), which officially ended the policy of hiring the “Gastarbeiter” (Ramm, 2010, p. 184). Shortly before this development, the magazine Der Spiegel, Germany’s leading magazine, published a dramatic article: “The Turks are coming – run for your lives!” (“Die Türken kommen – rette sich, wer kann”) (Spiegel, 1973). This article reveals the classic attitude of German society towards “the Turks” at the time of publication. Presenting Turkish migrants as an “underdeveloped ethnic group” (Spiegel, 1973, p. 26) this article offers insights into the typical stereotypes by which these “Gastarbeiter” were approached.

Mora (2009, p. 622), examined headlines and news in Germany’s most prestigious newspapers with highest distribution rates such as Die Tageszeitung, Die Welt Online, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Die Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Spiegel Online with keywords “Turkey and Turks” from 2008 to 2009 and found out that Turks living in Germany are negatively represented as follows:

- people who do not integrate and do not want to integrate into the German public;
- people who object to learn German;
- people who have many kids;
- people who are lazy;
- people who take unemployment compensation without working;
- people who exert violence of women;
- that even newly grown generations are unqualified and lazy;
- that they are Muslim and have a different culture;
- that they are potential threat to the German public.

who are not German according to Art. 116 Abs. 1 of the constitution, viz. do not hold the German citizenship” (Schacht, 2020, BMI Lexikon). This term assigns a negative meaning in relation to Germany’s ethnic groups and immigrants and takes on all negative aspects related to integration and migration (Ramm, 2010) and is often used to describe people with a migration background regardless of the possession of a German citizenship. “The role of the prototypical Ausländer is most prominently played by the German-Turk” (Schneider, 2001, p. 31). This term excludes German-Turks from the wider German society regardless of how long they lived in the country (or were born in) or their German citizenship.
After 9/11 the “growing anxiety about ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ brought the immigrants’ Islamic faith more into the focus of attention” (Ramm, 2010, p.185) reflected in articles like “Islam in Germany: a religion under suspicion” (“Islam in Deutschland: eine Religion unter Verdacht”) talking about the isolated life of “uprooted” Turkish Muslims from the “Ghettos” (Rosenkranz, 2004). This has led to an extremely ‘Islamised’ image of Turks, “thereby taking up and reshaping older discourses which focused on their ethnic and cultural ‘otherness’ as foreigners” (Ramm, 2010, p. 183).

This situation has been problematic to German-Turks in Germany to date as Islam is automatically associated with them due to Turkey being a predominantly Muslim country. The fact that some of them do not identify with Muslim values is mostly not taken into consideration. This is what almost all participants in this study address and complain about – both those with an Islamic faith and those without. They are perceived as ‘monolithic, backward and Muslim’ (Mehdi 2012: 26) which did not help in being welcomed in the society. Ramm (2010) claims that Turkish-Germans’ diversities and lifestyles are reduced to an image of being Muslim leading to a collective Muslim image “attributing social exclusion, educational shortcomings and forms of patriarchal violence (e.g., forced marriages or ‘honour killings’) to the immigrants’ Islamic origin (Ramm, 2010, p. 183).

Moffit et al. (2018) claim that discrimination based on religion and ethnicity derive from the idea that “Islam is incompatible with German identity” (p. 879). Consequently, individuals with a Turkish background feel that this situation also damaged their social standing, in which not even German citizenships help (Adar, 2019). This also results in assimilation pressures from the German government and public (Adar, 2019). Mueller (2006) claims that

there is a media obsession with the Turkish family, depicted negatively with its ‘traditional’, ‘repressive’, and ‘collectivistic’ aspects which cannot be reconciled with the individualism associated with the fragmented German nuclear family” (p. 424).

For example, in 2003 the prestigious newspaper Die Zeit published a media piece: “Integration? (…) A parallel society has been established here in the last four decades,
in which Turks remain Turks and let the Germans stay Germans” (“Integration? (…) Hier hat sich in den vergangenen vier Jahrzehnten eine Parallelgesellschaft entwickelt, in der Türken Türken bleiben und die Deutschen Deutsche sein lassen (...)” (Bittner, 2003, Die Zeit). While there is much to say about stereotypical portrayals in this statement about “Turks”, I want to highlight how it aggravates a “us” versus “them” dichotomy between “Turks” and “Germans” whilst referring to parallel societies build by “Turks”.

Another media article published by Der Spiegel in 2009 talks about integration resistance of “Turks” in Germany with the title “Forever foreign” (“Für immer fremd”): “But why do the foreign stay foreign, why do Turks in particular do not arrive⁶ in Germany, apparently not even those who were born here? (...) Who comes as a foreigner, stays foreign. Even more, even after 50 years, after sometimes three generations, even with a German passport, an alarmingly high number of immigrants live in a parallel world, and the future has poor prospects” (“Aber warum bleiben die Fremden so häufig fremd, warum kommen vor allem Türken nicht in Deutschland an, offenbar nicht einmal die die hier geboren sind? (...) Wer als Fremder kommt, bleibt fremd. Mehr noch, auch nach 50 Jahren, nach manchmal drei Generationen, selbst mit deutschem Pass, lebt eine alarmierend hohe Zahl von Zuwanderern nach wie vor in einer Parallelwelt, und um die Zukunft steht es schlecht”) (Elger et al., 2009, Der Spiegel). These types of excluding and arguably racist media articles demonstrate a fundamental attitude towards Turkish origin individuals, projecting social problems to ethnicity and culture (Yildiz, 2014). To date, news articles or documentary movies about lives of migrants (even beyond the groups of German-Turks) are rather problem-oriented with polarising interpretation practices (Yildiz, 2014).

In recent years, media coverage on German-Turks abundantly deals with their integration issues, their alienation from Germany and their stronger identification with Turkey, reflected in headlines such as “How well are German-Turks integrated?” (“ZDF-Studie: Wie gut Deutschtürken integriert sind”, ZDF, 2018). In this regard, a

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⁶ Literally translated the German word “ankommen” means “arrive” and in the context of migration and integration is used similarly as “integrate”.

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vast amount of media coverage on German-Turks are found in relation with Turkey’s current President Recep Tayyip Erdogan – mainly negatively presented as a dictator, who heavily ‘Islamises’ the country. Reflected in headlines for instance like “Why so many German-Turks hail to Erdoğan” (“Warum so viele Deutschtürken Erdoğan zujubeln”) (Beitzer, 2018, Süddeutsche Zeitung). Further, media coverage presents a general vision of a second and third generation “caught between two cultures” (Ramm, 2010, p. 188), reflected in headlines such as “German-Turks: strangers in their homelands” (“Deutschtürken: Fremd in der Heimat”) (Özer, 2018, ARD).

Very recently, on 22nd October 2021, the German public broadcasting radio station Deutschlandfunk Nova published a podcast about the “guest worker” period in Germany (Deutschlandfunk Nova, 2021). Experts without a “migration background” were asked to share their expertise while experts with a migration background were asked at the very end about their personal stories and not explicitly about their expertise. In a Twitter post in October 2021, political scientist Efsun Kizilay, who was one of the Podcast’s guests stated that this podcast “reproduces prejudices and racist language. The “guest workers” are degraded to objects, to a mass to push around, who are discussed, whose own stories from their own perspectives are hardly even mentioned”. (“Vorurteile und rassistische Sprache werden reproduziert. Die Gastarbeiter*innen werden zu Objekten degradiert, zur Verschiebemasse gemacht, über welche gesprochen wird, deren eigene Geschichten aus der eigenen Perspektive aber kaum Erwähnung finden.”).

This illustrates that to this very date, narratives about migrants, refugees, and people with a migrant history, are still reflected in a light that Others them, as very often these narratives are made “from a white perspective [that] takes a hegemonial speech ABOUT [“guest workers”] as a basis” (Efsun Kizilay, Tweet, 24th October 2021) („Der Podcast erzählt die Geschichte der ehemaligen Gastarbeiter*innen aus einer weißen Perspektive und nimmt sich ein hegemoniales Sprechen ÜBER diese zur Grundlage.“). It is thus all the more important to voice experiences of marginalised groups, of individuals with a migrant history, an ethnic background and balance white narratives on migration and integration with the perspectives of those “under investigation” or those who can actually relate to minority experiences.
Some newspaper articles tried to take this approach and for instance deal with discrimination experiences of German-Turks and the struggle to never fully being accepted as “Germans”, reflected in headlines such as “I am not perceived as German by Germans” (“Ich werde von Deutschen nicht als Deutscher angesehen”) (Ağirbaș & Mucha, 2018, Zeit Magazin). Articles such as the latter are crucial to spread awareness about German-Turks’ (and other individuals with an ethnic background) struggle to belong and being accepted by the society and about how widespread discrimination and racism in Germany are to date. However, the overall representation of German-Turks, both in media and in public discourse, is still rather negative and discourses that position Turkish immigrants and their descendants as “Other” have a stronger influence of public perception than alternative discourses that construct belonging and diversity in a positive way (Merten, 2013).

According to a study by the National Discrimination- and Racism-monitor (“Nationaler Diskriminierungs- und Rassismusmonitor”), who analysed German media articles from highly influential and popular newspapers, such as BILD and Die Zeit with regards to implicit racist discrimination towards those who are marked as ethnically and culturally different, hence as “Other”. They found that among other groups, German-Turks experience very high implicit discrimination in all the analysed media articles (NaDiRa, 2021). They moreover found that German-Turks in particular are subject to implicit negative connotations (NaDiRa, 2021).

Daily newspapers reach a high number of citizens in Germany and have thus great potential in influencing public opinion. In 2020 for instance, over 12.5 million copies of daily newspapers circulated in Germany (Statista, 2021a). In terms of online visits, the numbers are even higher. For instance, the online newspaper Bild was visited by over 24.4 million people in September (2021) only (Statista, 2021b). Negative connotations and portrayals outlined above have consequences for the perception and attitudes of the majority white German public towards those marked as “Other”.

These developments that racialise Turkish-German individuals and accompanied Otherness around German-Turkish culture blend so deep into societal mainstream discourses that it manifests in forms of dominant and mainstream jokes or “Turks
jokes” (“Türkenwitze”). Widespread German “Türkenwitze” are “jokes about Turks as being lazy, uneducated, low-class, religious zealots or unable to master the German language [and] are still readily available in German society” (Nickl, 2020, p. 14). This illustrates the deep-rootedness of negative societal perceptions of German-Turks as “unassimilable”.

Media is one of the most powerful instruments to reach and influence public perception, and as an opinion maker incite racist prejudices (Wetzel, 2006). The representation (or exclusion) of ethnic minorities in the media has a strong effect on the social integration of respective minorities (Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011). They produce cognitive stereotypes and manifest themselves in forms of prejudices in the majority society, which in turn leads to discriminating behaviours (Bonfadelli, 2007). Trebbe and Schoenhagen (2011, p. 411) claim that the “perception of the other is a core aspect of the integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants”. The way in which these individuals and/or social groups are racialised, labelled and thus othered, intensifies and emanates perceived stereotypes in public perception (Lippmann, 2018).

2.1.1.1 “The Other” created by the media

Media – “as the main transmitter of all sorts of public discourse” (Schneider 2001, p. 356) – is one of the most powerful tools which creates social realities that manifest themselves in public perception and discourse. It creates Othering and Otherness, in that it influences self-perceptions and identity constructions of minority group members, creating “us” versus “them” dichotomies in society (Udah & Singh, 2019). Not surprisingly, the German Turkish minority in particular is perceived as the most eminent “Other” in German self-defineds (Schneider & Lang, 2014). Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012, p. 300) claim that hegemoneous groups set the way Otherness is accomplished and that this “is transparent and […] accepted as natural”. This highlights the power of dominant (superior) groups in society – who for instance have power to influence media contents – to construct an (inferior) “Other” which then streams into public discourses. Therefore, these discourses are based on hierarchical structures, and the power of exclusion and inclusion (Canales, 2000). It is in these processes that “the Other” is constructed and assigned stereotypical, negative or
inferior attributes, which in turn results in everyday discrimination and racism (Essed, 1991), that has often been made relevant by participants in this study.

By constructing immigrants as an inferior ‘other’, native majorities create a sense of superiority and stability; it is immigrants who are ‘othered’, need to change, and need to live up to the expectations nonimmigrant majorities set forth (Ehrkamp, 2006, p. 1677).

The concept of Othering has emerged as a vital theme in participant discussion and narratives. Given the constraints in scope of this thesis, I have written a paper exploring how Turkish German descendants construct and negotiate their various identities through different forms of Othering. The paper demonstrates that minorities internalise mainstream discourses that stereotype ethnic minorities who in turn discriminate each other. This means that discrimination and racism grow into even deeper levels and layers and divide society even further (Kakalic, in press). Which migrants are othered, and who is treated as a “migrant” across generations is a racialised process. Whiteness delineates the boundaries around who is considered “us” and racialized Otherness creates “them” in opposition. White supremacy is the social structure undergirding all aspects of the processes of Othering. The racialisation of Germanness and whiteness are one of the key factors in shaping Othering and in turn social integration of German-Turks, which I could not explore in-depth due to the word constraints of the thesis.

This mostly negative public image and processes of Othering influence the way in which white Germans and German-Turks perceive and interact with each other, and hence affect the social integration of German-Turks, which I will discuss in the next section.

7 See section 8.3 for future research suggestions in this area.
2.1.2 Social integration of German-Turks

Most of the research dealing with integration and Turkish citizens in Germany present a rather negative relationship between integration and social integration and the Turkish community. Similarly, the tendency of German media representation of Turks gives a rather negative image of this very group, especially in regard to integration issues. Karcher and Darity’s (2010, p. 3) statement encapsulates the main idea on this matter: “Turks are not socially integrated and remain separated from “native” German society.” Much debate exists as to whether or not the integration of the largest ethnic group in Germany “has decelerated, come to a standstill, or even reversed” (Diehl & Schnell, 2006, p. 789).

Constant et al. (2009) identify four possible levels of social integration an immigrant can achieve in the receiving country, which are assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Karcher and Darity (2010, p. 6) claim that the level of social integration of most Turkish-origin people is segregation, which entails an exclusive identification with the culture of origin and a weak connection to the receiving culture, because “many Turks living in Germany hold on to Turkish culture and remain disconnected from “native” German society (...) [i]n terms of language, cultural elements, ethnic interaction, ethnic self-identification and migration”

However, research has shown that the share of Turkish migrants holding higher educational degrees and better jobs did increase, not only compared to the first generation, but also over time (Diehl & Schnell, 2006). This share, however, is heavily overlooked (Sauer, 2007) and those who identify with the German culture and perform well socio-economically are exposed to generalisations and disappear under the large number of those who are less well integrated.

The most important aspect of social integration is “the inclusion of the actors into the social system” (Esser, 2001, p. 4). This definition highlights the role and responsibility of the receiving society in integrating individuals. It implies “that in order to be integrated society must treat immigrants equal to ‘native’ Germans” (Karcher & Darity, 2010, p. 3). Media plays a significant role here as well. It has strong potential “in shaping and (re)directing public opinion on migration issues” (Torkington &
Ribeiro, 2019, p. 23). The production of a negative public image creates Othering and in turn affects the self-perception of German-Turks who then produce stronger identification towards their culture of origin and alienation towards Germany. It intensifies discrimination (Bonfadelli, 2007) of Turkish individuals which in turn results in disadvantages in education and labour markets, which then again lead to the aggravation of their social integration. I am approaching the topic of social integration by focusing on German-Turkish individuals’ identity construction and by exploring the ways they make sense and perceive issues of social integration in which they construct and negotiate their different identities.

Integration and migration research on the degrees of Turkish Germans’ social integration and socio-economic levels has constantly shown to be less developed and disadvantaged compared to other ethnic minorities in Germany (Froehlich et al., 2018; Kalter, 2006). There is a consensus that the majority of Turkish-origin individuals are less well integrated in terms of education and labour market and their socio-economic situation is less developed than other ethnic groups (Alba, 2005; Bender & Seifert, 2003; Constant et al., 2009; Diehl & Schnell, 2006; Hartmann, 2016; Kalter & Granato, 2002; Karcher & Darity, 2010; Kristen, 2003; Lodigiani, 2018; Riphahn, 2005; Soergel, 2017; Song, 2011; Wagner et al., 1998).

Unemployment rates and performance in schools, language proficiencies and social segregation, to name but few, are effective indicators for social and socio-economic achievement of Turks. A large body of research, mostly using numbers from the Socioeconomic Panel data set (GSOEP), has presented negative rates and numbers regarding all of the above listed indicators (e.g. Bettin et al., 2018; Constant et al., 2007; Euwals et al., 2007; Hartmann, 2016; Karcher & Darity, 2010; Song, 2011). The German Expert Council on Migration and Integration (2004), for instance, found that 26% of German-Turks did not have an academic degree in 2000 and 22% had poor or no command of the German language. 20% of citizens with Turkish heritage are unemployed (Lodigiani, 2018). According to the PISA data from 2006, the gap between second-generation Turkish students and their German peers is a staggering 114 points (Song, 2011). Yurdakul (2016) states that the likelihood of a German-Turkish student to drop out of school is four times higher compared to a white German
at the same age. These are just some of the numbers reflecting issues of social and economic integration.

Froehlich and colleagues (2018) determined that the education route could be a promising one in integrating German-Turkish individuals into German society arguing that education sets the base for integration in relation to further participation in key societal areas. However, the lower performance in schools of German-Turks compared to those without a migration background must be considered. In addition, ample research has investigated the underrepresentation of Turkish origin students in German high schools by identifying social status and language issues as the main problem in this endeavour. Ultimately, this situation is a barrier to social integration (Froehlich et al., 2018). In his study, El-Mafaalani (2012) investigated the social mobility and habitus transformation in the German education system of Turkish heritage individuals and white German adolescents and found that the impact of cultural differences is often largely overestimated by researchers as well as practitioners.

Moffitt et al. (2019) mention that Critical Race Theorists (CRT) found that such research “mask systemic, racialized discrimination by placing the onus responsibility on ethnic minority students and families, rather than highlighting the structures that allow for, and reiterate, inequitable educational experiences” (Gillborn, 2008, as cited in Moffitt et al., 2019, p. 2). Social integration is thus not only depending on the actual performance of German-Turkish youth but also how they are approached and evaluated by teachers, which according to studies from inter alia Jussim and Harber (2005) is influenced by prejudices and stereotypes – most probably established by mainstream discourses. Zander and colleagues (2014) for instance found that teachers expect worse German language skills from Turkish heritage primary students even when their performance are equal to their white German peers. This is similar to studies that investigate in the high school domain. Here, Weber (2013) for instance reports that teachers constructed German-Turkish students as less capable and in opposition to the normative German groups both in class as well as in teachers staff rooms.
These instances of systemic and institutional racism and discrimination (Moffitt et al., 2019) have to be taken into consideration when evaluating German-Turks and other ethnic minorities’ social integration. As much as integration policies demand “migrants” to integrate and adopt to German society this is very much depended on the majority society’s approach towards these minorities as well, especially teachers. A vicious cycle can be observed here. Negative images and prejudices of German-Turks influence their performance as well as their evaluation and approach by their teachers. Low school performance leads to labour market discrimination, social discrimination and social segregation (Diehl & Schnell, 2006; Karcher & Darity, 2010; Lodigiani, 2018; Zimmermann et al., 2008). However, who is “marginalized and who is afforded opportunity is often delineated along lines of class and race” (Moffitt et al., 2019, p. 3). German-Turks are being othered and racialised not only with terms like “race” which is not overtly utilised to date, but with terms such as “Ausländer” or “Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund”8 (people with migration background), linking them to Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) regardless of their citizenship and immigration status (El-Tayeb, 2014, as cited in, Moffit et al., 2019). Moffitt and colleagues (2019, p. 3) argue that terms, such as the aforementioned, work to maintain a “dichotomous notion of a white, ethnocultural Germany and a non-white, immigrant Other”. This portrayal is a major factor in the discursive (de-)construction of social integration and identity construction of participants overall. Integration debates in Germany – very often linked to Turkish-origin individuals or Turkish diaspora in Germany – have a strong impact on these processes as well. These will be presented in the following section.

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8 The term “Migrationshintergrund” was created for the 2004 micro census based on a complex definition including anyone with at least one grandparent born outside Germany. “It has since been amended to include only individuals with at least one parent born outside Germany, though in daily usage it often refers simply to anyone perceived as having non-German heritage” (Moffit et al., 2019, p. 832). Since 2021 there have been debates about eliminating this term suggested by the expert committee for integration, in order to avoid foregrounding individuals “ethnic background” (Leubecher, 2021, Die Welt).
2.2 Integration: conceptualisations and current debates

Integration has become one of the most pressing policy concerns related to migrants and refugees and emerged to a highly significant debate in public discussion of the early twenty-first century (Ager & Strang, 2008; Denninger, 2001; Larin, 2020; Rudiger & Spencer, 2003). In Germany specifically, “a wide-spread debate exists regarding the integration of foreigners in Germany, especially Turks” (Trebbe, 2007, p. 172). Conceptually, integration has multidimensional meanings in politics, public discourse and academia (Ager & Strang, 2008; Erhard, 2018; Larin, 2020). Scientifically, integration is challenging to measure (Pott & Schneider, 2019). It remains unclear what individuals are integrating into, considering that societies are themselves split into numerous segments, even communities and minorities are diverse in themselves. For instance, in European cities, the diversity among ethnic groups is increasing “sometimes challenging the existing ethnic hierarchies (Crul & Schneider, 2010, p. 1254).

In this section, I will first outline academic and political conceptualisations of “integration” to highlight its ambiguous and complex nature. After that, I will present an overview of Germany’s integration debates that form part of the mainstream discourses of social integration that the study is concerned about.

2.2.1 Conceptualisations of “integration”

With a multidimensional meaning, integration as a concept is utilised with extensively divergent understandings, which is reflected in policy development and public debates (Ager & Strang, 2003; Larin, 2020), as well as in academia as an analytical-scientific term (Erhard, 2018). Trebbe (2007, p. 174) states that in Germany one of the broad meanings of integration is “the whole process of interaction and confrontation of migrants in the (new) social context of the arrival nations. In cross-cultural psychology and communication research, integration refers to the idea that an individual can maintain their heritage culture (e.g., speaking the language of origin, connections with friends and family, practicing cultural (and religious) traditions or following heritage norms) and adapt to another culture by learning and practicing the other culture’s language, norms and traditions (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997; Safdar et al., 2013). Social scientists working in the fields of migration, politics and law, define the term
integration as “the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration” (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 11).

These definitions and understandings are further complicated by yet other terminologies and conceptualisations. Some scholars for instance define integration as “the process by which people who are relatively new to a country (i.e., whose roots do not reach deeper than two or three generations) become part of society” (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003, p. 4). In mainstream discourses of social integration, however, the term most often revolves around the generations that were born in the country, such as the participants of this research. This is reflected in articles measuring the integration of “Turks”, where the rather negative developments compared to other ethnic groups, are often strongly highlighted. However, such studies do not separate those who immigrated as “guest workers”, as economic refugees or during other waves of immigration, those who migrated before school age or those who were born in Germany. What the public sees and processes is the homogenous and collective “group of Turks” who struggle to (and seem to never be able to) integrate into German society. They remain forever “alien”.

In many European countries, the integration of migrants means “their assimilation to a pre-existing, unified social order, with a homogeneous culture and set of values” (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003. p. 4). In such countries, [integration is perceived as a one-way process, placing the onus for change solely on migrants. They are expected to undergo a unilateral process of change, particularly in the public sphere, so that they can fit into a given order. For example, women of Turkish origin in Germany are often expected to work without headscarves when serving customers, as it is thought that customers could be alienated by such changes to staff uniforms. As differences cannot be tolerated, they are required to disappear (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003, p. 4).

9 Although the term “host” is often used in acculturation research, it reiterates the precise Othering processes that this study is arguing against and is thus not directly used in this study, except for when it is quoted from other research. The participants were born and raised in Germany. German society is their society. They are not “guests” that are being “hosted”.

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These one-sided perspectives are contested within the academic literature and a “gradual shift towards the currently dominant two-way process to integration” has emerged (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 3). A “two-way” process of integration adds responsibility for integration to both the receiving society and migrants, and points to the importance for integration to be seen as a process of mutual accommodation (Ager & Strang, 2008; Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016; Haugen & Kunst, 2017; Kunst et al., 2021; Rudiger & Spencer, 2003). Thus, a “two-way” perspective on integration considers the need of social connections between refugees, migrants and descendants of migrants and broader German society. This means that factors that harm integration do not merely depend on the migrant or their descendants themselves. In fact, “[m]any migrants, some after decades of settlement, suffer economic and social disadvantages, are excluded from civic and political participation and face discrimination, racism and xenophobia” (Spencer & Rudiger, 2003, p. 3).

In policy documents and debates to date, discussions of integration have been very normative. These have been criticised in the academic literature due to the fact that they “[continue] to assume – as did the old conception of assimilation – that immigrants must conform to the norms and values of the dominant majority in order to be accepted” (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 12). Trebbe (2007) points out that “assimilation of migrants in terms of cultural and societal adaptation of strangers” is particularly evident in political discussions of integration in Germany (Pöttker, 2005, pp. 27-30; Sackmann 2004, pp. 29-69; Vlasic, 2004, p.16, as cited in Trebbe, 2007, p.174). National debates on integration and assimilation have a great influence on who is perceived as integrated or assimilated in academic as well as societal debates (Crul & Schneider, 2010).

Reflecting these assimilation-oriented concepts of integration, mainstream media deals with integration as a pressure to lose their [Turkish] cultural identity and assimilate (Trebbe, 2007), not only on migrants, but on those who were born in Germany but merely have an ethnic background, who did not experience migration themselves. This is how the study’s participants perceive “integration”: as heavy transformation to “become more German than Germans” (Toprak, chapter 4). How
participants perceive and reflect integration in Germany and how they respond to it discursively, will be discussed in subsequent chapters of the study.

2.2.2 Germany’s integration debates

Germany has experienced extreme and multi-faceted immigration that shape its current society of today. Although its immigration history dates back more than 70 years – at least its major migration wave via the “guest worker” agreement – Germany struggled to identify itself as an immigration country and as a “multicultural society” (Eckardt, 2007). Since the governmental change in which the Social Democratic Party took over power at the end of the 1990’s, Germany has sparked up new debates on migration and integration which became a central focus in political debates (Eckardt, 2007; Ehrkamp, 2006; Kontos, 2020). These debates led to the launch of a new nationality law in 2000 that lowered societal barriers as children born in Germany automatically received German citizenship (Panagiotidis, 2019). With the immigration law commenced in 2005 Germany moved even further towards a more welcoming perspective of immigrants (Bendel, 2017, Kontos, 2020).

Germany actively aimed to create preconditions to successfully integrate migrants. However, 9/11 and the refugee crisis in 2015 changed the perception and attitude towards Muslim minorities in Europe and particularly in Germany (Abdel-Samad, 2018), to which Turkish individuals are automatically linked, as discussed earlier in the chapter. “Muslim refugees, more recently in Germany, are especially known for endangering the welfare state model” (Nickl, 2020, p. 40). Right-wing parties, especially Pegida and AfD have made use of this ever-growing fear and uneasiness towards Muslims and accelerated these with their debates about “foreign infiltration” and “Islamification” to reject a multicultural and diverse Germany (Bade, 2018).

Since the beginning of the previous decade, integration debates mainly focused on the requirement of belonging and constructed a migrant as a figure of “integration-unwillingness” and the main cause of disintegration, which has been centre of the integration discourses (Kontos, 2020). These developments influenced Germany’s integration debates which is heavily debated but often goes back to the same fundamental question about who is it that has to be “integrated”? (Bendel, 2017) Who
shall be part of “us”? How and in which areas does integration succeed? (Bendel, 2017). Although a full overview of integration discourses in Germany would go beyond the scope of the thesis, it is important to know that in political and mainstream discourse integration is used and understood differently (Ehrkamp, 2006). Sometimes it is understood as learning the German language and accepting its constitutions while at other times and for others it can mean social processes that depend on both migrants’ and non-migrants’ efforts (two-way process) (Ehrkamp, 2006).

The latter is in line with Germany’s national integration plan launched in 2006, that highlights the responsibility of the majority society: “[i]ntegration can only succeed collectively” ("Integration kann nur miteinander gelingen") (Nationaler Integrationsplan, 2007, p. 7). The German integration policy pursues the strategy of making demands and providing support, in which immigrants have the “duty” to learn German and respect the fundamental rights of German society. The German society in turn is required to provide immigrants with access to all important areas of society, economy and politics through equal opportunities and equal treatment (Hanewinkel & Oltmer, 2017). Hence, integration policies include aspects of both “promote and demand” ("Fördern und Fordern") (Nationaler Integrationsplan, 2007, p. 24) which indicates some levels of pressure to adapt.

Partially influenced by integration policies, public debates around integration evolve around both the assimilation of migrants indicating a “dept” ("Bringschuld") to the German society and integration as a chance for participation in central aspects of societal life (Bendel 2017). As mentioned above, participants mainly perceive political and media debates around integration as an assimilation pressure. Since 2010 these debates took extreme sides. Former finance politician and later board member of the Deutsche Bank Thilo Sarrazin sparked a heated debate that dominated the media landscape with his book “Germany abolishes itself” ("Deutschland schafft sich ab") (Sarrazin, 2010) in which he talks about how immigration had detrimental effects on Germany and German culture, economy, crime rates to name but few. With his polemic theses he sparked a debate about the failed integration of (Muslim) immigrants.

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Sarrazin indistinctly lumped together hundreds of thousands of individuals who identified with one of the many forms of Islam. He associated them with a certain genetic pool because of their non-Christian countries of origin and their migratory displacements from Muslim-majority societies outside Europe (Nickl, 2020, p. 22).

Sarazzin (2010) claims that “migrants have no productive function except for the fruit and vegetable business” and demands to end the access for migrants (except for highly qualified migrants) into Germany. His book was a bestseller in Germany and his theses have reached a massive response; debates about “integration-unwillingness” ("Integrationsunwilligkeit") have been discussed in various talk shows and discussed in numerous media articles (Kontos, 2020). His debates about how people with a Muslim faith – especially those of Turkish and Arabic origin – are “neither capable nor willing to integrate” “have been picked up and supported extensively by the public” (Kontos, 2020, p. 7). Together with Germany’s current racism debates, this illustrates that racist resentments are still supported within large parts of German society (Zuber, 2015).

These types of debates sparkle and aggravate racism in society. Since 1970 there have been numerous racist-motivated terror attacks in Germany, where individuals with a migrant background have been killed by terrorists who hold racist and nationalistic ideologies to eliminate people who are not “ethnically” German. Between 2000 and 2007 the Neo-Nazi terrorist group (Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund, NSU) conducted a series of racist murders described as the National Socialist Underground Murders, known as (“NSU-Mordserie”) by killing nine people, mainly with a Turkish ethnic background (tagesschau, 2021). In the German city Hanau, only very recently on 19th February 2020, nine people with a migration background have been killed by a person with racist motives, leaving the society shocked by this catastrophic incident. Debates on migration and integration, especially when transmitted via powerful tools such as media and powerful groups or individuals such political figures influence or “control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 10) and change public perception (Lippmann, 2018). All the more important is that debates around these issues take a major turn towards the value and importance of diversity and a liberalisation of problem- and deficit-oriented debates and depictions of migrants and their descendants. Integration debates comprise the whole category of
migrants including those who were long naturalised or were born in the country (Kontos, 2020). The automatic association of the latter with integration issues is problematic and influences Turkish-origin Germans’ subjectification and sense-making processes of social integration, as will be illustrated in later stages on the study.

The way in which integration is perceived and problematised, how solutions are communicated and inserted in political programmes play a pivotal role for its acceptance by society (Bendel, 2017). Germany is a highly multicultural society with ever-growing diversity. The idea of integration and accompanying debates need a reshape, as majority groups’ density declines and boundaries between majority and minority groups blur. Based on the term “super-diversity” (Vertovec, 2007), some areas in Germany are already “super-diverse”: white Germans who initially made up the “majority society” represent still a relative but not the absolute majority (Schneider, 2020). Ultimately, “everyone will have to adapt to everyone else” (Lelie et al., 2012, p. 14). This is possibly one of the reasons why the term integration has no clear definition and is challenging to grapple, address and conceptualise. If nations want to grow, promote harmony within their societies and establish a sense of community, integration debates must not focus on how to make “the Other” better and more suitable to the majority society. Rather, the focus should be on evaluating the readiness of the government, its institutions and organisations in light of the multiplicity and diversity of German society (Terkessidis, 2018, p. 76).

This part of the literature review has focused on the socio-historical, cultural, political and societal aspect of migration and integration related to Turkish-origin individuals in Germany and related research that has been done in this area. The second part of this chapter is theory-based; elucidating how the study conceptualises identity and the theoretical frameworks used to assist in the analysis of its data.

2.3 Conceptualising identity

Since the 16th century, research on identity has become increasingly important in the fields of sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis, and social psychology (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Taylor, 1989). It is a heavily theorised academic
concept (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). It can be said that there exists no consensus on its definition. Approaches vary from a rather static view of identity, as a fixed feature of individuals, a "unique core" (Scott & Marshall, 2009, p. 331) or the "one true self" (Barker & Galasinski, 2001, p. 30), which remains more or less the same throughout an individual’s life. It appears, then, that essentialists draw to the ancient roots of identity, as the term initially originates from the Latin word "idem", which is translated to sameness and continuity (Scott & Marshall, 2009).

In contrast to such essentialist conceptualisations, however, the social constructivist paradigm, in which this study’s approach is positioned, takes a less static approach to identity. Social constructionism is one of the most important paradigms that significantly influenced conceptualisations of identity (Schnurr, 2013). The main principles of this paradigm establish identity as an ongoing dynamic process (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Holmes, 2008), with a discursive-performative nature (Butler, 2006) leading to multiple, shifting and fragmented identities, which can be expressed in various ways (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). In other words, identity is “the social positioning of self and other” which may vary across contexts and even throughout an interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 586). In the social constructionist paradigm, identity is created and recreated through interaction (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; De Fina, 2003; Schnurr, 2013; Schwantes, 2009; Woodward, 1997) and is a highly context-dependent (Simon, 2004) and collaborative process (Schnurr & Zayts, 2017). Jenkins (2014, p. 5) states, “[i]t is not something that one can have, or not; it is something that one does.”. Identity is a human capacity, rooted in language (Jenkins, 2014), and is dynamically constructed in and through language and communication (Schnurr, 2013). The crucial role of language is one of the factors for adopting the social constructionist approach for this study, as its main focus is on the discursive construction of various identities by participants and their sense-making processes of social integration.

Finally, social constructionists argue that identity is “all-pervasive” (Erikson, 1994, p. 9) and is constantly created in relation to other people (Hall, 1992; Schnurr, 2013; Spencer-Oatey, 2007; Wetherell et al., 2007). Hence, individuals not only construct their own but the identities of each other (Holmes & Schnurr, 2006). In a nutshell:
“One cannot be a self on one’s own.” (Taylor, 1989, p. 36). In this vein, it is important to evaluate my role as a researcher, holding a similar socio-cultural background as the participants, as people co-construct their identities.10

2.3.1 Ethnic identity

Ethnicity has its roots in anthropology and ethnology and broadly refers to a group who shares biological and linguistic ancestry (Liebkind, 1989, p. 28). Ethnicity is constructed out of appearance, regional, cultural and religious criteria (Nagel, 1994). Having a Turkish ancestry would then suggest that Turkish descendants in Germany most likely identify themselves with the Turkish ethnicity or being “ethnic Turks”. As elaborated above, this study adopts a social constructionist paradigm that opposes such a static an essentialist approach and highlights the fluidity, dynamic nature and context dependency of identity. According to Barker and Galasinski (2001) “ethnic identification is attained through the linguistic action and interaction of specifically located speaking subjects” and that “these subjects construct ethnicity as mobile and plastic category constructed through everyday language usage in specific contexts” (p. 122). Ethnic identities are thus situational and changeable.

Given the importance of context, the ethnic identification process of German-born Turks is neither stable nor fixed. As for this study, these two “German” and “Turkish” ethnic identities are not perceived as rigid or fixed entities, nor identified as two ends of a continuum, of which German-Turks choose one of them. Their ethnic identities are rather, “evolving, interacting, cooperating, at times conflicting, all at once” (Mehdi, 2012, p. 13) and are “continuously negotiated, revised, and revitalized (Nagel, 1994, p. 153). In other words, Turkish-Germans can construct a Turkish, a German and/or a German-Turkish ethnic identity in a dynamic interplay. They can also construct all these identities at the same time, or none of them as the study will illustrate.

10 This aspect will be discussed in detail in section 3.5.
With regards to German-Turks’ Turkish ethnic identity, the idea of a “symbolic ethnicity” (Gans, 1994) is one to take into consideration. Symbolic ethnicity is "characterised by a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for and pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behavior" (Gans, 1994, p. 1226). For instance, Turkish descendants, may foreground their Turkish identity out of preference and their “Turkishness” might be a “state-of mind” (Crispino, as cited in Bakalian, 1993, p. 431). They may even claim to be a “Turk” without speaking Turkish or without having ever travelled to Turkey.

For the construction of ethnic identities – in addition to context – other individuals’ roles are crucial as well. Barth (1998) regards ethnic groups as social organisations and argues that ethnicity is produced through “self-ascriptions and ascriptions by others” (p. 9). Consequently, an ethnic identity is the composition of one’s “self-identification and outsiders' ethnic designations i.e., what you think your ethnicity is, versus what they think your ethnicity is” (Nagel, 1994, p. 154). In this regard, it is of interest to see how the ascriptions by the German media, which also influence public perception, affect the (“ethnic”) identity construction of participants.

Similar to ethnic identity, the concept of multi- and bicultural identity is important when researching individuals who have been socialised within more than one culture, such as German-Turkish participants of this study, which I outline in the following section.

2.3.2 Multicultural instead of bicultural identity

Biculturalism is defined as two cultural influences, which shape a human’s identity, in which their encounter can be the hallmark of a temporary phase of life (Wießmeier, 1999, p. 5). This definition refers to individuals with same-nationality parents, born and grown up in a country that is different to the parents’ birthplace, and to individuals with parents whose nationalities/cultural backgrounds differ from each other (Feldmann, 2006). According to Schwantes (2009, p. 102) “the cultural spheres of descendants from immigrants are clearly defined”. The former applies to the study’s participants. In this case, they were born and grew up in Germany to Turkish parents.
In some research, their exposure to their “ethnic” culture and the German culture is approached in a basic and rather naïve way: at home, they mostly experience the Turkish culture, and outside they experience the German culture, and are thus strongly influenced by “two fat cultures”11 (Watzinger-Tharp, 2004, p. 291). This might be the case for some individuals, but this cannot be assumed with certainty. Parents of “bicultural” German-Turkish individuals might live according to German cultural values – depending on the age they migrated to Germany – or speak more German at home than Turkish and other factors. While it is adequate to say that Turkish German adolescents are strongly influenced by the German and Turkish culture, as they were socialised with both from birth to present, the level of exposure to these “two fat cultures” is anything but clear-cut. Moreover, the cultural and ethnic diversity in contemporary Germany is high. Thus, talking about only “two fat cultures” might not be appropriate anymore. To an extent in some German cities the minorities became the majority (Crul et al., 2015). Individuals are thus exposed to, live with, and contribute to cultural diversity. In addition, reflecting on participants urge to “break free” from cultural categorisations and labels and be seen for who they are despite their Turkishness and Germanness, the study refers to Turkish German individuals as multicultural rather than bicultural.

An interesting concept regarding individuals with more than one cultural background is Gemende’s (2002) concept that she calls “intercultural limbos” (“Interkulturelle Zwischenwelten”). Gemende (2002) explains that intercultural limbos are reflected as independent, multiple, ambivalent and changeable perception and behaviour patterns, which bicultural individuals develop in an interplay between themselves and the environment. She visualises this phenomenon by trying to depict the strategies and continuous oscillations between the cultures of individuals with a migrant background. This construct resembles the circumstances of Turkish German descendants and what it means to grow up and socialise with two cultures (Feldmann, 2006). The experience


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of various cultures, mainly the German and the Turkish culture, from birth to present, Turkish origin individuals are able to commute between two realms. This brings out the psychological, social and cultural contradictions. In these “in-between-worlds, […] individuals try to merge contradictory life worlds on which they are dependent” (Gemende, 2002, p. 24, my translation). According to Gemende (2002, p. 24) the concept of a limbo as mental and change processes, in which individuals’ life worlds are constantly developed and extended, (re)defined, changed, and refined and constantly take on new forms, aid individuals to balance any tension between cultures. Like the concept of identity, an “intercultural limbo” is a highly dynamic and complex construct.

2.4 Theoretical frameworks

This section discusses the analytical perspective of this study. The study mainly deploys the frameworks from Buchholtz and Hall (2005) for the analysis of identity from a socio-cultural linguistic perspective. Whilst not deployed as a theoretical framework, the study is influenced by work and approaches of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and hence takes a critical approach given the timely and political aspects of issues around social integration in Germany. That said, the whole study adopts and reflects such a critical approach. In terms of analysis, chapter 4 takes a discourse-analytical approach and selectively draws on and reflects the work of Critical Discourse Analyst’s (mainly Teun Van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Norman Fairclough). Chapter 4 thus lays the groundwork for the subsequent two analysis chapters by providing an understanding of the overall experiences of and perceptions about the current German media landscape with regards to German-Turks in Germany. The aim of chapter 4 is to illustrate the complex connection between mainstream discourses and identity construction and sheds light on inequality, power relations and how these are manifested in language. Underlying meanings and assumptions generated linguistically are explored whilst examining the reproduction of ideology and stereotypes in language use. The subsequent analysis chapters (5 and 6) analyse participants’ interactions during the focus groups by applying Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework to an in-depth exploration of participants’ identity construction.
2.4.1 Bucholtz and Hall’s framework

Taking a sociocultural linguistic perspective on identity, where language, culture and society intersect, the framework from Bucholtz and Hall (2005) is ideal for the purpose of this study, which looks at issues around social integration of German-Turks from a sociolinguistic perspective. The authors highlight that identity simultaneously operates at multiple levels and use five principles to analyse individuals’ identities in linguistic interaction: (1) the emergence principle, (2) the positionality principle, (3) the indexicality principle, (4) the relationality principle and (5) the partialness principle.

The emergence principle relies on the notion that “identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588). Identity is constructed through social activities that are pursued with linguistic interaction (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998) and emerge in situations where individuals’ use of language does not comply with their social categories (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). In cases of Turkish-German descendants, these individuals may construct a German ethnic identity (depending on the context), using German as their “mother tongue”, crossing ethnic boundaries, and thus “sever the ideologically expected mapping between language and biology or culture” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588).

The positionality principle highlights the dynamic interactions through which identity is constructed and where individuals position themselves and others (inter)subjectively through the use of language and the variety of linguistic choices. This principle implies that “identities encompass (a) macro-level demographic categories; (b) local, ethnographically specific cultural positions; and (c) temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 592). Opposing the idea that identity is a fixed construct, Turkish descendants can position themselves in specific interactions that employ temporary roles. For instance, in terms of ethnicity, they may take on the role as a “German” or a “Turk”, depending
on the social context and depending on the interlocutor, here, the interviewer or other participating German-Turks.

The indexicality principle is one of the most important principles of identity. This principle is concerned with the mechanisms of constituting identity and implies that through utterances, linguistic devices, attitudes and certain behaviours, individuals index particular stances, which are in turn associated with certain identities and roles (Ochs, 1993). The use of various speech styles establishes certain stances and therefore constructs certain identity positions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). There are various ways in which linguistic forms are used to construct identity positions, that are encompassed by this principle, which are:

(a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one’s or other’s identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 594)

In other words, “interlocutors are constantly engaged in identity work – not only when they explicitly refer to identity categories, roles and positions, but also more implicitly in positioning themselves and each other throughout an interaction” (Schnurr, 2013, p. 124).

The relationality principle underscores the idea that identities are “intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice, and authority/delegitimacy” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 598). The first complementary relation, similarities and differences, also referred to as adequation and distinction, highlights that individuals need to possess enough similarities to be positioned alike a certain group. However, at the same time, they cannot be identical. Adequation accentuates the downplay of differences and distinction underlines the suppression of similarities. The latter is a crucial concept for identity, both in individual and in group terms (Liebkind, 1989, p. 38).

The ‘dialectical’ tension between personal and group-based distinctiveness is one of the main forces powering the dynamics of identity processes.
Distinctiveness draws upon the capacity of the mind to construe representations of social reality in contrasts rather than in differences of degree. Contrasts, or the tension between differences and similarities are employed by the mind in the process of endowing the surrounding world with structure, order and meaning (Lange & Westin, 1985, p. 19).

*Genuineness* and *artifice* emphasise the authenticity of identities. *Genuineness* outlines the discursive examination of identities whereas *artifice* focuses on the authenticity of the assumptions regarding the seamlessness of identity.

The final intersubjective construct is *authority* and *delegitimacy*. This construct indicates that identity is either ignored (*illegitimation*) or imposed (*authorization*) by institutionalised power and ideologies. Regarding the latter, certain (negative) identities may be imposed to German-Turks by various discursive constructs, which at the same time, include ideologies. German textbooks, for instance, depict and represent Turks as “the Other” and portray them as “victims” who are not able to integrate (Dawidowski, 2012). In this case *authorization* takes place, as certain identities are imposed on individuals of Turkish origin by *Othering* them. This in turn might affect their self-perception. Such imposed identities might also be the subject of humour. Due to word constraints for this project, a book chapter has been published to explore how German-Turks utilise humour to challenge mainstream discourses of social integration (see Kakalic & Schnurr, 2021). In section 7.1 of the thesis I will present one examples of this strategy.

The final principle, the partialness principle, puts emphasis on the complex and dynamic nature of identity and describes its “multivariant nature” (Cashman & Williams, 2008, p. 7):

Any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation and contestation, in part an outcome of others’ perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction. It is therefore constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across Discourse contexts (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606).
This principle stresses that “identity is inherently relational, it will always be partial, produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605).

To unpack the link of (mainstream) discourses, identities and the (re)production, legitimisation and challenging of power, I decided to complement Bucholtz and Hall’s framework with certain aspects from CDA. CDA aided me in taking a critical angle towards the data and the issues that arose, as “any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009b, p. 2). The next section sets out the CDA approach and how it was utilised to delve deeper into the analysis of my data (specifically in analysis chapter 4).

2.4.2 Critical approach

The thesis takes a critical approach overall and while I as the researcher have been critical towards the issues set out in the study, I was strongly influenced by the work of Critical Discourse Analyst’s – mostly the works of Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Norman Fairclough. This has ultimately strengthened the critical angle of my study. In this section, I will discuss some approaches of CDA to illuminate how it influenced my overall project and its critical approach.

Concerned with the fundamental understanding of social problems; with social structures and power relations, CDA is a theory that illuminates how power abuse, injustice and inequality are manifested in and affected by language and has the aim to contribute resources to increase social justice, to reduce and resist harm (O’Connor, 2003; Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 2001). As such, CDA influenced the critical stance of the study as it calls for researchers to critically approach, interpret and analyse social relations of dominance injustice and inequality that are realised in text and discourse (Van Dijk, 1996) and to “reveal structures of domination” (Young & Harrison, 2004, p. 2).

In this vein, “discourse”, which is any spoken or written language, is seen as forms of social practice that shapes social relations and entities and is shaped by them (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak & Meyer, 2009a). This means, that discourses shape,
impact and enable societal reality (Jäger, 2001). Since this study looks at mainstream discourses and their impact of ethnic minorities – namely Turkish origin Germans in Germany – their lived experiences, life realities and sense making processes through spoken interaction, the influence of CDA to the study’s approach aided in highlighting how mainstream discourses enter and manifest in participants’ social realities and how certain discursive practices and ideologies are reproduced by them.

CDA, moreover, looks at which voices gain authority in the process of moving along chains (i.e., media, politicians, government reports) and which voices diminish. It thus sheds light on how and which discourse gains power and authority (Blackledge, 2005). Van Dijk (1996) for instance states that politicians play a key role in the (re-) production of ideologies about minority groups. This is part of what the study elucidates; thus, CDA approaches were useful, i.e., on explaining the shift of meaning via “recontextualization” (Blackledge, 2005; Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2000; Wodak et al., 2008), racism reproduced through discourse (Richardson, 2004) and the investigation of discriminatory mainstream text (Blackledge, 2005).

However, as well as being influenced more generally by CDA, I found aspects of its approach which were also strongly in alignment to my own stance as a researcher. Researching a group as an “insider”, as CDA calls for researchers to take the perspective of dominated groups, of “those who suffer most from dominance and inequality” (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 252) with the aim to combat their issues with inequality (Van Dijk, 2001). Being a Turkish-German descendant myself, I often took the perspective of my participants trying to see the world from their point of view.

This study takes an individual perspective, i.e., it reports on the perspective of those who are marginalised, stigmatised, racialised and stereotyped by the media and political (as well as academic) discourses, whose recipients are not only the majority society but the suppressed groups themselves. Hence, these mainstream discourses strongly influence the subjectification, self-perception and identity construction of ethnic minorities (Kontos, 2020). CDA supports the study’s focus and critical approach to promoting and prioritising the voices of marginalised individuals and groups. More broadly, CDA has influenced my approach in shedding light on the ways
in which mainstream discourses reproduce unequal power relations between majority society and German-Turkish groups – from participants’ perspectives. It illuminated how such discourses represent and position Turkish-German individuals in Germany and how this influences their discursive construction of identity and social integration.

When applied to the analysis of the study’s data, CDA was primarily utilised to shape an overarching critical perspective in doing research (van Dijk, 2001). CDA advocates multi- and interdisciplinarity and derived from various theoretical backgrounds, disciplines and paradigms (O’Connor, 2003; Van Dijk, 1993; Weiss & Wodak, 2003). More broadly, CDA’s most important purpose is to approach discourse in a critical way that this study has aimed to do (Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, 2010; Van Dijk, 1996).

Having said this, it is important to acknowledge that by utilising CDA the researcher has “to be aware that their own work is driven by social, economic and political motives like any other academic work and that they are not in any superior position” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009a, p. 7). This recognition implies an ethical standard in that researchers must make their values, position and research interests as transparent as possible (Wodak & Meyer, 2009a), whilst being highly self-reflective (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). The latter is particularly crucial for me as a researcher, as I share the same socio-cultural background as my participants, and my position, values, research interests and motivation are influenced by this. While I acknowledge the possibility of approaching the data and overall research more subjectively than I possibly would as an “outsider” who does not share similar experiences as the research participants, I have continuously engaged in critical self-reflection before, during and after the conduction of the study to avoid assumptions. I discuss this point in detail in section 3.4.

I will now present the research questions (henceforth RQs), which are guiding this study.
2.5 Research questions

Agee (2009, p. 432) claims that the creation of RQs is part of a larger interactive process in qualitative research, with constant questioning being “an integral part of understanding the unfolding lives and perspectives of others”. This means that good RQs are the ones that are constantly reflected on, refined and reformulated (Agee, 2009; Flick, 2009).

While I initially aimed at exploring how mainstream and media discourses on Turkish-Germans affect the identity construction of this very group, with an equal focus on media (i.e., analysing media content), after the pilot study I decided to mainly focus on the identity construction of German-Turks due to word and time constraints of the PhD project. I also prioritised to explore individual experiences and give participants a voice, which has further vindicated the decision to drop the media content analysis part. After data collection, the topicality of social integration for participants became prevalent. Very often participants’ experiences shared, and discussions held in the focus groups made social integration relevant. Hence, I framed the study around this phenomenon, particularly aiming to explore how participants discursively (de-) construct and make sense of (their) social integration.

Besides the academic aspect of this research, I aim to use the insights generated from RQ1 and RQ2 to provide socially applicable results, which are captured in RQ3.

Hence, the resulting RQs which guided the study are the following:

I. RQ1: How do German-Turkish descendants experience issues of social integration currently discussed in the media and/or reflected in mainstream public discourses?

II. RQ2: What kinds of identities do they construct and negotiate in the focus groups and the interviews?

   a) Do they construct themselves as Turks, Germans and/or German-Turks?
b) How do they position these different identities in relation to each other – sometimes combining them and at other times contrasting them?

III. RQ3: How can these insights be used in order to enhance Germany’s integration policies?

I will now turn to providing details on the study’s methodology used to address these questions.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the chosen methodology for this study with regard to the research objectives and RQs. The adopted research strategy is a qualitative one – inductive in its approach and constructivist in its “ontological orientation” (Bryman, 2016), which will be elaborated further below. After explaining the research strategy and paradigm (3.1) and introducing the methods of data collection (3.2), I will describe how sampling (for both participants and media sources) was done (3.2.1). Thereafter, the chosen data collection methods will be explained followed by a detailed illustration of the procedures for both focus groups (3.2.2) and interviews (3.2.3). Finally, I will critically reflect on my role as a researcher (3.4).

3.1 Research approach and paradigm

The research design is traditionally selected by considering “the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers’ personal experiences, and the audiences of the study” (Creswell, 2009, p. 3). This research aims to explore and discover (Mason, 2017) participants’ individual experiences, perceptions and understandings in relation to mainstream discourses of the social integration of German-Turkish individuals. Based on this, this study adopted a qualitative research approach, as one of the main foci of this study is the in-depth exploration of individual experiences and perspectives in the context of sensitive issues (i.e., perceived negative portrayals in the media, discrimination and racism, to name but a few).

Qualitative research is moreover understood to be “discovery-oriented and holistic to understand processes and question underlying assumptions” (Forman et al., 2008, p. 765). This focus entails an approach to analyse evaluative meanings (Graham, 2003) and to understand social phenomena (Sprenger, 2016), thus adopting a qualitative approach and exploring the data using qualitative methods was most appropriate. Along with the exploration of sense-making processes of social integration, this study is particularly interested in how participants construct their identities in interaction. With a qualitative approach, the study aims at unfolding the complexity of identity construction and conveying multiple perspectives, both from the researcher’s and the
participants’ side, while identifying many factors involved in this complex process to depict a larger picture of the issue under study (Creswell, 2009).

As discussed in the previous chapter, research on Turkish migrants in Germany has received considerable attention in the literature. Many such studies employ cohort analyses, mostly within the quantitative paradigm, with an emphasis on describing patterns rather than exploring individual experiences, as this study aims to do. Unlike quantitative methods, which are concerned with questions like “how many?, how widespread?, how old?, etc.”, what separates the qualitative from the quantitative paradigm is the “researcher’s fundamental research question – [s]he asks why?” (Fink, 2000, p. 3) and strives towards the exploration of “richness, depth, complexity and nuance” (Mason, 2006, p. 22). Using qualitative methods, the researcher can delve into broad dimensions of the social world,

(…) including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, Discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings they generate (Mason, 2002, p. 1).

Moreover, the fact that participants are going to interact with a researcher with a similar socio-cultural background\textsuperscript{12}, and thus perhaps having similar personal experiences, provides an additional rationale to use a qualitative design, as in this

(…) interactive process in which the researcher tries to untangle and make reflexive sense of her own presence and role in the research the written study (…) becomes a complex train of thought within which her voice and her image of others are interwoven (Holliday, 2007, p. 122).

Using words as data (Braun & Clarke, 2013) qualitative research allows the researcher to “understand the world from the subjects’ points of view and to unfold the meaning of their lived world” (Kvale, 2006, p. 481), in order to gain insight into their experiences, perspectives and opinions (Flick, 2009; Pope & Mays, 1995), which is of high importance for the present research focus. According to Mason (2002, p. 1),

\textsuperscript{12} The researcher’s socio-cultural background, which is similar to the participants’ backgrounds, and its role in the research process will be discussed in section 3.4.
qualitative research therefore has the capacity to “constitute compelling arguments about how things work in particular contexts”.

The adopted paradigm for this qualitative research project is social constructivism (or constructionism), which views social realities as “actively constituted through representations and Discourse as well as practices” (Waller et al., 2016, p. 11). These realities are constructed through multiple perspectives and depend on several variables such as the people involved, the topic under investigation and the context in which it takes place (Creswell, 2009; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015; Slembrouck, 2015). This paradigm has the “goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1998, p. 221). Since this research focuses on participants’ construction of meaning of particular themes, their individual experiences, perceptions and lived social world(s), the constructivist paradigm is highly suitable for the purpose of this study and aligns with its epistemological stance that meaning, knowledge and reality are co-constructed by all the social actors involved (e.g., Bryman, 2016; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015; Schwandt, 1998). Therefore, I regard research “as a joint product of the participants, the researcher, and their relationship: It is co-constituted” (Finlay, 2002, p. 531). In section 3.4, I will discuss my role as a researcher and my relationship with the participants in the process of collecting and analysing the data more specifically.

3.1.1 Narrative Inquiry

The role of narratives plays a strong part in both data collection and analysis and is the central unit of analysis for this study. Hence, the study’s research approach is framed by narrative inquiry of identity, experience, and sense-making processes to better understand participants overall meaning making and processes of identity construction.

Narrative inquiry is the study of experience as stories and is thus a way of thinking about experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). This approach has influenced the development of my ideas about identity as well as the way I approached and made sense of my data. Narrative inquiry enables researchers to make sense of individuals experiences, feelings and emotions and aids in receiving an in-depth understanding of
these through their stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). It is through these lived and
told stories that participants both collectively as well as individually create meaning
of their lives in the focus group discussions (Clandinin, 2006) whilst making sense of
mainstream discourses of social integration and construct their various identities in
this context.

Narratives are “sensitive to the subtle textures of thought and feeling” (Webster &
Mertova, 2007, p. 7). In the focus group discussions, it was highly important to allow
participants to share these feelings and thoughts and bring up experiences and events
that have been significant in their stories (Towers et al., 2017). Narrative inquiry
focuses “not only on individuals’ experiences but also on the social, cultural, and
institutional narratives within which individuals’ experiences are constituted, shaped,
expressed, and enacted” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, pp. 42–43). “Story, in the current
idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their
experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Connelly &
Clandinin, 2006, p. 479). In the focus group discussions, participants shared (and co-
constructed) these stories with each other and me as the researcher and interpreted
their own and each other’s stories to collectively make meaning of issues of social
integration, of difficult situations and challenges but also of opportunities and hope
and their lived experiences overall. Narrative inquiry was chosen in order to provide
the flexibility for participants to tell stories about their experiences of mainstream
discourses of social integration, of being positioned as “integrators” in these
discourses and of being bi/multicultural individuals in Germany.

3.2 Methods of data collection

As described above, the aim of this study is to examine the construction and
negotiation of identities by German-Turkish descendants while exploring the
processes through which members of this group experience, describe and make sense
of their social integration within the broader context of the German media landscape.

In order to explore these issues and to understand and investigate the participants’
“identities, experiences, beliefs, and orientations” (Talmy, 2010, p. 111) data was
collected using multiple methods. On this matter, this research includes the analysis of data acquired from focus groups (emic and etic method)\textsuperscript{13} – the main method of data collection – and in-depth interviews (etic method), conducted with participating German-Turkish descendants from the second and third generation (section 3.3.1). The interview questions were, moreover, offered in written form to those who could (or would) not attend the focus group discussions physically or for those who felt more comfortable by answering the questions on their own.

This methods triangulation (Polit & Beck, 2004; Thurmond, 2001) is believed to suit the purpose of this qualitative study best, because the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (Denzin, 2012, p. 82).

Therefore, a methods triangulation is believed to balance the disadvantages of one method with the advantages of another method (Thurmond, 2001) in order to receive an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Denzin, 2012). These data collection methods are aimed at answering RQ1 and RQ2.

In order to design the most appropriate focus group and interview guide a pilot study for both methods was undertaken in November 2018\textsuperscript{14}. Piloting helps to identify flaws and weaknesses and to adjust the rules and procedures for the focus groups and refine interview questions (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). In this regard, ethical approval was received from Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick (Appendix 10.6)\textsuperscript{15}. After designing and refining the focus group and interview guides (Appendices 10.1 and 10.2) and incorporating feedback from supervisors, a pilot study

\textsuperscript{13} By participating in the focus group discussions as a participant I was able to obtain a viewpoint from within the social group as a member, which makes this method an emic one. Acting solely as a moderator, however, I only took on the role as an observer outside the social group, which is considered an etic perspective (Morris et al., 1999).

\textsuperscript{14} An overview of participants (including for the pilot study) can be found in Appendix 10.5.

\textsuperscript{15} Ethical considerations for this study will be discussed in detail in section 3.2.4.
with three German-Turkish women was conducted. This pilot study helped me to become familiar with the focus group procedure and to test another data collection method to complement the focus group discussions (Liljestrom, 2010), which is, as discussed above, the use of individual face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, the pilot study was an effective method to readjust and modify questions, procedures, the environment and chosen written and video materials to be prepared for the actual focus groups.

In addition, a pilot interview was undertaken with one person having the same socio-cultural background as the actual research group (Gillham, 2005) – German-Turkish – to test and modify the interview questions and their order to conduct the actual interviews more successfully. The data deriving from both pilot studies were very insightful and interesting, which is why that data was included in the data analysis for the thesis.

3.2.1 Sampling

Participants

Before recruiting the participants, the criteria upon which an individual is considered appropriate for this research and the RQs had to be defined. This study focuses on individuals who have lived and have been socialized with two cultural groups from birth to present. Firstly, participants must have been born and grown up in Germany, and secondly must have a Turkish origin: more specifically they must have been born to Turkish parents, who were born in Turkey but immigrated to Germany at school age or later. An overview of the participants and their demographic characteristics can be found in Appendix 10.5. Overall, I collected 16.45 hours of data – 3.5 hours of interview data and 13.15 hours of focus group data. Moreover, seven participants filled in a form with a shortened version of the interview questions.

In migration research, individuals under investigation are defined in generational terms. Scholars refer to the “first, 1.5, second, 2.5, third, fourth, fifth generation” and so on. According to widely used definitions of those who were born in the country their ancestors have immigrated to, my participants would be defined as “second generation” as it describes a group who are descendants of migrants, and who were
either born in Germany or migrated to Germany before school age (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2003, p. 7). The term is defined differently by different researchers. Scholars using the rigid definition refer to the “second generation” to describe the offspring of those who migrated and were then born in the country (Schneider, 2016). Based on the study’s participant criteria, I recruited “second generation” German-Turks. However, “in less rigid definitions the term is applied also to those who migrated with their parents at a very young age or when the entrance age for schooling as the definitional limit is taken” (Schneider, 2016, p. 3).

Based on this definition, the “second-generation” would also apply to some of the participants’ parents (forming the majority of the study) who reunited with their parents – the so-called “guest workers” – in Germany as young adults or children in school age, which some research defines as “1.5 generation”. Yet other participants’ parents are the “first generation” to migrate to Germany, thus not part of the “guest worker” programme but migrated as part of subsequent immigration waves after the labour recruitment programme in the 1950’s. If we take these into consideration, descendants of “guest workers” would “already represent the fourth or fifth generation” (Schneider, 2016, p. 5). In sociological terms however, my participants would represent the “second” and the “third” generation.

All these terms and definitions are problematic and create confusion, fuzziness and inaccuracies (Schneider, 2016) that this study acknowledges and criticises\(^\text{16}\). I do not agree with using these terms, because they create more divide – not only between “white German society” and individuals with various ethnic heritages but also among those with these ethnic heritages. In still referring to “generations of migrants” public and academic discourse associates those who were born in, fully socialised within and identify with Germany, with immigration and thus with integration and the problematic issues attached to it (Schneider, 2016). The categorising nature of the term generation leads to Othering and contributes to the vicious cycle of racism and

\(^{16}\) Due to word constraints I am not discussing the origin, usage and differences of all these generational terms here. For a detailed overview and discussion of why the term “second generation” in particular is problematic and contradictory see Schneider (2016).
discrimination and hence needs to be acknowledged and possibly eliminated. However, in the study I use the term throughout to firstly reflect that the participants themselves used to refer to certain “generations” and secondly to reflect and draw on terms that are used in wider research.

Having said this, for methodological and sampling reasons I need to distinguish and define who I am talking about. To avoid creating yet other labels and categorisations, I shall only refer to the criteria listed above and the further six subcategories for recruitment of participants, namely:

1. those who were born as German citizens,
2. those who hold a Turkish citizenship,
3. those who were naturalised,
4. those who hold a dual citizenship (German and Turkish),
5. those who chose German citizenship over Turkish citizenship\(^\text{17}\),
6. those who chose Turkish citizenship over German citizenship

In total, 31 participants were recruited, across a wide range of gender, age, socio-economic background and other demographic variables. While one of the participants was aged 16 and three were aged 17, and took part in the same focus group, the remaining 27 were all over the legal age. Nine were my acquaintances, while with the remaining 21 I did not have a pre-existing or personal relationship.

Through convenience sampling, I contacted my acquaintances first to take part in the study. The need for further participants was achieved through the snowball sampling method, where my initial contacts directed me towards other relevant individuals (Bryman, 2016). A snowball technique can help the researcher to gain quicker access to participants and build trust (Çelik, 2015) and is “arguably the most widely employed method of sampling in qualitative research in various disciplines across the social sciences” (Noy, 2008, p. 330). This technique worked well for the recruitment of participants for the pilot study as well as the actual study. However, snowball sampling

\(^{17}\) In 2000, the German government implemented a nationality law, in which individuals with passports in addition to a German passport have to choose between their German or foreign passport after the age of 23 (Bendel, 2017). The problematic nature of this law will be addressed in chapter 8.
enables the researcher to only “[drill] down vertically through social networks” which puts the sample to be at risk to remain shallow and superficial (Geddes et al., 2018, p. 1) rather than deep by “mov[ing] horizontally across social networks and cast the sampling and recruitment net wide” (Geddes et al., 2018, p. 1). Some researchers argue that this sampling strategy is not reflective of a broader population. Due to my network in different areas in Germany and with individuals from various socio-cultural and socio-economic background I was able to recruit a variety of individuals from several different cities, across age, educational and socio-economic background (see Appendix 10.5 for an overview of participants). To further widen the sampling and recruitment net, I also recruited participants via social network sampling. I prepared Facebook and Instagram posts that included information about participant criteria, which was only to be of “German-Turkish descent and born in Germany”, and one sentence that was generic rather than specific: “How are German-Turks presented in the media? Let us discuss” I also included dates for focus groups that were planned to be held in different cities and mentioned that snacks and drinks will be provided. Having public profiles and with the help of hashtags my posts could be seen by individuals beyond my own social networks. I was contacted by five more participants who were interested in taking part in the study, three of whom met the criteria. The other two had one parent with a Turkish and the other parent with a German ethnic background and could not take part.

**Print and broadcast media**

In order to acquire an understanding of participants’ perspectives, experiences and sense-making around topics related to social integration, selected excerpts of recent German media coverage were presented to the group for the focus group discussion. In this regard, specific excerpts from articles or broadcast media, such as political talk shows, were selected. These articles dealt with issues surrounding social integration, migration and integration of German-Turks in Germany which attract the focused attention of the media, “which plays a significant role in shaping and (re)directing public opinion on migration issues” (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 23). These articles were merely used to provide prompts at the start of the focus groups. The aim was not to analyse the content of these articles in depth.
According to Mautner (2008), the data choosing process is always affected by subjective judgement, wherefore “subjectivity needs to be counterbalanced by rigour and choices exposed to critical scrutiny” (p. 37). In this regard, the evidence was obtained by using a specific strategy described below, in order to avoid skewed sampling (Mautner, 2008). The data were collected through the online archive of several online newspapers and broadcasters and the Google search engine by way of the following search query:

*Deutsch-Türken* (German-Turks)*
OR *Deutsch-Türkische Personen* (German-Turkish /individuals)*
OR *Deutsch-Türkische Migranten* (German-Turkish migrants)*
OR *Türken in Deutschland* (Turks in Germany)*
OR *Türken und Integration* (Turks and integration)*
OR *Türken und Soziale Integration* (Turks and social integration)*
OR *Deutsch-Türken und Integration* (German-Turks and integration)*
OR *Deutsch-Türken und Soziale Integration* (German-Turks and social integration)*

After having typed in those keywords and received results from the online archive of each online newspaper and broadcaster, the results were then manually scanned and only articles whose contents explicitly focused on individuals of Turkish origin in Germany were chosen. Articles with only passing reference to the integration of individuals from other ethnic backgrounds, or those containing references to other migration processes (for example, the emigration of refugees, which has become another topical subject in Germany since the start of the refugee crisis in 2015 (Hanewinkel, 2015), were excluded. This procedure was applied on each online website of the above listed newspapers and broadcasters. The search function of the Google search engine was used to identify articles and broadcasts or television shows containing references to all the above listed keywords in their headlines. The aim of this study is not to analyse the media articles itself but to utilise some excerpts to provide a starting point and a prompt to participants and to initiate a discussion. Interestingly, participants already started addressing and discussing topics regarding the integration of Turks in Germany and (social) integration generally before the focus

18 The choice of the selected newspapers and broadcasters was based on their online visits and rankings, hence their popularity in Germany.
groups during the ‘getting-to-know’ phase. This illustrates the participants’ awareness, relevance and topicality of these issues. There is the possibility that the discussions might have generated similar insights without the prompts given by the media excerpts.

3.2.2 Focus groups

The decision to conduct focus groups with the research participants was taken for numerous reasons. As a method which is best used in exploratory research (Vaughn et al., 1996) it is highly suited to the investigation of experiences and attitudes (Kitzinger, 1995). Smithson (2000) regards a focus group as “a social event that includes performances by all concerned” (p. 105). Within this social event, it is possible to explore how participants structure and formulate their views on a given topic and how they use language as a constructive and functional medium (Smithson, 2000) to construct their identities in relation to the given topics (Wetherell et al., 1987).

Focus groups can be described as “a way of collecting qualitative data, which – essentially – involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion (or discussions), ‘focused’ around a particular topic or set of issues” (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 177). Scholars such as Maynard-Tucker (2000) and Smithson (2007) argue that information in focus groups and interviews given by participants might differ, which does not imply that the participants have provided untruthful information (Liljestrom, 2010). Rather, there may be differences in an individual’s self-representation in a group and their self-representation in one-on-one settings (Liljestrom, 2010).

[T]his may be seen as a product of group interaction – in which people provide comments that orient to what others have said, as well as tailor their accounts in particular ways to other group members as over-hearing audiences. (Liljestrom, 2010, p. 38)

Focus group work is, moreover, particularly useful for the purpose of this study, because it helps to facilitate the examination of “not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way” (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299). By bringing
participants together as a group and presenting selected excerpts of recent media coverage related to social integration, it is possible to explore and clarify their perceptions and understandings around social integration, which is not (or rather hardly) accessible in an individual interview. It was hoped that the group dynamics in the focus groups would reveal insights into collectively perceived topics of importance, which encourages participants to explore these topics in more detail and open up new questions and possibly new directions and ideas that had not been considered by the researcher.

Through group work the researcher has the opportunity to tap into various forms of communication, which would not often be overtly expressed in face-to-face interviews, because individual interviews put more burden on the interviewee to explain certain issues (Morgan, 1996). Therefore, it was of high interest to see the emerging group dynamics in combination with the associated operation of dissent or consensus on certain topics (Hughes & DuMont, 1993), as through the opportunities of dialogue (Liljestrom, 2010, p.38) participants have the chance to discuss perceptions, ideas, opinions, and thoughts (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

In this regard, the socio-cultural background all participants share, including myself as the researcher, might create an atmosphere of safety due to presumably shared experiences, thus, facilitate them to share information (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Vaughn et al., 1996). On this matter, participants can “provide mutual support in expressing feelings that are common to their group but which they consider deviating from mainstream [German] culture” (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299). Participants’ shared background can increase their sense of belonging and cohesiveness and can serve as an environment for discussing personal issues and, ideally, provide potential solutions to each other (Duggleby, 2005). In this context, after the pilot study and following data collection, all participants expressed their positive feeling towards me being a member of the German-Turkish community, which will be elaborated further in section 3.4.

Most researchers recommend homogeneity in a focus group (Hughes & DuMont, 1993; Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 1997) in terms of ethnic background or a “shared milieu” (Morgan, 1997, p. 3). However, a degree of diversity, e.g., in terms of different
professions, age groups, genders (to name but few), can serve as an advantage because of the opportunity to explore various and diverse insights of different perspectives within a group (Kitzinger, 1995) and to “illuminate complex psychosocial phenomena (Powell & Single, 1996, p. 500). The composition of research participants in this study meets the above described two recommendations (see section 3.2.1).

Kitzinger (1995) suggests that focus groups can aid in revealing or highlighting various scales of understandings, which are more likely to remain unexploited using other data collection techniques – here the use of interviews. Nonetheless, in focus groups the possibility of the suppression of individual voices exists (Kitzinger, 1994). For instance, there might be dominant participants who potentially influence the dynamic of the discussion, i.e., suppressing others, influencing their reactions or responses. In order to eliminate this, several steps have been taken. Firstly, a certain moderator practice has been adopted in which I made sure that every participant had the chance to contribute to the discussion. In the case of groups with particularly dominant participants I asked those who seemed quieter than others broad follow-up questions (e.g., what do you think?). Among seven focus groups conducted, there was only one where this situation was apparent. Despite one dominant participant present in this group, nevertheless a dynamic discussion developed to which everyone contributed at some point. For example, if someone did not talk much, their enthusiasm and interest was still evident in their reactions, body language, nodding and other paralinguistic features. Based on this observation nobody felt overlooked or excluded. In addition, after every focus group (sometimes immediately post focus group discussion and sometimes later on during follow-up questions) I asked every participant if they felt comfortable, if they felt that they had the chance to say what they wanted to say when they wanted to say it. In the overall feedback of all participants, this is reflected. Having said this, I still must acknowledge that dominant participants might have influenced other participants’ reactions, contribution etc. But I do hope that no participant felt they had been excluded and not been given that chance to participate.

To further ensure that each participant had the chance to voice their thoughts, feelings and opinions, post-focus group interviews were conducted with participants who were
willing to share additional personal information. Also, participants were offered to take part in an interview only, should they feel uncomfortable in joining a group discussion. However, just two out of the 31 participants chose to participate as a sole interviewee without considering their participation in a group discussion, while two others did not feel comfortable participating in a group discussion nor being interviewed – they were, however, willing to take part by answering the interview questions in written form. Due to the latter, I decided to include this option as a data collection method, which I will elaborate on further in section 3.2.3.

The fact that only four out of 31 participants were unwilling to join a group discussion leads to the assumption that the remaining participants felt comfortable to share their personal experiences and opinions in focus groups with people they had not met before. After having conducted the focus groups, and by evaluating general observations of participants’ behaviours as well as their responses and the topics they discussed (which included large amounts of sensitive and intimate information), this assumption can be confirmed.

Another possible disadvantage worth mentioning is that invasion of privacy concerns can limit the topics that researchers can address (Morgan, 1996, 1997), since the presence of other participants can impair participants’ responses, especially when the subject of the research involves sensitive topics, such as in this study. It was hoped to solve this issue with the use of individual post-focus group interviews, where participants had the opportunity to share sensitive sentiments, which might have been a challenge to share in the group. However, given that personal and sensitive topics were discussed frequently and openly throughout all focus groups in this study (for instance, experiences of racism and discrimination), the issue of impairment can be considered as not being highly relevant for this particular study. Participants expressed explicitly that they felt comfortable in sharing sensitive topics in their feedback after the discussion. According to them, the atmosphere was relaxed and it was easy to open up due to the similar socio-cultural background of the participants and the researcher (see section 3.4)
Finally, pre-existing relationships between the participants may lead to a reflection of roles which exist outside the group. People might be more likely to orient to one another during the group work and might adhere to their roles and relationships they have outside the group “and position their perspectives in particular ways for other members of the group” (Liljestrom, 2010, p. 39), which might affect the way they talk. According to Liljestrom (2010), this has both advantages and disadvantages. Pre-existing relationships among participants automatically create a comfortable environment “in which group members are willing to freely discuss topics of interest” (Liljestrom, 2010, p. 39), which simplifies the moderator’s work. In terms of disadvantages, there is the possibility that “in such groups, group members will enact particular identities occupied outside the group and position their perspectives in particular ways for other members of the group” (Liljestrom, 2010, p. 39).

It is important to create an environment where participants feel comfortable to share their ideas and opinions, which might differ from those of other participants, especially with regard to sensitive topics (Wellings et al., 2000). Concerning this matter, participants from the pilot study talked about sensitive topics throughout and quickly felt comfortable in sharing them.

3.2.2.1 Conducting focus groups

As elaborated above, before conducting the actual focus groups I conducted a pilot focus group with three German-Turkish women (see Table 1). This composition is in alignment with research recommending homogeneity in a focus group (Hughes & DuMont, 1993; Morgan, 1997) in terms of ethnic backgrounds or a “shared milieu” (Morgan, 1997, p. 3) and a degree of diversity, e.g. in terms of different professions, age groups, and genders (to name but few). This is an opportunity to explore various and diverse insights and perspectives within the focus group and “illuminate complex psychosocial phenomena (Powell & Single, 1996, p. 500). As the pilot focus group proved successful in terms of productive and informative discussion and feedback of participants, I tried to form the following focus groups for my actual data collection in a similar way. In total, I conducted seven focus groups with a total of 21 participants.
According to the literature, the ideal size of a focus group comprises six to 12 people (Litosseliti & Edley, 2018; Vaughn et al., 1996), who are strangers to each other (Morgan, 1996; Powell & Single, 1996). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) claim that groups with less than four participants can lead to a loss of quality of being a group. However, they also point out that triads can be an effective hybrid of in-depth interviews, which have the potential to yield valuable and relevant data as participants are given more space to discuss and elaborate topics in detail (Brannen, Lewis, & Nilsen, 2002). Therefore, the focus group sizes for this study range from two participants in a group to five. The duration of the focus group was planned to be around one hour. However, except for two groups, all other group discussions took around two hours, showing that a small group can produce rich conversations (Bryman, 2016).

**Procedure**

The focus groups were conducted in three different cities in Germany, always in an area close to the centre and easy to reach, to ensure participants had easy and comfortable access (Liljestrom, 2010) and to diminish any inconvenience and time pressures. All focus groups were audio- and video-taped (Wilkinson, 2004). I placed the video-recorder\(^\text{19}\) in a place that was rather out of sight to avoid the distraction of participants (see Image 3.1).

\(^{19}\) Consent for video-recording the focus group discussions was given by all participants.
I chose small and convenient locations (friends’ and my family’s home) and provided snacks, finger food, hot and cold drinks to set an informal and relaxed tone (see Image 3.2). The setting may have an impact on the conversation styles of the group: informal settings can create rather “chaotic” conversations due to interruptions, simultaneous and/or unstructured talk, but it may also reveal insights into real-life interactions and how they are constructed (Green & Hart, 1999; Oliveira, 2011), which is rather what I aimed to explore and get access to. After the pilot focus group with a “chaotic” and informal setting proved successful in providing potential to obtain interesting and
relevant data, I decided to arrange the seating on the ground, with a pillow to sit on for each participant (see Image 3.2).

Image 3. 2 “Chaotic” and informal setting – example from focus group 2

Getting-to-know/warm-up phase
Before the actual discussions started, we had a “getting-to-know” phase for about one hour20, where I had the chance to get to know the participants better, as I had just met them for the first time. It also offered a chance for the participants to warm-up and get

20 With the consent of participants, this phase has been recorded.
to know each other. In two focus groups none of the participants had pre-existing relationships, in four groups the participants had met before or had pre-existing relationships, and one group had a mixture of both. For groups consisting of people who all knew each other, a getting-to-know phase was not necessary, however, I decided to implement this phase as a warm-up, which was helpful in setting an informal tone and helped participants to ‘warm-up’ for the actual discussion. I tried to initiate conversations by talking about non-academic related and personal topics, such as my trip back to Germany and some ‘funny’ experiences I had during the trip. The participants warmed up quite quickly and soon there was a lot of laughter which created a relaxed and informal atmosphere. The prepared finger food and provided hot and cold drinks aimed to contribute to this kind of atmosphere (see Image 3.3).

Image 3. 3 Snacks and drinks for “getting-to-know” phase

I recognised that in most focus groups we already started to talk about “German-Turkishness” during this phase, which was very interesting. I used this part as an opportunity to hand out the consent forms and information sheets to the participants to read and sign after they had ample opportunity to ask questions. However,
sometimes the conversations were very engaged, wherefore I distributed the consent and information sheets at the beginning of the official focus group discussions.

**The opening**

The opening phase is particularly important for setting the agenda for the interactions to come (Liljestrom, 2010). Therefore, I started the sessions with a short introduction describing the agenda, introduced myself and explained my motivation to conduct the research, whilst trying to include joke-telling and self-disclosure (Zeller, 1993), “in order to draw on a feature of ordinary conversation – in that when one person tells a story, frequently a listener will provide a ‘second story’” (Sacks, 1992, as cited in Liljestrom, 2010, p. 42).

**The discussion**

After the introduction, I presented participants with selected excerpts (Schulz, 2012) from German media coverage: an article from an online newspaper for the first discussion and an excerpt from a political talk show for the second (see Appendix 10.3). According to Morgan (2002, p. 148), in an ideal focus group the researcher asks questions at the opening and at the end of the focus group, “suggesting that the most effective focus group is one in which talk is unstructured, and participants become so engaged in discussing the topic that they need little assistance from the moderator” (Liljestrom, 2010, p. 43). This was the case for my focus groups, as participants actively discussed the presented excerpts without me intervening, after I asked broad questions such as “What do you guys think about this article/talk show?” at the beginning of the discussion.

By intervening as little as possible, but rather encouraging participants to discuss with each other (Wilkinson, 2004), I intended to avoid imposing any reference frame and explore the natural group interaction – the ‘hallmark’ of focus group research (Morgan, 1996, p. 12) – among participants. As mentioned above, the focus groups were planned to last approximately one hour. However, most of the discussions’ length were approximately two hours, which is a positive sign in terms of selecting appropriate topics which have the potential to produce and facilitate rich conversations. Lastly, it is important to mention that all group discussions were held
in German, apart from some Turkish expressions and words the participants used in their discussions.

3.2.3 Interviews

It was decided to conduct in-depth interviews as a supplement and support to the focus groups in order to clarify some points/questions my participants said/asked during the group discussions. As mentioned earlier, this was an opportunity to recruit more participants, specifically those who did not feel comfortable to take part in a focus group. Moreover, “[t]he use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin, 2012, p. 82. As I only ended up conducting three interviews, I am only briefly outlining this method and the process of conducting these individual interviews for this study.

According to Kvale (1996), the qualitative research interview has the purpose to receive information about participants life worlds. Within these life worlds, it is possible to analyse how participants discursively position themselves and each other (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) in relation to discourses around social integration in the media and to explore authentic insights into their experiences (Silvermann, 2011). In an interview, the interviewer and the interviewee jointly construct knowledge (Kvale, 2006; Mann, 2010; Sarangi, 1994). This knowledge might be affected by the socio-cultural background the interviewer and interviewees share, which Ganga and Scott (2006) refer to as “insider interview” (p. 2). This issue will be elaborated in detail in section 3.4.

In addition to the socio-cultural background, pre-existing relationships with participants might also affect the interview conversation and the produced knowledge. Interviewing participants with whom I have a personal relationship with might create a biased interview, which “certainly influences the nature of the co-construction (…) [and] can have important implications on what transpires in and is generated from an interview” (Mann, 2010, p. 20). Whereas individuals whom I do not know might experience difficulties in opening up, especially when the subject includes sensitive topics. Therefore, I decided to interview acquaintances and foreigners to eliminate any possible disadvantages of both options and to exhibit a greater variety of different
information, experiences and perspectives (Sandelowski, 1995). This combination proved successful for my MSc project and was hence repeated for this PhD study.

In order to analyse the conversation produced in the interviews (Rapley, 2001) it is highly important to be aware of the interview context, as each interview “produces situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes” (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p. 353, as cited in Mann, 2010, p. 9). This means that each interview carries its individual expectations, creating its structure and ultimately shaping each utterance (Briggs, 1986, as cited in Mann, 2010). The “truth” of the social world obtained in interviews is context specific, to fit the demands of the interactive context of the interview and representative of nothing more or less (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p. 132).

A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was selected, as its interactive nature helps researchers and interviewees to share sentiments and experiences (Kvale, 2007) and creates a context of conversational intimacy, which in turn encourages participants to feel comfortable and tell their story (Ramos, 1989) “as they see it, feel it, experience it” (Corbin & Morse, 2003, p. 339). As the nature of this study demands personal information about participants, such as feeling of belongingness or faith, the “gold standard” (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006, p. 390) face-to-face interviews are suitable. These are said to produce more detailed data while allowing the researcher to react more flexibly to statements and to establish rapport. While encouraging interviewees to give long elaborated answers, the interviewer has the chance to influence the focus of the conversation, ask follow-up questions and clarify statements (Friesen, 2010). Moreover, it is possible to give participants the chance to come up with specific and possibly relevant topics on their own (Braun & Clarke, 2013, as this can serve as an indicator of perceived importance.

**Interviews in writing**

Due to some participants who were willing to join but could not attend the focus group discussions physically, and some participants who either did not feel comfortable in joining a group discussion nor being interviewed face to face, I decided to send them the most important interview questions in written form (Appendix 10.2) to give these
participants the possibility to share their thoughts and be able to take part in the study. A total of 10 participants expressed their interest in filling in the form, however in the end only seven did. The data deriving from these forms have not been used in the analysis and interpretation process in this thesis. First, because the response rate was rather low with only seven forms. Second, because the focus groups already provided a great amount of relevant data, which not only gave insights into individual experiences but also to collective meaning-making. And third, the analysis of identity as constituted in linguistic interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) would have been challenging to conduct on written answers.

3.2.3.1 Conducting interviews

The amount of the interviews conducted are small considering the scope of the study. I only conducted three face-to-face interviews in total. However, as mentioned earlier, most participants were happy and comfortable to take part in the group discussions, which already generated a very high amount of valuable data.

Before the interviews, the participants were given the choice to talk in German, Turkish or both (Watzinger-Tharp, 2004; Çelik, 2015). The interviews were conducted in German only and lasted for about one hour. After an initial briefing (Kvale, 2007), I started the actual interviews with broad and general questions about participants’ background in order to explore which topics participants regard worth mentioning when talking about themselves. To provide a comfortable and unobserved feeling, observations and thoughts were noted after the interview as a supplement to the recording. The participants were offered to hold the interview at a place of their preference, to facilitate a rich conversation (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). After cancellation of the first interview by the interviewee for the pilot study, we held the interview using Skype. Unfortunately, the quality of the call was poor, which delayed and extended the interview and might have had an impact on the overall results. The other two interviews were held face to face.

I used a digital audio recorder and my mobile phone to record the interviews. In this regard, an information sheet (Appendix 10.10) was handed to the participants before the interview and a consent sheet was read and signed by the participants (Appendix
Waller and colleagues (2016, p. 88) claim that the effectiveness of an interview depends on the degree of established rapport between the interviewee and the interviewer. Interviewers “will need sufficient rapport that the interviewee feels comfortable providing full and honest responses (…)”. Having said this, I had pre-existing relationships with all three interviewees. I met one of them before the interview during the pilot focus group, where I could establish rapport.

### 3.2.4 Ethical considerations

Before conducting the pilot study, several steps were taken in order to meet the highest possible ethical standards. Firstly, a research ethics form was filled in and approved by Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick prior to conducting the focus groups and interviews (Appendix 10.6). Secondly, all participants were provided with an information sheet: one for focus group participation and one for the interviews (Appendix 10.10). Thirdly, a consent form – one for the focus groups and a separate one for the interviews – was signed by all participants (Appendices 10.7 and 10.8). This ensured anonymity and the right for the participant to withdraw at any stage of the project. Also, all names of the participants, as well as any kind of information that could give clues about their identity, have been changed to preserve anonymity (Research Students’ Handbook 2010-2021; Applied Linguistics, 2021).

In order for participants under the legal age of 18 to be able to take part in the study a signed consent from the parents was necessary. Thus, all parents were provided with an information sheet and signed the consent form on behalf of their children (Appendix 10.9).

### 3.3 Analytical processes

As indicated above, I used an inductive approach towards my data (Bryman, 2016). As within qualitative research, it was important to keep an open mind during coding and to allow new themes to emerge from the data (Bryman, 2016). The analytical process was circular, starting from surveying all data to then moving to the transcription process to then coding the data and moving back to surveying the data before emerging patterns and themes were identified. In this context, a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to discover, organise and systematically...
interpret emerging patterns, themes and clusters of meaning across the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57; Willig, 2013, p. 275). This approach allowed me to “make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57), which suits the focus of this study as it aims to explore the processes through which German-Turkish adolescents experience, describe and make sense of their social integration within the broader context of the German media landscape, both on an individual level and on a collective level as a group talking about their shared experiences and opinions.

To start the thematic analysis, I followed several steps (after surveying the data), the first of which was to transcribe the audio- and video-recorded data. All recorded focus group discussions and interviews were fully transcribed in the original language: German. Only some small sections that were not relevant to the focus of the study were omitted. I used a verbatim transcription style and included laughter, pauses, overlaps, and interruptions, as well as body language and other paralinguistic features, thus capturing how participants spoke and what they emphasised, to examine, for instance, the participants’ reactions to presented materials or certain themes (Fontana & Fay, 1994, as cited in Poland, 1995, p. 291). During this phase of transcription, I did not use the accurate transcription conventions with detailed interactional features, but a rather ‘loose’ style in which I indicated, for instance, laughter for my own record but not with the specific symbols and signs presented in the transcription notations, to save time in transcribing more than 16 hours of data and to get an overall idea of the unprocessed information (Dornyei, 2007). During the later stages, I refined the transcription for the selected extracts of data that I was going to analyse in depth and that I translated to English to present in this study (see Appendix 10.11 for transcription notations used). While I translated selected examples for analysis into English, I tried to remain as accurate as possible to the original language. However, translating from the original language can still be problematic, as there were some phrases or words that were challenging to translate while still representing the same meaning. To help address this difficulty, one of my supervisors, who is a German native speaker, checked the translations. Moreover, I include the original German transcript together with the English translation in this thesis. The transcription was “an open ended-process in which the transcript changes as the researchers’ insights into
the talk are redefined through ongoing analysis” (Liddicoat, 2011, p. 26). For reasons of anonymity and to respect the rights and dignity of the participants, any information that could identify them was removed or changed after the transcription process (Denscombe, 2002; Fink, 2000).

After this first round of transcribing the raw data, I familiarised myself with the data by reading through the transcript several times to make comments and reflections (Denscombe, 2010). Hereby, I also aimed to identify patterns, similarities or differences between the focus groups (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and any other notable observations that stood out. I coded inter alia reoccurring phrases, words, statements, parallels between the groups, as well as prevalent themes – such as racism or integration – which seemed to be of importance to all groups and to most participants. Moreover, phenomena or attitudes such as humour, expressions of disappointment or feelings of inferiority were coded. During this stage, I also included fieldnotes that I took before, during and after each focus group. Here, I noted down observations, such as participant reactions to media articles and talk shows (before and after). Extreme facial expressions, body language and other notable observations were also detailed. I also noted down any of my own reflections after each focus group and my retrospective comments about feelings and impressions.

This pre-coding process aided me in identifying possible initial codes. Figure 3.1 shows the initial codes I identified whilst reading through the transcripts (the intensive coding was done at later stages), and Image 3.4 illustrates what this initial pre-coding process looked like.
Figure 3.1 Emerged codes and themes during initial round of coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Familiarisation → Noting patterns and themes → Adding reflections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*** Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Germanness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Turkishness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Feedback from participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Body language/paralinguistic features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Parallels between groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Difference to other groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Other notable observations/comments and reflections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After this initial round of coding and pattern identification, I went through the transcripts again to start an extensive round of coding and to extend the list of initial codes identified in Stage 1 (Figure 3.1). Creswell’s (2009) thematic coding...
process was used, from the “bottom to the top” (p. 183), which is “driven by what is in the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 58) and allowed for themes and categories to emerge that in turn refined and shaped the research focus and the guiding RQs (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Bryman, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Thomas, 2006, p. 238). I tried to generate codes that capture the richness of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998). The types of codes were diverse, ranging from single words, to phrases, to reoccurring words, similarities and differences, or codes that highlight a particular feature of the phenomenon, all of which are considered important and meaningful for the focus of the study, more specifically the guiding RQs (Denscombe, 2010). These codes were used to form categories and to identify topics and an index of key themes and subthemes (Boyatzis, 1998; Bryman, 2016), which addressed the overall RQs (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While forming themes, I looked for patterns, repetitions, metaphors, transitions, similarities and differences (Bryman, 2016, p. 586) as well as anything important in relation to the study’s topic and RQs being explored (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I arranged the data into different types and clustered similar topics together (Basit, 2003; Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2009). And, as with the circular process, I refined and reviewed all categories throughout the coding process (Bryman, 2016).

At this stage, I identified 19 themes plus seven subthemes (see Image 3.5). For each of these topics and themes I went through the transcripts again to identify relevant examples chosen across the focus groups to group under relevant themes and subthemes. This was not done to choose examples for the analysis chapters but to start the process of identifying relevant examples that reflect the identified themes at this stage. Up to this stage, I only included the focus group data in the coding process. The coding for the interviews was conducted separately. As I only conducted three interviews, this was more straight-forward and less time consuming. I adapted the same procedure as for the focus groups.
After the coding process, I created a mind map to identify meanings and to interpret my theme set, which helped to visualise all the themes and subthemes, make associations, see and better understand the interconnectedness and connections between categories, themes and topics, and to identify possible cause-and-effect...
relationships and categories of meaning (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Image 3.6 shows the mind map that I created addressing the first (main) RQ1 which laid the foundation for participants’ overall views and experiences of issues of social integration reflected in the German media and provided a backdrop against which identity construction is taking place (RQ2)
Image 3.6 Mind Map for RQ1
This mind map helped me to structure and cluster the codes and thereby narrow the themes down to five. Because RQ2 builds on RQ1, and because of the interconnectedness of these RQs, I was able to form three main themes for the analysis. As the thesis could not feature all of the examples due to constraints in scope, for the actual analysis I selected examples that best illustrated the main themes as reflected in the analysis chapters:

a. Chapter 4: Experiences of social integration (reflected in media and public discourses)
   i) 4.1: Explicit mentioning of identity
b. Chapter 5: Embracing Germanness and Turkishness
c. Chapter 6: Rejecting Germanness and Turkishness

Before turning to the analysis chapters, I will provide a detailed reflexive evaluation of my role as a researcher.

3.4 A critical self-reflection of my role as a researcher

In the course of this study, it is very important to reflect on my role as a researcher and critically “analyze how subjective and intersubjective elements influence” (Finlay, 2002, p. 531) my research process. In qualitative research, especially during (group) interviews, where the researcher and the participants form a special relationship, it is, for ethical and methodological reasons, highly important to reflect on the researcher’s own position in the research process critically (Sprenger, 2016). As the central figure, the researcher and her “methodological choices, interests, and subjectivities” (Mann, 2016, p. x Prefix) influence not only the data (i.e., collection, selection and interpretation) but also participant responses in interviews and interactions in focus groups, “thereby influencing the direction of findings” (Finlay, 2002, p. 531).

As discussed in section 3.2.2 there was a group with a dominant participant who compared to others in the group contributed more frequently to the discussion. As noted, I tried to ensure each participant had the chance to contribute and based on participant feedback and observations this has indeed been achieved. However, due to the risk that some participants still might have felt suppressed or uncomfortable to share certain thoughts, I made sure to select and present extracts from every focus group discussion to reflect not only all main themes but all participants’ voices.
2002, p. 531). Shaped by their socio-cultural background and certain cultural contexts (Guthey & Jackson, 2011), a researcher’s interpretations are based on what they hear, see, perceive and understand and “cannot be separated from their own background history contexts and prior understandings” (Creswell, 2009, p. 176). Researchers can never claim and capture entire objectivity (Denscombe, 2012; Denzin, 2012). “We only know a thing through its representations” (Denzin, 2012, p. 82). With reflexivity, however, “subjectivity in research can be transformed from a problem to an opportunity” (Finlay, 2002, p. 531).

The interaction between researcher and participant is a dynamic process of meaning negotiation and knowledge construction, which varies in different social contexts with different (actions of) social actors (Finlay, 2002; Sandelowski, 1994; Schwandt, 1998). Research is a co-construction between researcher, participant and their relationship (Finlay, 2002). I acknowledge that my background and my relationship with the participants – having pre-existing relationships with some and none with others – influenced the data generation, as well as its interpretation. The former in particular has certain advantages and disadvantages that must be acknowledged.

**Being an “insider”**

Given the above-mentioned importance of critical self-reflection of researchers in the research process, I must acknowledge that as a German-Turk myself, holding a similar socio-cultural background as my participants adds another level of responsibility to the critical self-reflection in my research process. Holding the same socio-cultural background as my participants had possible effects on the research process and outcomes. In empirical social sciences, research on the interviewer-interviewee relationship has received much attention (Welzer, 1990). However, “most articles in applied linguistics treat aspects of pre-existing or personal relationships as part of background information or ‘setting the scene’ (if they get mentioned at all)” (Mann, 2010, p. 19). Thus, an awareness of the effect of my role as the researcher with regard to my socio-cultural background, will help to reveal and unfold possible factors having an impact on the study (Letttau & Breuer, 2007). Each researcher forms a unique relationship with their participants and every researcher’s story would unfold in a different way with meanings negotiated in different ways (Finlay, 2002).
I am aware that the stories my participants shared with me and how they shared those stories may have been shaped by established rapport, but also the social similarities and differences between me and those I interviewed (Miller & Glassner, 2011). While this is a limitation on one hand, it serves as an advantage on the other. As a limitation, the rapid closeness that I established with participants due to ‘us being both German-Turk’ and the advantages that came with it (i.e., less hesitation to ask certain questions) is “easy to take-for-granted” (Ganga & Scott, 2006, p. 2). This can lead to assumptions and speculation, which de-authenticate the findings. Some scholars raise concern about insider research and its potential to lead to understandings taken for granted and thereby loosing important information (Anderson, 2012). To avoid this, it was crucial to “temper this with the realism that such status gives us (…)” (Ganga & Scott, 2006, p. 2). I always took a step back from the data analysis and asked myself if there were any assumptions that I might have made. This reflection was challenging at times, as there were moments where I was certain I “knew what they meant”. If a situation is too familiar “it may prevent us from recognising important patterns of practice” (Anderson, 2012, p. 539).

With the reflexivity and criticality towards myself and my role as a researcher, as well as the help of my supervisors who could identify possible assumptions from an outsider perspective, I was able to eliminate these assumptions, hopefully entirely. On a positive note, it seems however, that the participants themselves believed that “you know what we mean” as Melek stated: “It was good that you are a German-Turk too and know what I mean” (Es war gut, dass du auch Deutsch-Türkin bist und weißt was ich meine).

Regarding the advantages, I observed that the informal and relaxed atmosphere that was partly created by the social proximity I had with the participants, and that participants had with each other regardless of their relationship to each other, were possible factors that contributed to a more in-depth and open discussion. Sena, for instance, describes how comfortable she felt with a group sharing the same background and who can relate to each other’s experiences: “I find it was very good that we are all German-Turks, because in this way we understand each other so much better” (“Ich finde das ist richtig gut, dass wir alle Deutsch-Türken sind, weil wir uns dadurch viel besser verstehen”).
Similarly, Meryem further added to this sentiment. She said: “I felt comfortable to talk about private stuff. If you would’ve been German, it would have been different. Probably we wouldn’t have said the same things” (“Ich fand’s enstpannt über private Sachen zu reden. Wenn du Deutsche gewesen wärst, wäre es anders gewesen. Wir hätten wahrscheinlich nicht die gleichen Sachen gesagt”). This is a crucial statement, as it challenges researchers researching a group whose community they do not belong to, in this case a “German”, researching German-Turks.

This is supported by Wertz’s (1984, p. 39) claim that the presence of researchers “in interviews or observations can be responsible for omissions and even fabrications which are mistaken as valid data”. While Meryem’s statement and viewpoint does not represent all other participants, it is still strong to validate and confirm the “insiders” advantage in receiving authentic data. Moreover, all participants’ feedback regarding their feelings during the focus groups towards me as the researcher and the topic generally was very positive and very similar to those presented in this section.

Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1996) argue that researchers who have a different background from the focus group participants are exposed to the risk of constructing some in the group as “Other”. Having a similar background to the participants is one possible strategy to minimize this risk (Smithson, 2000), which is reflected in Toprak’s feedback: “I have a totally different feeling of trust towards somebody, who has the same background as me … who understands me” (“Ich habe ein komplett andereres Vertrauensgefühl jemandem gegenüber der den gleichen background hat wie ich … der mich versteht”). This again illustrates the advantages of a strong researcher-participant relationship and its access to authentic (and probably more) data. For instance, for each focus group I anticipated a one-hour discussion. However, each focus group took double the amount of time, some even more (see section 3.2.1). This shows the participants’ willingness to discuss issues under investigation, as well as hints at a positive atmosphere where talk was fostered and facilitated.

I regard it as my duty to try and use the above-mentioned advantages of my background and of being a member of the group I studied in the most fruitful way. It was my responsibility to make use of my position as an in-group member to interpret
participants’ responses and insights in the most accurate and authentic way – in a way that perhaps a non-member of the group could not – to share it with the scientific and the non-scientific communities and the public generally, with the purpose to make participants’ voices heard and taken seriously. So that those, who disappear within the large, scientifically and publicly generalised, homogenous group of “Turks” in Germany; those whose voice are subdued, can be heard. More qualitative in-depth research is needed to study migrant and minority groups to explore their life worlds from their perspective.

The following chapters proceed to the analysis of the most prominent themes that emerged from the focus group data.
Chapter 4: Challenging Mainstream Discourses of Social Integration

The overarching umbrella theme that emerged from the focus group discussions is: “Challenging mainstream discourses of social integration”. This chapter lays the foundation for participants’ overall experiences and views of mainstream discourses of the social integration of German-Turks as discussed in the media and reflected in public discourses. This chapter thus addresses RQ1 and is the basis for the subsequent analysis chapters. Chapter 5 elucidates how participants embrace Germanness and Turkishness and Chapter 6 illustrates how Turkishness and Germanness are rejected by participants. Both chapters establish these activities of rejecting and embracing against the background of participants’ overall experiences of issues of social integration and focus particularly on their identity construction and negotiation. Throughout the focus group discussions participants repeatedly challenged and resisted mainstream discourses of social integration related to German-Turks living in Germany. They did so by portraying themselves as integrated individuals (a point I will also elaborate in more detail in the next analysis chapters), by rejecting the mainstream terminology of integration, and by resisting the stereotypical images often associated with German-Turks. Although participants challenge and resist these discourses, they at the same time orient towards the ideologies and reproduce the knowledge that is created by them. They orient towards power asymmetries reinforced by stereotypical discourses of German-Turks but can only establish themselves in opposition to these discourses by drawing on them. This reveals the power of media and public/mainstream discourses on those who are positioned as integrators in these discourses. While the study is influenced by CDA works overall, in this chapter I am trying to tease out these power asymmetries. Hence this chapter, whilst performing discourse analysis, is particularly influenced by CDA ideas and scholarship which helped me to analyse the interactional focus group data in relation to broader contextual aspects of media and mainstream discourses.

In what follows, I will first provide brief background information on mainstream discourses of social integration in Germany (discussed in detail in the literature
4.1 Mainstream discourses of social integration

As elaborated in the literature review, there is ample evidence that the German media landscape is characterised by discourses of ethnic tension, migration, integration and assimilation in relation to German-Turks (e.g. Mora, 2009; Orendt, 2010; Ramm, 2010). Their cultural differences such as ‘language, religion, physical features, behavioural differences’ (Mora, 2009, p. 616) together with their quantitative intensity in Germany have attracted much attention in the media as well as in political debates since the introduction of the “guestworker” programme. This attention was (and is) often paid to integration and assimilation developments of “Turks” residing in Germany or German-born Turks which – taking into consideration the high numbers of Turkish origin individuals in Germany – presents mostly negative statistical values with regards to (social) integration. It is thus not surprising that these presentations and discourses created (and keep creating) a negative public image of this minority group, an image of people who are unwilling or unable to integrate and assimilate (Ehrkamp, 2006).

This negative opinion is still reflected in much current media coverage. Topics frequently deal with the integration of German-Turks and a high number of articles deal with the identification levels of this group, to both Germany and Turkey. Headlines such as “How well are German-Turks integrated? ARD makes a fact check” (“Wie integriert sind Deutschtürken? ARD macht den Faktencheck”) (Holthoff, 2018) reflect this type of media coverage. Further, media coverage typically presents a vision of German Turks being stuck between two cultures (e.g. “German Turks: strangers in their homeland” – “Deutschtürken: Fremd in der Heimat”) (Özer, 2018). A vast amount of media coverage on German-Turks is found in relation to Turkey’s current President Recep Tayyip Erdogan – who is generally presented negatively as a dictator, heavily “Islamising” the country. This trend is reflected in headlines such as: “Why so many Germanturks hail to Erdogan – If you don’t want us well then Erdogan” (“Warum so viele Deutschtürken Erdogan zujubeln – ‘Wenn ihr uns nicht wollt dann eben Erdogan’”) (Beitzer, 2018) or “More and more Germanturks regard Turkey as
Their home” (“Immer mehr Deutschtürken betrachten die Türkei als Heimat”) (Schulte von Drach, 2018) (see Appendix 10.4 for some examples of headlines and images). These types of articles may seem unproblematic at first sight, but they create (dangerous) “us” versus “them” dichotomies, situating German-Turks in the heavily disputed Erdogan category as well as portraying them as a minority that favours Turkey over Germany, thus as being not willing to integrate. This harms integration on many levels as it creates frustration on both sides, the majority society and the minority groups. In this vein, one of the participants in my study, Onur, said in an ironic and sarcastic tone of voice: “All Turks are associated with Erdogan (.) everyone is supporting him” (“Alle Türken werden mit Erdogan in Verbindung gebracht (.) alle unterstützen ihn ((ironischer und sarkastischer Stimmton))”).

Opposing to this trend, newspaper articles increasingly deal with discrimination experiences of German-Turks and their struggle to never be fully accepted as “German” in Germany, reflected in headlines such as “Germanturks: ‘I am not perceived as German by Germans’” (“Deutschtürken:’Ich werde von Deutschen nicht als Deutscher angesehen’”) (Ağirbaş & Mucha, 2018). This development is supported by media companies trying to talk about stereotypes and cliches of Turks in Germany to problematise their stigmatisation. Such articles are crucial to spread awareness about migrants’ struggle to belong and be accepted by society and about the pervasiveness of discrimination and racism in Germany to date. However, the representation of Turkish-origin Germans generally, both in media and in public discourse, is still rather negative and focuses on differences, foreignness and the “duty” to integrate. Discourses that position Turkish immigrants and their descendants as “Other” have a stronger influence on public perception than alternative discourses that construct belonging and diversity in a positive and favourable way (Merten, 2013).

Media representations (or exclusion) of ethnic minorities strongly influence the social integration of respective minorities (Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011). The way in which these individuals and/or social groups are labelled, racialised, and othered intensifies and emanates the ways in which the public perceives (and reproduces) stereotypes (Lippmann, 2018). The second generation, born in the country, do not have a
migration experience and are not new to the German society to which they are supposed to adapt (Crul & Schneider, 2010). To date, Turkish descendants are living in the third, fourth and possibly fifth generation in Germany. Nevertheless, calls for their integration are still being made (Moffitt et al., 2018). This poses many problems for this group in terms of acceptance, discrimination, belonging and social integration. Together with the first and second generation, they report frequent discrimination (Pollack et al., 2016). Regardless of already existing levels of integration or efforts to integrate, being socialised with the society they were born in and possessing all the cultural and societal requirements, they are still positioned and regarded as “Other”. This development mobilises them as a key discussion of identity and belonging in contemporary Germany. A stigmatisation as such makes full social acceptance (Canales, 2000) and hence social integration challenging and already existing (social) integration levels are likely to decline (Kakalic, in press). Only by reshaping migration and integration discourses in Germany can this downward development be combatted. The importance of inclusivity, diversity and understanding of a German identity that does not exclusively include “white individuals without a ‘migration background’” (Moffitt et al., 2018, p. 14) must be highlighted more strongly and frequently in mainstream discourses.

During the focus group discussions, participants expressed their awareness of this situation and discuss stereotypical and mainstream discourses often assigned to the German-Turkish community in Germany. While addressing these discourses, the overall stance of participants throughout all focus groups was a rejection and challenge of mainstream discourses around issues of social integration of German-Turks. Except for one participant, Cansu, who is the only participant who accepts mainstream portrayals of Turkish-Germans around social integration to some extent. Cansu argues: “Sometimes for me it’s for example that I feel it the way I read it ((articles about German-Turks in Germany)) like the way it is portrayed” (“Also manchmal ist es für mich zum Beispiel das ich das wirklich so empfinde wie ich’s lese also wie es da auch dargestellt wird”). While Cansu sometimes finds that stereotypical images of German-Turks have some degree of truth in them: “It’s a cliché but it is confirmed it is well you see it so often that you somehow say okay that’s gonna become a cliché right?” (“Das ist ein Klischee aber es wird ja bedient es ist ja also man sieht es ja so
However, the rest of my study’s participants consistently challenge mainstream discourses of social integration in relation to German-Turks in Germany. In terms of background/independent variables, it is noteworthy that Cansu, being the only one adopting/accepting (to some extent) “cliques” and stereotypes often set out by mainstream discourses discussed in the focus groups, she is one of the few participants who did not receive higher education but did her apprenticeship as a buyer straight after secondary school. This can be an indication of the relevance of education and social class playing a role in participants’ identity positioning and will be discussed in chapter 7.

Participants’ strong urge to talk about issues of integration and the relation of this phenomena with the German-Turkish community was observable in all focus group discussions, as well as in the pre-discussion stage (see section 3.2.3). Even without the prompts I gave at the beginning of the actual focus group discussions (with selected excerpts from media articles), participants made issues of integration relevant during the “getting-to-know” phase. This was amplified by participants’ often emotional, irritated and angry reactions as well as their many humorous comments during the discussions. As explained earlier, whilst talking about issues of social integration, participants challenge and resist the stereotypical images of German-Turks circulating the media and public discourses. One of their ways of challenging these discourses is by portraying and constructing themselves as integrated individuals, which I will elaborate in the next section.

4.1.1 Portraying themselves as integrated individuals

One reoccurring observation is that participants often portray themselves as integrated. In this regard, the overarching stance of participants throughout all focus groups can be summarised as follows: “Integration has nothing to do with us anymore”. This sentiment is nicely illustrated by Toprak and Betül in the following two examples:

**Example 4.1: “Why is integration still associated with us?”**
Context: We are talking about the terrorist attack in New Zealand when Toprak suddenly interrupts to talk about integration.
Toprak: I would like to say something about this integration thing (xxx) I- I feel THIS when someone’s talking to me about INTEGRATION [loud and angry tone of voice] then I- I DON’T UNDERSTAND why this- this word integration is still associated with US! [angry tone of voice and irritated facial expression] (. ) INTEGRATION this word also didn’t exist during the time when Grandma and Grandpa came to Germany IT DIDN’T EXIST! [angry tone of voice and irritated facial expression] (. ) integration evolved when people were FLEEING (. ) integration evolved when people immediately after having been attacked came here to Germany (. ) RIGHT! (. ) One should have talked about integration during that time (. ) where the early 70’s when the guest workers started one should have brought the word integration into the world and could’ve showed these people a way

What is particularly noteworthy in this exchange is that Toprak interrupts the discussion by initiating a drastic topic change and specifically mentions integration,
so that we all shift to discussing this new topic. The interruption takes place to clarify her opinion of integration and to discuss it further. She refers to the integration issue as an “integration thing” in line 1 (“Integrationsding”) and distances herself from it. By describing integration as a “thing” she diminishes the importance of the term (“it’s just a thing”), she thereby expresses her aversion to the term integration. Moreover, the word “thing” can be used as a substitute for a term that is well known to the group. Toprak might assume background knowledge about integration and that all other participants are familiar with the term already. The term “thing” also indicates that the term is understood and ubiquitous. She thereby assumes in-group membership – a topic which will be elaborated in detail in the next chapter.

This means that, already in the first sentence, Toprak is challenging the phenomena of integration, especially rejecting the fact that it is linked to German-Turks. Particularly significant with regards to the latter is her statement in lines 3 to 5. With an angry tone of voice she claims that she does not understand “why this- this word integration is still associated with US!” (lines 3 – 4) (“warum dieses dieses Wort Integration immer noch mit UNS in Verbindung gebracht wird!”). Toprak is infuriated and her strong emotional reaction seems to be directed towards the everlasting and omnipresent discourses of integration and German-Turks. The use of the pronoun “us” illustrates a contrast of “us” versus “them” that mainstream media has reinforced and that Toprak reproduces (Mooney & Evans, 2019). This shows the power of media discourse to produce ideologies that manifest in minority groups own discourse (Blackledge, 2005; Van Dijk, 1996). Moreover, by using the pronoun “US” and emphasising it, she signals membership in the German-Turkish community. The topic of group membership is an important part of individuals’ identity construction and will be elaborated in more detail in the next chapter.

Within these far-reaching discourses of integration and assimilation in Germany, the Turkish community has been the main focus, as established in earlier sections. Schneider (2001) claims that “the Other” in public and everyday discourses in Germany are “the Ausländer (“foreigner”) and the role of the prototypical Ausländer is most prominently played by the German Turks” (p. 351). In the focus groups, almost all participants claim that they, “the Turks”, “as long as you have a migration
background you are and you will remain the Ausländer” (“Solange du einen Migrationshintergrund hast bist und bleibst du ein Ausländer”) (Bora). As described before, this term is burdened with negative associations (Ramm, 2010) such as people who are not integrated and perform poorly socio-economically. These practices are partly created by the powerful media and became a symbol of difference between white Germans and “foreigners” (Blackledge, 2005). Just like media, political discourse locates such practices as markers of difference (Blackledge, 2005, p. 185).

Thus, Toprak is not only challenging the term integration, but she is also challenging and rejecting mainstream and stereotypical discourses of Turks’ social integration. In lines 5 to 6, Toprak then moves on to talk about integration during the “guest worker” period. With a loud and an angry tone of voice she claims that “INTEGRATION this word didn’t exist during the time when Grandma and Grandpa came to Germany IT DIDN’T EXIST!” (“INTEGRATION dieses Wort gab es auch nicht zu der Zeit wo Oma und Opa in Deutschland angekommen sind das GAB ES NICHT!”). She implicitly questions the timing of integration policies to be implemented and/or when discourses around these started and announces that “integration evolved when people were FLEEING (.) integration evolved when people immediately after having been attacked came here to Germany” (lines 8 – 10) (“Integration entstand als Menschen GEFLÜCHTET sind (.) Integration entstand als Menschen unmittelbar nachdem sie angegriffen worden sind hier in Deutschland angekommen sind”). In this sentence, she claims that integration already started in this period and she links it to the struggles and problems migrants had, which makes this statement very emotional. At the same time, Toprak finds that the German state “had never planned for the future when initiating guest-worker recruitment” (Ehrkamp, 2006, p. 1684) and thus has failed to think about immigration consequences for the descendants of “guest workers”. For Toprak, one consequence is that “integration is still associated with us” (line 4) (“Integration [wird] immer noch mit UNS in Verbindung gebracht [...]”).

In her subsequent utterance it becomes clear that she suggests that integration should have been an issue when the first “guest workers” arrived in the country, which can be observed in the following statement: “One should have talked about integration during the time (.) where the early 70s when the guest workers started one should have brought the word integration into the world” (lines 10 – 13) (“Integration hätte man
zu der Zeit … wo die frühen 70’er Jahre als die Gastarbeiter anfingen hätte man dieses Wort Integration in die Welt bringen können”). She thereby also positions the word integration as old-fashioned and outdated. Moreover, she claims that while integration already started with people immigrating to Germany, the government, society and public should have started to implement effective integration policies to help “show these people a way” (line 13) (“diesen Menschen einen Weg zeigen”). Finally, during Toprak’s speech, all other participants were nodding and showing their agreement, which suggests that they support Toprak’s attitude and standpoint towards integration. By using “should” Toprak hints to a reference of requirement that the government should support people with a migration history, who newly arrived in the country (Blackledge, 2005), relegating the government’s responsibility in the integration of its migrants to support them and protect them by “showing them a way”.

This example shows that integration, as well as its profound association with German-Turks, is strongly challenged and rejected by constructing it as outdated and unjustified to “still” link it with individuals of Turkish descent. Against this backdrop, the following example exemplifies how another participant, Betül, rejects the idea of “getting integrated” by portraying herself as fully integrated.

**Example 4.2: “I DON’T WANT to get integrated!”**

Context: Participants are discussing the Nazi period in Germany. They argue that the current society is not responsible for what happened but that they should accept the past.

1 Betül: I just think one has to accept the past (. ) the past of the Germans IS just)
2 the way it //is\)
3 Bora: /Yes\ it’s not the society’s (. ) //the current society’s fault\)
4 Toprak: /Of course it’s not their fault yes\)
5 Betül: /It’s not their fault but\ out of respect to the past out of respect to the
6 FATHERS OF ORIGIN (slow pronunciation and loud tone of voice)
7 from the current generations (. ) one therefore shouldn’t (. ) how can I
8 say (. ) shouldn’t be arrogant you know (. ) one shouldn’t praise oneself
9 for being German, well if I would be a German (. ) BEST example (. ) I
DON’T WANT to get integrated 22 (. ) I am now going to be a legal assistant then I’ll study law so I AM practically fully integrated! But I would never refer to myself as German (. ) I would even curse myself for saying I am a German (. ) look it’s come this far with me already.

Betül: Ich find’ man hat einfach die Vergangenheit zu akzeptieren (. ) die Vergangenheit von den Deutschen die IST halt nun mal //so \ Bora: /Ja\ dafür kann die Gesellschaft also //die jetzige nichts \ Toprak: /Die können natürlich nichts dafür ja \ Betül: /Die können zwar nichts dafür aber \ aus Respekt vor der Vergangenheit aus Respekt vor den HERKUNFTSVÄTERN (den) jetzigen Generationen (. ) sollte man einfach (. ) demzufolge keine (. ) wie soll ich sagen keinen Hochmut schenken weißt du (. ) man sollte sich nicht selbst damit loben Deutscher zu sein (. ) Also wäre ich’n Deutscher (. ) BESTES Beispiel (. ) ICH WILL mich gar nicht integrieren LASSEN (. ) ich werde Rechtsanwaltsfachgehilfin jetzt bald ná danach studiere ich Jura also ich BIN quasi voll integriert (. ) ICH würde von mir selbst aber niemals behaupten ich bin Deutscher (. ) ich würde mich sogar verfluchen zu sagen ich bin Deutscher (. ) guck mal so weit ist es schon bei mir

Betül starts this exchange by commenting that “one” (“man”)23 has to accept the past (referring to Nazi Germany and World War II). By using the word “man”, she excludes herself and describes others in this claim. In the second part of her statement, she refers to “the Germans” (line 1) (“den Deutschen”), thereby she constructs herself in opposition to the German community. Bora and Toprak join this opposition by using...
the pronoun “their”, while describing the society, and position themselves outside of the German community by commenting that “Yes it’s not the society’s (.) the current society’s fault” (line 3) (“Ja dafür kann die Gesellschaft also die jetzige nichts”) and “Of course it’s not their fault yes” (line 4) (“Die können natürlich nichts dafür ja”). Thereby, they jointly construct a “we” versus “them” dichotomy, where “we” stands for the non-Germans and “them” for the German society. Van Dijk (2006) states that “us/them” “distinctions are one of the most pervasive in persuasive language” (as cited in Mooey & Evans, 2019, p. 48). As mentioned previously, the identity construction of participants will be elaborated in Chapters 5 and 6, hence I will not go into detail of identity construction in this chapter.

Betül then repeats that “out of respect to the past and the FATHERS OF ORIGIN” (lines 5 – 6) (“aus Respekt vor der Vergangenheit aus Respekt vor den HERKUNFTSVÄTERN”) one should accept the past and “shouldn’t praise oneself for being German” (lines 8 – 9) (“man sollte sich nicht selbst damit loben Deutscher zu sein”). Although she states that “it is not their fault” (line 5) (“Die können zwar nichts dafür aber”), she at the same time implies that the current generation in Germany should not be proud of themselves in light of what happened during Nazi Germany. She goes on and puts herself in the position of “a German” (line 1) (“ein Deutscher”) and explains what she would do: “Well if I would be a German” (line 9) (“Also wäre ich’n Deutscher”) and constructs herself as non-German. Like Toprak in the first example, Betül implies a requirement that Germans should not be proud to be German in the context of Germany’s Nazi history. Betül exercises a level of authority, a position of “Germans” as ones to avoid. She strategically assigns the usually inferior and undesirable position of ethnic minorities to “Germans”. She draws on demeaning processes done to minorities by superior more powerful groups and uses these processes to demean the powerful (Mooneey & Evans, 2019).

Another important part of this exchange is when she then jumps to talk about integration and emphasises: “I DON’T WANT to get integrated. I am now going to be a legal assistant then I’ll study law, so I am practically fully integrated!” (lines 9 – 11) (“ICH WILL mich garnicht integrieren LASSEN (.) ich werde Rechtsanwaltsfachgehilfin jetzt bald ná danach studiere ich Jura also ich BIN quasi
voll integriert!”). Betül rejects the very idea of “getting integrated” by others, especially into “being German” and thus reinforces an outsider status. Interestingly, she does not specify by whom or what she does not want to get integrated into. Rather, she clearly states that she does not want this to be “done to her”. She clearly claims that she is fully integrated already and that therefore, there is no need to make efforts to integrate any further – neither by herself nor by another entity.

In this quote, she constructs integration as something that is forced upon her by an external entity, which remains anonymous (but could be related to society, government etc.). She clearly emphasises in a loud and certain tone of voice that she does not want to get integrated. Another interesting point to make about this part of her statement is that she argues she is “practically fully integrated” (line 11) (“ich bin quasi voll integriert”), with the adverb “practically” signalling doubt and the adverb “fully” serving as a booster for claiming that she is integrated.

According to Betül, she is integrated already but she “would never refer to [her]self as German” (lines 11 – 12) (“ICH würde von mir selbst aber niemals behaupten ich bin Deutscher”). Similar to Toprak in example 4.1, Betül implies that integration is not an issue for her anymore and that she can be integrated without “being German”. This line of argument challenges the concept of (social) integration as reflected in mainstream media, which Mueller (2006, p. 14) defines as “turning Turks into Germans”. Betül does not, however, determine as what she would identify with in this statement. But interestingly, she ends her statement by pointing out “I would even curse myself for saying I am a German” (lines 12 – 13) (“ich würde mich sogar verfluchen zu sagen ich bin Deutscher”). She thereby underlines that she would never refer to herself as German, thus positioning herself in opposition to the German community and constructing herself as non-German. Moreover, by maintaining to “curse” (“verfluchen”) herself for saying she is German, she puts a negative stance and aversion towards this identity. Her last point “look it’s come this far with me already” (line 13) (“guck mal so weit ist es schon bei mir”) shows that the production of a negative public image creates Othering and in turn affects the self-perception (Bonfadelli, 2007; Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019) of German-Turks who then produce
stronger identification towards their culture of origin and alienation towards the country they were born and grew up in. → Indicate begin fed up….

The two examples discussed in this section have demonstrated how mainstream discourses of social integration are challenged by my participants who reject the idea of having to be integrated and who rather portray themselves as integrated individuals. In the next section I look at some more examples where participants challenge and reject mainstream discourses of social integration – this time with a particular focus on how they challenge the terminology of integration.

4.1.2 Challenging the terminology of integration

Another reoccurring theme is that in their comments, participants frequently challenge the terminology often used in the context of social integration. There is a struggle in terms of how different conceptualisations and definitions of integration are used in different contexts, particularly because the term integration is dealt with in many different ways and one can say that there is no consensus on its meaning, not only in the German context but internationally. The following example illustrates this in the context of participants’ perception and how they challenge mainstream public definitions of (social) integration.

Example 4.3: “We have to talk about integration.”

Context: Participants are talking about the acceptance of Turkish people and Islam (mostly associated with Turks) in German society. They agree that Turks and Islam are not yet fully accepted in German society. However, they claim that Turks and Islam will be accepted in the future due to the large Turkish community in Germany, which positively contributes to German society in terms of better employment and education, to name but few.

1 Yesim: You say that something is going to change, do you think our or the next generation have arrived ((integrated))? Do we still have to talk about integration?
2 Memo: Eeehm (.) well actually we have arrived ((are integrated)) (.) that’s right
3 (.) and I still think that we have to talk about integration especially
BECAUSE I indeed think that the problem is actually that a lot of Germans or all (. ) ehm or a lot out of all [laughs] (. ) ehm (. ) have the wrong idea about integration. For them it’s like + everyone has to do what I do (. ) right they have to be like me (. ) so and however that is in my understanding not integration (. ) integration for me is just to belong (. ) to accept laws and so on (. ) but my culture I can do whatever I want my culture is my culture and I can live it without harming anyone else. For many (. ) which I also see when I drive the cab talking with them (. ) integration is always + for example eating pork then you are integrated right [laughs]

[Joint laughter]

[...]

Cemil: When I go somewhere then they say ‘Yes: we also have extra stuff without pork meat’ [laughs] How do you know I don’t eat pork?

Batu: /Yes:: man [laughs]\n
Levent: /[laughs] Exactly\n
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Yesim: Du sagst es wird sich was ändern, findest du unsere oder die nachkommenden Generationen sind die nicht schon angekommen? Muss man da noch über Integration reden?

Memo: Eeehm (. ) also eigentlich sind wir schon angekommen (. ) das ist schon richtig (. ) und ich finde aber schon das wir über Integration reden müssen ganz besonders WEIL ich glaube nämlich dass das Problem eigentlich das ist das viele Deutsche oder alle (. ) ehm oder viele von allen [lacht] ehm (. ) den Begriff Integration falsch verstehen. Für die ist so Integration + alle müssen das tun was ICH tue (. ) so die müssen sein wie ich (. ) so und das ist in meinem Verständnis aber nicht Integration (. ) Integration ist für mich einfach dazugehören (. ) Gesetze zu akzeptieren und so weiter (. ) aber meine Kultur kann ich machen was ich will meine Kultur ist meine Kultur und ich kann die ausleben ohne jetzt jemand anderem zu schaden. Für viele (. ) merk ich auch wenn ich im Taxi mit denen rede (. ) ist für die Integration immer
Memo’s statement is a response to my question about whether he thinks that current or coming generations of German-Turks are integrated and if we still need to talk about integration. While I am giving the prompt about integration, it is interesting to see Memo’s standpoint towards integration and German-born Turks. First of all, he believes that “we have arrived” (line 4) (“wir sind angekommen”). Like Toprak in example 4.1, Memo is convinced that integration is not a problem for the current Turkish generation in the sense that they do not need to be integrated anymore. The difference between Toprak’s and Memo’s statement is, however, that unlike Toprak, Memo argues that “I still think we have to talk about integration” (line 5) (“ich finde aber schon das wir über Integration reden müssen”) showing that this topic is still an important issue in German society.

In both lines 4 and 5 he uses the pronoun “we” (“wir”). Interestingly, in line 4 he talks about “we” the “German-Turks”, claiming that they are integrated in German society. Thus, he positions himself within the German-Turkish community. In line 5, however, he refers to both communities, German-Turks, as well as Germans and all other citizens, by maintaining that “we”, i.e. everyone who lives in Germany and are confronted by integration discourses, have to talk about this phenomena as it is still an issue in German society.

Memo points to the importance of addressing integration because he claims that the term integration is understood incorrectly by Germans: “a lot of Germans or all (.) ehm or a lot out of all [laughs] (.) ehm (.) have the wrong idea about integration” (lines
(lines 6 – 8) (“viele Deutsche oder alle (. ehnm oder viele von allen [lacht] (. ehnm (. den Begriff Integration falsch verstehen”). He is creating a “we” versus “many” dichotomy – more specifically, “a lot of Germans” versus “we”, whereby “we” refers to the group membership of the Turkish community, as established in the above paragraph. The dynamic in which Memo positions himself as “one of them” and “one of us” shows the complex nature of belonging and identity construction – a point which will be elaborated in more detail in the next chapter.

With these comments Memo is clearly challenging and resisting the mainstream meaning and terminology of integration. While doing so, he tries to avoid generalising all Germans and that all Germans have the wrong idea about integration by correcting himself “a lot of Germans or all (. ehnm or a lot out of all [laughs]” (lines 6 – 7) (“viele Deutsche oder alle (. ehnm oder viele von allen [lacht]”), which can still be understood as a generalisation. This implies that while the overall understanding of integration is incorrect, in his opinion there are clearly (German) people who see integration the way he is seeing it, which is “integration for me is just to belong (. to accept laws and so on … but my culture I can do whatever I want with my culture is my culture and I can live it without harming anyone else” (lines 10 – 12) (“Integration ist für mich einfach dazuzugehören (. Gesetze zu akzeptieren und so weiter (. aber meine Kultur kann ich machen was ich will meine Kultur ist meine Kultur und ich kann die ausleben ohne jetzt jemand anderem zu schaden”). By imitating an imagined “German” Can claims that in the eyes of “Germans” (“Deutschen”) migrants are integrated when “everyone has to do what I do” (lines 8 – 9) (“alle müssen das tun was ICH tue”) and that “they have to be like me [German]” (line 9) (“die müssen sein wie ich”) in order to be integrated. This line of argument is supported by Mueller (2006, p. 14) who states that “[i]ntegration itself is an interesting concept from a German perspective. Essentially, it means turning Turks into Germans. Pluralism or multiculturalism has no say in the matter.”

Although Memo makes clear that this is his own understanding of integration (line 10), he is drawing on the German concept of integration as reflected in the mainstream media, which Mueller (2006, p. 14) defines as “turning Turks into Germans”. This perception is topical and was addressed by many participants who drew on these
concepts of integration. Betül, for instance, said “Germans say when you are integrated you know how to behave” (“Deutsche sagen wenn du integriert bist weißt du wie du dich benimmst”). This implies a requirement from Turkish-German’s to behave according to the normative broad cultural and societal values that define contemporary Germany and Germanness and indicates to its white supremacy that is the social structure undergirding all aspects of Othering processes. In integration and migration discourses, whiteness delineates the boundaries around who is considered “us” and racialized “others”. Betül challenges while at the same time reproduces this ideology. This statement illustrates the reproduction of “special discursive entanglements, which feed on the hitherto experienced and current life situation of those involved in the discourse” (M.Jäger, 1996, p. 47, as cited in Jäger, 2001, p. 49).

Memo stresses that integration does not mean assimilation and that he can still live with “his culture”: “but my culture I can do whatever I want my culture is my culture and I can live it without harming anyone else” (lines 11 – 12) (“aber meine Kultur kann ich machen was ich will meine Kultur ist meine Kultur und ich kann die ausleben ohne jetzt jemand anderem zu schaden”). Interestingly, when mentioning “his culture”, he does not specify which culture specifically he is referring to. Keeping in mind his background as a German-Turk, brought up with both cultures, he might refer to the Turkish culture, the German culture, or his own unique “complex position in, or between, two cultures” (Watzinger-Tharp, 2004, p. 285), the German-Turkish culture. Again, the overlap and interconnectedness of the cultures Memo grew up with can be observed as well as the dynamic nature of his identity construction and negotiation – a point that will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Memo uses a rather negative term by stating “without harming anyone else” (“ohne jetzt jemand anderem zu schaden”) because the Turkish culture is seen as negative and alien and “serve[s] as a prototypical incompatibility” (Schneider, 2001, p. 355) to the German culture. The way Memo describes it, living according to the Turkish culture is regarded as harmful in German society. Lastly, the fact that everyone is nodding during Memo’s speech showcases the participants’ agreement with his opinion on this matter.
In lines 14 to 15 Memo (and many other participants across the focus groups) states: “integration is always + for example eating pork then you are integrated right (.) [joint laughter]” (“ist für die Integration immer + zum Beispiel Schweinefleisch essen dann bist du integriert nä (.) [gemeinsames Gelächter]”). As described in earlier sections, Islam is mostly associated with individuals of Turkish origin and many living in Germany have been brought up with an Islamic lifestyle. Therefore, most of them do not eat pork, as this is considered a sin in the Islamic religion. Thus, referring to lines 13 – 15, giving up one of the rules in their Islamic religion (i.e., not eating pork) is, according to Memo, one step towards integration – as understood by “Germans”. This statement demonstrates how discourse is ideologically biased and polarises in- and out-groups (Van Dijk, 2001). Memo makes fun of “Germans” by reproducing the assimilation pressure put forth by wider German society and its integration debates. To some extent Memo, and the fellow participants, reclaim the discourse of “pork eating”. This was widely used by white Germans to challenge German-Turks an categorise them into the (negatively associated) group of Muslim by pushing this behaviour on them implicitly. Memo, Cemil, Batu and Levent, reclaim this discourse and use it as a positive marker of identity (Mooney & Evans, 2005, p. 159) that simultaneously enables them to be in control of the situation (Weaver, 2004, see also Kakalic & Schnurr, 2021).

In this regard, another participant (Betül) in another focus group points out “One should ask Germans on the street what is integration … they will come up with answers where you think how can a foreigner satisfy these requirements? What we wear, what we eat, how we treat others … everything” (“Man müsste auf der Straße Deutsche fragen was ist Integration … da werden Antworten kommen wo du dir denkst …. wie soll ein Ausländer dem gerecht werden? Was wir anziehen wie wir essen wie wir mit anderen umgehen … alles”). Just like Memo, Betül argues that for Germans, integration means “turning Turks into Germans” (Mueller, 2006, p. 14) and that in order to be integrated and accepted in society a person with another ethnic background basically has to give up all the cultural values, attitudes and even the language coming from their culture of origin. This line of argument is supported by Froehlich et al. (2019, p. 3) who claim that “[t]he sociocultural context in Germany for immigrants can be characterized by a strong assimilation pressure – the social climate for many
Cemil’s response in lines 18 and 19 is interesting with regards to this type of “assimilation pressure” as it serves two purposes: First, he is challenging people (imitated by him) who assume that he does not eat pork, thus that he is Muslim. Second, he provides room for the possibility that he does eat pork, thus already conforming with one of the demands within the assimilation pressure mentioned above. The laughter hints to a degree of ridicule of the people he imitates and a contestation of automatically assumed ideas about him. Thereby, he challenges stereotypes about Turks being Muslim and their eating habits. This is positively responded to by Batu with a lengthened “Yes: man [laughs]” (line 20) and Levent with “[laughs] Exactly”. Their laughter and affirming words signal shared understanding and support of Cemil’s claims as well as an attempt to challenge stereotypes.

This example illustrates how a participant challenges the terminology of integration by claiming that integration can happen and is still happening without losing or giving up ones’ “own culture”, which can be linked to the Turkish culture learned from one’s parents, the German culture, or one’s own unique culture in-between. In the next example, taken from another focus group, Toprak, another participant, goes one step further and talks about German-Turks who are not only integrated but fully assimilated. In Toprak’s opinion, those individuals have lost the connection to the Turkish community and the Turkish language. Thereby, Toprak questions associations of integration with German-Turkish descendants.

4.1.3 Resisting stereotypical images associated with German-Turks

I will now move on to discuss another reoccurring theme of the focus groups, namely those instances where my participants challenged mainstream discourses of social integration by resisting stereotypical images and portrayals of German-Turkish individuals. I have chosen two examples from two different focus groups to illustrate this.
Example 4.4: “We do everything that every other German also does!”

Context: Before this exchange we were talking about the terror attack on a Muslim mosque in New Zealand.

Toprak: Ok wait ((interrupts current speaker)) we speak the German language we pay taxes we do everything that every other German also does [very determined and serious tone of voice and serious facial expression] (.) so why is integration STILL associated with US? [nodding and agreement]

Bora: hmmm

Yesim: Exactly

Toprak: There was a huge assimilation wave. I know German-Turks who (. ) are SO MUCH assimilated that they don’t speak a word of Turkish that they don’t engage with Turkish politics with the Turkish culture (. )

All: hmmm [nodding and agreement]

Toprak: That they DON’T KNOW ANY Turkish community (. )

All: hmm [nodding and agreement]

Toprak: That they don’t have any Turkish friends so

Toprak: So warte ((unterbricht die andere Person)) wir sprechen die Deutsche Sprache wir zahlen Steuern wir machen alles was jeder andere Deutsche auch macht (.) [sehr überzeugter und ernster Tonfall und ernster Gesichtsausdruck] also warum wird Integration IMMERNOCH mit UNS in Verbindung gebracht?

Alle: [Nicken und Zustimmung]

Bora: hmmm

Yesim: Ganz genau

Toprak: Es fand es fand eine RIESIGE Assimilationswelle statt. Ich kenne Deutsch-Türken die (. ) SO assimiliert sind dass sie kein Wort türkisch sprechen dass sie sich nicht mit der Türkischen Politik auseinander setzen mit der Türkischen Kultur (. )

Alle: hmmm [Nicken und Zustimmung]
Toprak: Das die KEINE Türkische Community KENNEN (.)
Alle: hmm [Nicken und Zustimmung]
Toprak: Das sie keine Türkischen Freunde haben so

In this excerpt Toprak interrupts one of the other participants with an angry tone of voice to complain about the fact that integration is still associated with “US” (line 4) (“UNS”). She claims that “we” (lines 1 and 2) (“wir”) – thereby positioning herself in the Turkish community – “speak the German language we pay taxes we do everything that every other German also does” (lines 1 – 2) (“wir sprechen die deutsche Sprache wir zahlen Steuern wir machen alles was jeder andere Deutsche auch macht”). Interestingly, in the last part of this sentence she includes herself in the group of “every other German” (“jeder andere Deutsche”). In this vein, in lines 8 to 14, Toprak uses the pronoun “they” (“die/sie”) several times when referring to German-Turks and she thereby – in contrast to participants in the examples above – positions herself in opposition to this very community. Her monologue thus showcases the complexity of her belonging and identity, which will be further elaborated in more detail in the next chapter.

Toprak argues that although German-Turks “speak the German language, (…) pay taxes, (…) do everything that every other German also does” (lines 1 – 2) (“sprechen die deutsche Sprache wir zahlen Steuern wir machen alles was jeder andere Deutsche auch macht”) and have adopted “German” ways of living and behaviours and societal duties (which is what participants in the previous examples described as the requirement to be accepted as integrated in Germany) integration is “STILL” associated with them. This opinion is shared among most participants and is summed up by Sila, who participated in another focus group, who argues: “No matter how well I am integrated, I am always the outsider” (“Egal wir gut ich integriert bin, ich bin immer der Außenseiter”). “After all, the average German cannot reconcile ‘integration’ because foreigners have the label of an Ausländer, and are also different in terms of appearance and lifestyles” (Mueller, 2006, p. 14) as well as an alien culture (Kaya, 2007; Weaver et al., 2016).

Just like in the examples above, in this statement Toprak is challenging and resisting the mainstream discourses of integration associated with German-Turks. This
challenge is especially amplified when considering the fact that “German politicians cite the lack of assimilation on the part of Turkish immigrants and emphasize the need to preserve German norms and values and to assert and restore German normality” (Ehrkamp, 2006, p. 1688). Opposing this statement, Toprak claims that Turkish “immigrants” are already assimilated, whereby she simultaneously refers to being integrated, as can be seen in her first sentence where she rejects the association of integration with “US” (line 4) (“UN’S”). Toprak seems to use the words assimilation and integration interchangeably, which is in line with Ehrkamp’s (2006) claim that “[a]lthough the words [i]ntegration and assimilation are different, their meaning is often similar, if not the same” (p. 1675).

Toprak’s angry tone of voice, her facial expression and body language all indicate her anger/frustration as well as the fact that integration and social integration are still huge issues in Germany, especially with regards to German-Turkish individuals. In light of this “discrimination, it is not surprising that Turkish immigrants in Germany and members of their families assert their identities both as Turks and as Muslims” (Mueller, 2006, p. 19). In contrast to this claim, Toprak argues that “[t]here was a huge assimilation wave. I know German-Turks who (..) are SO MUCH assimilated that they don’t speak a word of Turkish that they don’t engage with Turkish politics with the Turkish culture (.).” (lines 8 – 10) (“Es fand es fand eine RIESIGE Assimilationswelle statt. Ich kenne Deutsch-Türken die (..) SO assimiliert sind dass sie kein Wort türkisch sprechen dass sie sich nicht mit der türkischen Politik auseinander setzen mit der Türkischen Kultur (.).”)

Thus, Toprak states that, despite discrimination and racism, there is a vast number of Turks who have assimilated and have given up or lost their attachment to the Turkish culture who “DON’T KNOW ANY Turkish community (.).” (line 12) (“Die KEINE Türkische Community KENNEN …”) and who “don’t have any Turkish friends” (line 14) (“Das sie keine Türkischen Freunde haben”). If we consider Mueller’s (2006) description of the German idea of integration “turning Turks into Germans” (p. 14), Toprak is referring to people who are by definition fully integrated. The aim of “turning Turks into Germans” is impossible and paradox as being German means having a German ancestry (Ditlmann et al., 2011). In this vein, Toprak describes
integration as happening at the cost of giving up on parts of the cultural background (and language) of their parents and ancestors. While she is talking about “them”, i.e., those others who are assimilated, she automatically excludes herself from this group, thereby implying that she has not lost her Turkish cultural belonging (yet). Having said this, once again, it becomes very clear that she is challenging the ideas of integration as propagated in mainstream discourses and is questioning their legitimisation. This emphasises the “harm associated with racialized, inequitable norms of belonging” (Moffitt et al., 2019, p. 849).

At the same time, Toprak rejects mainstream discourses from another perspective. As established earlier, mainstream discourses of social integration of German-Turkish descendants are characterised by negative notions, such as non-integrated people and people with very low socio-economic levels (Ramm, 2010) to name but a few. By claiming Turks have already “assimilated” (line 9) (“assimiliert”), she is clearly challenging these stereotypical discourses.

Like Memo and Betül in the previous examples, Toprak is implying that one can be fully integrated while maintaining the connection to Turkey. She talks about paying taxes, speaking the language and doing “everything like every other German also does” (line 2) (“alles was jeder andere Deutsche auch macht”). Melda, another participant who took part in another focus group, makes a similar comment:

“We have not become a community, we are still regarded as the foreign the other, one does not have the feeling that we are contributing to the gross national product and that the Germans are profiting from our success just like we are profiting from theirs, that we, just like them, finance Hartz IV recipients, that we are simply not seen, we are regarded as something outside, excluded, who do not belong.”

“Wir sind keine Community geworden, wir sind immer noch das Fremde das Andere, man hat nicht da Gefühl das wir was zum Bruttosozialprodukt beitragen, und das die Deutschen genauso von unserem Erfolg profitieren wie wir von deren Erfolg, das wir genauso Hartz4 Empfänger mitfinanzieren, das

24 Hartz IV is a welfare benefits and unemployment insurance reform project as part of the German government’s Agenda 2010, which took effect in January 2005.
Melda is describing people who adapt to the German society and fulfil their societal duties, who are integrated, as people who are still outsiders and as people who are “not seen” (“nicht gesehen”). This supports the fact that mainstream discourses produce strong generalisations and fully disregard people outside of these discourses. Once more, Melda’s and Toprak’s statements ratify the idea that no matter how well German-Turks are integrated, they are not seen as such due to their stereotypical depictions in mainstream societal discourses around these issues. Finally, like in examples 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, heavy nodding from all other participants (including myself) was observable during Toprak’s speech. These physical utterances are expressions of agreement demonstrate strong agreement with Toprak’s opinion and presumably similar experiences (of friends who do not speak Turkish very well or do not relate to their Turkish identity/heritage anymore).

This example illustrates how dominant discourses around integration in relation to German-Turks are challenged by resisting stereotypical images associated with the Turkish community in Germany – one of which portrays them as unintegrated individuals. Toprak’s statement nicely links to the next example, where another participant, Sena, rejects the way German-Turks are presented and represented in media articles by claiming that the socio-economic situation of German-Turkish people has strongly developed and integration issues are not topical anymore. While Toprak refers to general public and mainstream discourses of German-Turks around social integration, Sena explicitly touches on the media article presented to the focus group. In both examples, participants challenge, resist and reject the association of integration with the German-Turkish descendants in contemporary Germany.

**Example 4.5: “There are no integration issues nowadays”**

Context: This is the first comment at the very beginning of the focus group after we have read the first excerpt of an article which deals with negative evaluations of the socio-economic performances of German-Turks, such as education levels and employment (see Appendix 10.3).
Sena: Makes me angry somehow like it’s shocking well I think there are many prejudices that just aren’t true (.) and aren’t true anymore well maybe it was like that a hundred years ago [laughs] when someone came to Germany (.) that they didn’t make it because of the language that there were integration problems and so on, but this is nowadays simply not the case anymore we are all in sixth form ((gymnasium25))

[laughs]

All: [joint laughter, nodding and agreement]

Sena: Macht mich wütend irgendwie also ist schockierend also ich finde da sind sehr viele Vorurteile drinnen die einfach nicht stimmen (.) und nicht mehr stimmen also vielleicht war das vor hundert Jahren mal so [lacht] wenn jemand nach Deutschland kam (.) das sie es halt aufgrund der Sprache nicht geschafft haben das es Integrationsprobleme gab und so aber das ist heute einfach nicht mehr der Fall wir sind alle auf’m Gymnasium hier [lacht]

Alle: [gemeinsames Gelächter, alle nicken]

In this excerpt, Sena is rejecting and resisting the portrayal of German-Turks in the media. According to the article “the Türkischstämmigen” (“those with Turkish roots”) have statistically speaking less income, less housing space, less education” (Hartwich, 2017, Neue Bürcher Zeitung). Sena perceives this article to be full of prejudices which “aren’t true anymore” (line 2) (“nicht mehr stimmen”). However, she comments “anymore” (“nicht mehr”), whereby she implies that these negative performances were attributable to previous generations. Right after she comments: “maybe it was like that a hundred years ago [laughs] when someone came to Germany” (lines 3 – 4)

25 The uppermost educational level after elementary school, for a total of 12 or 13 years of elementary and secondary education. It is the track of education that prepares pupils for the Abitur, which is equivalent to A-Levels or the International Baccalaureate (IB).
(“also vielleicht war das vor hundert Jahren mal so [lacht] wenn jemand nach Deutschland kam”). By stating “maybe” (“vielleicht”) she does not even acknowledge that previous generations arriving and living in Germany had integration issues with reasonable certainty. Ultimately, she is challenging the topicality, propriety and validity of the article for previous as well as current generations of German-Turkish individuals, since these performances were “maybe (…) a hundred years ago” (line 3) (“vielleicht (…) vor hundert Jahren”).

Moreover, Sena’s laughter could be interpreted as a form of devaluation of the article and the credibility of its content. Hence, this paralinguistic feature – the laughter – strengthens her (implicit) attempt to devaluate and challenge mainstream discourses of social integration in relation to German-Turks, which is represented by that article. Furthermore, she talks about how previous generations of Turks (e.g., “guest workers”) arriving in Germany had to deal with integration issues (lines 3 – 5). She therefore portrays the younger generation of German-Turks, who were born in the country, as a group without integration issues and thus as fully integrated.

With a disappointed and angry tone of voice, Sena seems to believe that the article is over-generalising and does not present German-Turks who perform well socio-economically. This is in line with the opinion of another participant from another focus group, Melda, who alleges: “we are simply not seen” (“wir werden einfach nicht gesehen”). Being ignored and categorised with the stereotypical (and negative) image of German-Turks leads to a rather disappointed and angry reaction of Sena and most participants in the focus groups. Thus, in Sena’s view, the article does not represent the new generation of German-Turks and their socio-economic performance: “but this is nowadays simply not the case anymore we are all in sixth form ((gymnasium)) [laughs]” (lines 5 – 6) (“aber das ist heute einfach nicht mehr der Fall wir sind alle auf’m Gymnasium hier [lacht]”). She draws on herself and the other participants, who are her friends as well, and tries to emphasise that everyone participating in the focus group on that day is in sixth form, performing well in their education and is, thus, integrated. She thereby intensifies her claim that integration is not an issue anymore for current German-Turkish generations by taking herself and her friends as examples. Comments on performance in school, for instance that they “have to work twice as much as Germans” or that they perform well at school are often used as a justification
for showing that they are integrated was made by many participants. This is in line with previous research that found that academic self-efficacy is a buffer to protect themselves against the impact of discrimination (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2008). Finally, as described above, her laughter might be seen as a derogation of the article’s content and thus as “not to be taken seriously”. Like in all the examples discussed above, all other participants were nodding during Sena’s speech, which demonstrates agreement with her statement and opinion.

4.2 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter I started to address RQ1: “How do German-Turkish descendants experience issues of social integration currently discussed in the media and/or reflected in mainstream public discourses?” Throughout all focus group discussions, the overall perspective and attitude of participants towards integration of “Turks” in Germany can be summarised as “challenging mainstream discourses” around these issues. Participants’ perspectives and experiences are highly divergent from the mainstream discourses around this very issue. Rather than announcing that there is a need to be integrated, as it is presented in dominant discourses and media coverage, participants in the focus groups portray and construct themselves as the opposite: as already integrated or not in need of integration. This stance is underlined by Özhamaratli (n.d.), claiming that “unlike popular stereotypical mis-representation of Turkish immigrants in western discourse, the big proportion of them have become politically, socially, economically and culturally integrated and active agents in their country of settlement”.

In all examples, participants strongly resist, reject and challenge mainstream terminology and understanding of integration as well as mainstream discourses of social integration. They portray themselves as integrated individuals, who give importance to their various backgrounds they grew up and socialised with and that this does not mean to give up on that in order to be integrated (examples 4.1 and 4.2), which is similar to some scientific definitions of integration (see chapter 2). They, moreover, challenge the mainstream terminology of integration (example 4.3), and resist the stereotypical images associated with German-Turks (examples 4.4 and 4.5). These attitudes are supported by Ehrkamp’s (2006, p. 1676) claim that
“representations of immigrant groups in the media, and in political and public discourses of host societies, are integral to immigrants’ identity constructions”.

This statement emphasises the interconnection between negative public and mainstream discourses of German-Turks on the one hand, and the resistance and challenge of these stereotypical discourses by participants on the other hand. It also establishes an explicit link to identity construction because, as Ehrkamp (2006) claims, medial representations of individuals with diverse ethnic backgrounds and discourses around them are strongly influencing the identity construction of those presented in such discourses “as immigrants internalize, grapple with, and often contest and challenge such labels and ascriptions” (p. 1676).

Participants in this study claim that negative integration is unfairly and inappropriately associated with German-Turks. They repeatedly question the legitimation of being associated with integration discourses and argue to be in a position where there is no longer a need to discuss integration in relation to German-Turks. Their often sarcastic and biting tone of voice underlines this contestation and frustration. The analysis shows how the notion of integration is a power-laden process that those positioned as integrators struggle against. This is reflected also in participants’ ambiguous relationship with integration, which they use in different ways. On the one hand they use the term to establish themselves as integrated but do so by resisting its mainstream terminology and conceptualisation. On the other hand, they establish themselves as not integrated to challenge the mainstream understanding of the concept. They do so, however, by reiterating and reproducing these very mainstream integration discourses. Much of the participants’ own narratives reflect mainstream German discourses (e.g., of “harming” others by living differently – example 4.3). This demonstrates a difficult position of being “trapped in the discourse”, in which they struggle to position themselves as Germans or as Turks, as integrated or as not integrated, while reproducing and drawing on the discourses that they reject and contest. This shows the contradictions in participants’ narratives. Ultimately, the focus group interactions reflect problems of having to adopt part of the discourse to be able to reject aspects of it. For instance, participants announce that they “do not want to get integrated” and at
the same time claim to be already “fully integrated” (example 4.2), which indicates a contradiction in positioning.

Another contradiction that is apparent in the analysis is a rejection of generalisations that participants feel trapped into by society and by the media (i.e., into the group of “Turks” or “German-Turks”), while at the same time generalising themselves (i.e., “we German-Turks”, “we Turks” or “we Kanaks”) and others (i.e., “the/all Germans/Turks” or “the/those/all German-Turks”). This highlights the power of discourse in “reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations” (Fairclough et al., 2011, p. 370) and illustrates the ways in which powerful groups or institutions such as the media can influence or “control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 10), even those who are negatively targeted in these discourses, such as ethnic minorities themselves. In the analysis we can see that participants themselves hint at positioning themselves as “good immigrant” versus “bad immigrant” that the mainstream media often displays (i.e., “I am now going to be a legal assistant, so I am practically fully integrated” – Betül in example 4.2), this illustrates how ideologies about minorities can be reproduced and adopted by the very minority members themselves. This is not surprising given that media transports discourses to everyday communication. Integration discourses, such as the above discussed, thus strongly influence their processes of subjectivation (Kontos, 2020, p. 16).

In this study, participants orient towards power asymmetries reinforced by the media and public discourse. This in turn affects participants’ agency to construct themselves as German or Turkish, thus inhibiting feelings of belonging. It moreover reinforces an element of control that the media and mainstream discourses have on the production of knowledge that is used and reproduced in the focus groups and possibly in real life interactions. Ultimately, these mainstream discourses of the social integration of German-Turks influence the nature of their interactions, which illustrates a link of power and knowledge (Fisher, 1991; Wodak, 1997).

Distorted representations of German-Turks in relation to integration are problematic in that they present an unrealistic image of this very group which manifests itself in
public perception – despite participants challenging and rejecting mainstream discourses. Not only are labels and ascriptions as “foreigners” or as “the Other”, or distorted images and representations in media and public discourses generally, challenged by participants, but ascriptions or labels as “German” as well. It is noteworthy that this particular focus group was formed by female participants, who are all high school students and are all under the age of 18. All other participants finished school and are employed. Yet, the non-relevance of age and life phase as well as gender can be observed when analyzing how people react to mainstream discourses of social integration. The prevalent sentiment of rejection and challenge is evident in all focus groups, across all participant responses.

Ela, another participant of this study, illustrates this when she declares: “When Germans are saying I am German, I say NO, you are not in the position to decide what I am and it’s not a compliment for me because don’t TAKE my migration background away!” (“Wenn Deutsche mir sagen du bist Deutsche dann sag’ ich NEIN du hast nicht zu entscheiden was ich bin und für mich ist es kein Kompliment, weil NIMM mir meinen Migrationshintergrund nicht weg!”). In this quote Ela explicitly constructs her identity by stating “what I am”. She does not explicitly state “what she is” but she resists the right of anyone to determine her identity (“you are not in the position to decide what I am”) (“NEIN du hast nicht zu entscheiden was ich bin”). For Ela, being imposed a German identity is an act of “TAK[ING] her migration background away!” (“NIMM mir meinen Migrationshintergrund nicht weg!”). This example will be explored in detail in chapter 6. This quote nicely demonstrates the link between participants’ identity construction, the ascriptions of identities they feel is made upon them by other entities and the complexity of feelings of belongings of German-Turkish descendants. The next chapter elaborates on this and focuses specifically on the discursive processes through which the participants of this study construct and negotiate their various identities against the background of mainstream discourses of social integration in Germany.
Chapter 5: Embracing Turkishness and Germanness

As illustrated in the previous chapter, throughout the focus group discussions my participants largely challenged discourses of social integration displayed in the German media landscape by rejecting stereotypes assigned to German-Turks, resisting mainstream terminologies of integration and portraying themselves as integrated individuals. They thereby position themselves in opposition to these mainstream discourses – both, individually as well as collectively in the focus group discussions, and they thereby construct a range of different identities.

Those various identities will be analysed and discussed explicitly in this and the next analysis chapter by addressing RQ2: “What kinds of identities do they construct and negotiate in the focus groups?” The first sub question will look at: “Do they construct themselves as Turks, Germans and/or German-Turks?” And the second sub question will explore: “How do they position these different identities in relation to each other – sometimes combining them and at other times contrasting them?” With the aid of these RQs I aim to explore the discursive processes through which my participants construct and negotiate their various identities against the background of media and public mainstream discourses of German-Turks’ social integration in Germany.

This chapter in particular explores how participants of this study embrace their Turkishness in certain contexts and their Germanness in other contexts, as well as embracing both at the same time and positioning themselves as part of these communities. The subsequent chapter (6) on the other hand will illustrate how participants challenge and reject Turkishness at times and at other times challenge and reject Germanness by positioning themselves in opposition to both communities, thereby constructing themselves as “different”. Both, chapter 5 and 6 will aid in answering RQ2. These two extremes (embracing versus rejecting) that chapters 5 and 6 encapsulate, exemplify the highly dynamic and fluid nature of my participants’ identity construction and reveal that identity is a “discursive, intersubjective construction” (Harrington Fértandez, 2018, p. 56), located in language (Schnurr, 2013) and “constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606).
The chosen framework for both chapters is the one proposed by Buchholtz and Hall (2005) for the analysis of identity as produced in linguistic interaction. Their model offers a sociocultural linguistic perspective on identity “that focuses on both the details of language and the workings of culture and society” (p. 586). Therefore, this framework is ideal for the purpose of these two particular chapters to aid in conducting an in-depth qualitative analysis of participants’ spoken interactions and to explore their various linguistic choices. This framework, moreover, is particularly helpful in exploring how my participants construct and negotiate their different identities and portray themselves as Germans, Turks and/or German-Turks at different points during interactions.

In what follows, I will first provide an overview of how the notions of embracing Turkishness and Germanness emerged in my data, and how participants construct their identities in favour of both the Turkish and the German community in relation to mainstream discourses of social integration. This is followed by illustrating how participants construct their German, Turkish and German-Turkish identities by explicitly talking about identity (one of the prevailing themes in this thesis) as part of embracing both identities. I will then proceed with an in-depth analysis of relevant examples for the theme Embracing Turkishness followed by an analysis of chosen examples for the theme Embracing Germanness, to illustrate the complexity and diversity of my participants’ identity construction, who often find themselves torn between positioning themselves as Germans, Turks, German-Turks, Turkish “Ausländer” and as “different”. The latter will be explored in detail in chapter 6.

5.1 Emergence of embracing Turkishness and Germanness

During the focus group discussions, as well as during the process of listening to and transcribing the data, the dynamic and complex nature of participants’ identity construction became salient. Participants continuously constructed multiple, shifting and fragmented identities, “across different often intersecting and antagonistic discourses practices and positions” (Schnurr & Zayts, 2017, p. 88). Thus, the identity construction of my participants is not fixed nor stable (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) but
highly complex and hybrid as they establish different identities at different points in an interaction.

On many occasions my participants explicitly as well as implicitly mentioned membership to Germany (e.g., “I am German” or “German is my mother tongue”) but to Turkey on others (e.g., by referring to themselves as “Kanake” or “Ausländer” or to their ancestors as “Gastarbeiter”). They also sometimes positioned themselves outside both communities (e.g., when talking about “the Turks”, “the Germans”, “the German-Turks” or “migrant-children”). Moreover, while positioning themselves as a member of the German community they often simultaneously claim their membership in the Turkish community and vice versa (e.g., “My home is in Germany I was born here but I am a proud Turk” “Mein Zuhause ist Deutschland ich wurde hier geboren aber ich bin stolzer Türke” – Bora). Often, participants – collaboratively as well as individually – construct themselves as unique individuals and/or as part of a group by portraying themselves as being neither German, nor Turkish or German-Turkish, neither a “Kanake” nor an “Ausländer”. This rejection of both German and Turkish identities and constructing themselves as “something else” will be elaborated in more detail in chapter 6.

As mentioned above, the current chapter focuses on the myriad ways in which participants discursively embrace Turkishness and Germanness. Melek, who took part in the pilot study, illustrates this nicely when she embraces both her German and her Turkish identities within one statement: “Yes, I am also Turkish but I am also German I was born and raised here I saw the culture from the Turks and from the Germans” (“Ja ich bin auch Türkisch aber ich bin auch Deutsch ich wurde hier geboren ich hab’ die Kultur von den Türken gesehen und von den Deutschen”). In the first part of this sentence, she explicitly constructs herself as German and as Turkish by assigning herself explicit macro identity categories “Turkish” and “German” and explicitly stating “I am”. In the second part of this sentence however, she positions herself as

26 “Kanake” or “Kanacke” is a derogatory term used to describe people living in Germany with a migration background, mostly associated with people of Turkish descent. In the focus groups, participants used this term referring to themselves, both in a humorous and serious way.
neither German nor Turkish and excludes herself from these communities (an aspect on which I will focus on in the subsequent chapter) by using the distancing formulations “the Turks” and “the Germans”. Thus, she positions herself in opposition to both communities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

The ability to refer to both cultures and identities, to accept and/or reject them, also leads to what scholars (e.g., Feldmann, 2006; Kaya, 2007), as well as my participants, call an “identity confusion” or “identity crisis”. They sometimes struggle to position themselves within these two life worlds (Gemende, 2002) which may lead to the ubiquitous question “Who am I?”. This feeling of fragmentation is nicely illustrated by Meryem at the beginning of one of the focus group discussions:

“I don’t know how it was with you, but in the past I didn’t even know whether I was German or Turkish. When Germans asked me, I was German .( ) when Turks asked me, I was Turkish. But actually, I myself didn’t even know where am I what am I actually? (.) What am I actually?”

Interestingly, while Meryem expresses her feeling of being torn between being German and being Turkish and the challenge to construct a feeling of belonging to either, she, at the same time, explicitly portrays herself as both German and Turkish and embraces both categories, whilst pointing out that her identification is dependent on the immediate social context (Van Rijswijk et al., 2006). This struggle has also been discussed in the literature (e.g. Karcher & Darity, 2010; Kaya, 2007; Orendt, 2010; Özhamaratli, n.d.) highlighting the issues that descendants of Turkish immigrants in Germany face regarding “their complex position in, or between, two cultures” (Watzinger-Tharp, 2004, p. 285). A large body of literature illustrates that individuals living in Germany with Turkish roots possess a “mixed identity” (Orendt, 2010, p. 175) with conflicting feelings between being attached to their Turkish roots
and the desire to belong to German society. This conflict emerged as a pertinent aspect in my participants’ identity work.

As for this study, participants established ties and were socialised with more than one culture, and might feel torn, especially between two strongly divergent “fat cultures”, Turkish and German. While this situation creates a dilemma in some contexts and during some exchanges in the focus group discussions, it is simultaneously regarded as positive by most of the participants. It is the idea of having “two characters” (“dann hat man zwei Charaktere”) as Demir states in one of the focus groups, which he believes “is way better” (“ist viel schöner”). A large volume of literature describes this attitude as a “third space” (Özhamaratli, nd) – a form of a hybrid and vibrant set of identities between Germany and Turkey, or a “transnational (social) space” (e.g. Faist, 2000; Faist & Özveren, 2004; Kaya, 2007; Sert, 2012) which denote dynamic social processes, practices, attachments and ties of German-Turks transcending borders (Ehrkamp, 2005; Kaya, 2012). These spaces are “molded by social, cultural, economic and political imperatives” of Germany and Turkey (Kaya, 2007, p. 1). Ultimately, there is a tendency to identify with and embrace both worlds and identities, German and Turkish, which I will explore in this chapter. Another prevalent observation – the rejection and challenge of both worlds – which is quite an opposite tendency to the former, will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

In this regard, in all seven focus group discussions, participants explicitly stated that they embrace their diverse ethnicities and identities and are thankful for having multiple backgrounds they can refer to depending on various contexts. Sevgi, one of my participants, nicely illustrates this sentiment: “I really thought again THANK GOD I do have another cultural background!” (“Ich hab’ echt nochmal gedacht GOTTSEIDANK hab’ ich noch einen anderen kulturellen Hintergrund!”). In short, while feelings of identity struggle and being “trapped” between two cultures exist, feelings of being “blessed” or “lucky” simultaneously prevail, which again unfolds the highly dynamic and complex nature of identity construction with individuals displaying certain stances to build up different identities for themselves and others within an interaction (Ochs, 1993), demonstrating that their identities are “shaped from moment to moment in interaction” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591).
The in-depth analysis of the following longer examples will further illustrate some of the hybrid and dynamic processes of identity construction and negotiation of my participants in terms of embracing Turkishness and Germanness with the aid of Bucholtz and Hall’s theoretical framework (2005) and provide an overall understanding of the discursive processes in which identity construction against the background of mainstream discourses of social integration in Germany takes place.

5.1.1 Talking explicitly about identity

The notion of identity was constantly made relevant throughout participants’ discussions – sometimes implicitly and very often explicitly. Without giving any reference to this term by me or by the presented media articles, participants perpetually mentioned “identity” while drawing on their experiences of social integration and mainstream depictions of German-Turks in the media.

Example 5.1: “We receive no identity offer here in Germany.”

Context: The group is discussing to what extent German-Turks feel belonging to Germany, and that media articles often portray German-Turks to be more attached to Turkey than to Germany.

1 Melda: BUT that’s also – that’s an identity process. We receive no identity offer here in Germany (.). we don’t receive any (.). neither in school nor in some leisure activities (.). we learn nothing about our roots nothing about the rooting of Germans and Turks (.). and then? What do we search for ourselves? An identity! What is the most obvious one? In Turkey we are accepted there it’s even like ‘ah sweet look she speaks Turkish ah great ah great you are a Turk you are a Turk you belong to us’ Yes OF COURSE I do take that as my identity offer (.). and then say (.). ON PURPOSE out of defiance especially among the younger ones (.). ‘Yeah you know what? Germany is not even my homeland I don’t give a shit about your country (.). Turkey is my homeland AND I want Erdogan in your face’ like that

13 All: Nodding throughout Melda’s talk
Alle: Nicken während Melda’s Argument.

This exchange starts with Melda explaining that a feeling of belongingness (as discussed shortly before this exchange) is an “identity process” (line 1) (“Identitätsprozess”). Interestingly, she steers the discussion towards issues of identity and even mentions the term “identity” explicitly, although identity was not previously mentioned in the discussion. Melda then moves on and complains about German-Turks not receiving an “identity offer” (“Identitätsangebot”) in Germany (lines 1 – 2). Particularly noteworthy here is that she constructs identity as something which has to be “offered” and subsequently be accepted and chosen. Identity is here constructed as something which Melda does not yet possess and has to create, which strongly highlights the fluidity of identity construction (Jenkins, 2014). Melda’s definition of identity strongly aligns with the social constructivist view of identity, where identity is defined as an ongoing dynamic process (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Holmes, 2008), accomplished in interaction (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998) with a discursive-performative nature (Butler, 2006) possessing the possibility of multiple, shifting and fragmented identities, which can be expressed in various ways (Hall & Du Gay, 1996).

Receiving “no identity offer” indicates a position of not “possessing” an identity, in which Melda undermines the extreme assumption that she “has” no (ethnic) identity.
In this statement the relation of *illegitimation* from Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework can be clearly seen. This relation “addresses the ways in which identities are dismissed, censored, or simply ignored by (...) structures of institutionalized power and ideology, whether local or translocal” (p. 599). By maintaining “we don’t receive any (. ) neither in school nor in some leisure activities” (lines 2 – 3) (“*wir bekommen keins (. ) weder in der Schule noch in irgendwelchen Freizeitaktivitäten*”) Melda holds institutionalised structures, public institutions as well as society in general accountable for minority groups not being able to claim an identity, that is unquestioned and that they do not have to justify, for themselves, and she illegitimates identities that should be offered to her and people within the same socio-cultural context.

This suggests that, in Melda’s view, institutions and German citizens in general play an important role in the identity formation of German-Turks and possibly other individuals with a migration background. Being able to “choose” an identity offered by the German public might strengthen the feeling of belonging to Germany (as it does with regards to Turkey). This in turn would improve the social integration of German-Turkish descendants. The most important aspect of social integration is “the inclusion of the actors into the social system” (Esser, 2001, p. 4). This definition highlights the role and responsibility of the receiving society in integrating individuals. It implies “that in order to be integrated society must treat immigrants equal to ‘native’ Germans” (Karcher & Darity, 2010, p. 3).

Melda repeatedly uses the personal pronoun “we” (lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (“*wir*”) and draws on a shared identity by including herself in the German-Turkish community (this becomes evident due to the group talking about German-Turks shortly before Melda makes this comment). She thereby portrays herself as German-Turkish. Additionally, she “metonymically position[s] [her]self as speaking on behalf of fellow [German-Turks]” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 604). Thus, she creates an identification of a shared stance (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) and indexes similarity which complies with the complementary relation ‘adequation’ of the relationality principle, which states that “identities are never autonomous or independent but always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors” (p. 598).
Melda then moves on – whilst still “speaking on behalf” of fellow German-Turks – that “we learn nothing about our roots nothing about the rooting of Germans and Turks” (lines 3 – 4) ("wir erfahren nichts über uns unsere Wurzeln nichts über die Verwurzelung von Deutschen und Türken"). Melda does not specify which roots she is referring to here, but the second part of that sentence suggests that she refers to both “their” German and Turkish backgrounds. According to the authentication relation, Melda discursively verifies her German and Turkish identities by tracing her provenance (Baumann, 1992). Melda, thus, authenticates herself as German and Turkish by relying “on a claimed historical tie to a venerated past” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 602), more specifically her roots.

According to the indexicality principle (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), Melda implies and presupposes a German and a Turkish identity position for herself and fellow German-Turks and thus constructs her German-Turkish identity by “overt[ly] mention[ing] […] identity categories and labels” and signalling “implicatures and presuppositions regarding [her] own or others’ identity position” (p. 594). Interestingly, within the same sentence, she claims membership in both communities but at the same time positions herself outside of both German and Turkish communities and constructs herself as a member of an out-group, i.e., “the rooting of Germans and Turks” (line 4) ("Verwurzelung von Deutschen und Türken"). This utterance highlights the “multitude of ways in which identity exceeds the individual self” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605) and can be positioned within the partialness principle, which states:

Any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation and contestation, in part an outcome of others’ perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction. It is therefore constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts (p. 606).

While Melda habitually and possibly in parts intentionally constructs a German and Turkish identity for herself and other in-group members, she also unconsciously constructs a non-German and non-Turkish identity. Moreover, her utterance is partly
an attempt of contestation, as she challenges the absence of being informed about her German and Turkish roots (line 4). In addition, she implicitly makes reference to ideological structures in Germany which impact her identity construction. In sum, as stated in the partialness principle, Melda’s statement sheds light on the “multitude of ways in which identity exceeds the individual self” as it is “inherently relational, it will always be partial, produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605).

Melda continues with her idea of identities being “out there” to choose from and moves on to what appears to be the next step in this social integration process, which is “searching” for an identity. Melda declares that when no one offers her a suitable identity in Germany, German-Turks have to search themselves: “What do we search for ourselves? An identity!” (lines 4 – 5) (“Was suchen wir uns? Eine Identität!”). She utilises a rhetorical question format and then explicitly remarks that “we” search for “an identity” and foregrounds the fact that identity is indispensable. She adds a second rhetorical question in lines 5 to 6: “What is the most obvious one? In Turkey we are accepted” (“Was kommt am naheliegensten? In der Türkei werden wir akzeptiert”) where this statement takes a turn with the reference to macro geographical categories, namely the country Turkey. Two different principles of Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework can be applied here. First, the positionality principle, which states that “[i]dentities encompass […] macro-level demographic categories” (p. 592), in this case Turkey. Secondly, Melda points towards her attraction to Turkey and thus, in alignment with the indexicality principle, presupposes an identity position for herself and others (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 594). This example demonstrates the multiple facets of identity work and that “different kinds of positions typically occur simultaneously in a single interaction” (p. 593).

A closer look at Melda’s utterance shows the linkage to social integration. As explained above, the inclusion and acceptance of migrants and individuals with a migration background are highly important in their integration processes, which simultaneously affects their feelings of belonging. According to Melda, “in Turkey we are accepted” (line 6) which creates a Turkish identity for Melda to “choose” from. She indexes a positive stance towards Turkey and the Turkish identity (Bucholtz &
The *adequation* relation emphasises that individuals or groups have sufficient similarities to be positioned alike (p. 599). Melda constructs herself as Turkish by positioning herself as a person who shares the same language with the Turkish community and thus as positions herself sufficiently similar to “choose a Turkish identity for herself”. She asserts: “in Turkey we are accepted there it’s even like ‘ah sweet look she speaks Turkish ah great ah great you are a Turk you are a Turk you belong to us’” (lines 6 – 8) (“*In der Türkei werden wir akzeptiert da ist es sogar ‘ah süß guck mal sie spricht türkisch ah toll ah toll du bist Türkin du bist Türkin du gehört zu uns’*”). Melda draws on a shared language and belongingness (“you belong to us”) and moreover establishes Turks as the ones who authoritatively position herself with Turks, which is described in another intersubjective relation, *authorisation* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 604). This situation then leads Melda to proclaim “Yes OF COURSE I do take that as my identity offer” (line 8) (“*Ja NATÜRLICH nehme ich das als mein Identitätsangebot*”) while with a loud tone of voice she highlights “OF COURSE”.

With reference to Germany, she implies that in Germany the same acceptance that she receives from Turks does not exist, which signals negative evaluations of Germans and Germany (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), whereby Melda positions herself in opposition to this nationality. This relates to the opposite relation of *illegitimation* in which her German identity is “dismissed, censored, or simply ignored” (p. 603). This is in alignment with what Moffitt et al. (2018) claim, that the national identity for Turkish origin youth in Germany is often contested by other members of society.

The last part of Melda’s statement takes a radical turn. In a slightly annoyed tone of voice, she announces that Germany is not her homeland due to the fact that she cannot choose an identity in this very country. She thereby positions herself in opposition and outside of the macro category “German” by indexing a negative stance and by rejecting the country (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005): “and then say (.) ON PURPOSE out of defiance especially among the younger ones (.) ‘Yeah you know what? Germany is not even my homeland I don’t give a shit about your country’” (lines 9 – 11) (“*und sage dann (.) EXTRA aus Trotz gerade bei den jüngeren (.) ‘Ja weißt du was? Deutschland ist gar nicht meine Heimat ich schieß auf euer Land’*”). With the use of
the pronoun “your” she strongly distances herself from the German society by creating an “us” versus “them” dichotomy. In line 11 Melda starts to use the expletive “don’t give a shit” (“ich scheiß’ auf”) which signals anger and disappointment. The use of rude slang becomes an effective instrument for Melda to reject ostracism and dominant ideologies of German-Turks. She utters a negative stance towards the notion of Germany as a “homeland” and positions herself outside of this community.

Lastly, Melda explicitly states that “Turkey is [her] homeland” (lines 11 – 12) (“Türkei ist meine Heimat”) and thus constructs herself as an in-group (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). By explicitly stating that her decision to say Germany is not her homeland but Turkey “ON PURPOSE out of defiance” (line 8) (“EXTRA aus Trotz”), Melda seems to be engaged in what appears to be a revenge. Her reaction synthesises with the struggle of the larger group of German-Turks to integrate effectively because the acceptance of the German society is missing and is replaced by discrimination, ostracism and racism.

In previous chapters, the low socio-economic level of German-Turks in Germany has been discussed and the importance of the majority society in integrating non-native Germans has been highlighted. Melda’s expression seems to illustrate possible results of “purposely” turning her back to Germany as acceptance is missing. In this vein, Melda declares: “‘AND I want Erdogan in your face’ like that” (line 12) (“UND ich will Erdogan in euer Gesicht’ so”). The expression “in your face” is generally used to cause feelings of anger and displeasure, and as an idiomatic phrase serves Melda to challenge alienations towards German-Turks.

By symbolising Germany as an entity with feelings and emotions she implicitly refers to German individuals and her aggressive comment seems to be some sort of vent to deal with a frustration about the system in which Turkishness is perceived and approached in Germany, in institutions (e.g., learning about the rooting of Germany and Turkey) and by individuals and ultimately by mainstream discourses. Moreover, the ongoing debate about the current Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan being a controversial politician is an important theme in this exchange. The constant association of Erdogan with German-Turks by Germans was frequently addressed and heavily problematised by my participants. Many expressed their annoyance by declaring that they do not understand why Erdogan is automatically addressed as soon
as people know that they have Turkish roots, such as stated by Toprak during a focus group in a furious tone of voice: “WHY do I have justify or support him?? His politics his life!” (“WIESO muss ich ihn erklären, oder unterstützen?? Seine Politik sein Leben!”).

In this regard, Erdogan is heavily criticised in the German media landscape as well as in public discourses associating him with terms such as “Islamisation, conservative and suppression of press freedom” (Vogeler, 2015, pp. 23-24, my translation). The leadership style of Erdogan can be said to challenge the conception of human rights and freedom by Germans and the German society, which is one of many reasons for portraying Erdogan as a problematic political figure, especially because his political actions, such as reimposing the death penalty in Turkey, caused considerations of the German government to abort the EU accession negotiations for Turkey (Alkan, 2018). Thus, by stating “AND I want Erdogan in your face” (line 12) (“UND ich will Erdogan in euer Gesicht”), Melda challenges and rejects this representation as well as the underlying assumption of German mainstream media which reject Erdogan and his controversial leadership style. The subsequent analysis chapter (6) will illustrate how participants reject Germanness and Turkishness by referring to the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Throughout Melda’s monologue, the rest of the participants are constantly nodding to express their agreement and understanding of her ideas and views, which signals shared experiences and agreement. In this excerpt, Melda implicitly juxtapositions German and Turkish societies. In the next example participants describe how German and Turkish identities may be taken away from them.

**Example 5.2: “We let our identities get taken away”**

Context: This exchange occurred during the same focus group as example 5.1 and participants debate how Germans are Othering German-Turks with questions such as: “Where are you from?” or “What are you?” which make them feel alien. According to Ela, being ‘different’ is regarded as negative by German-Turks. For Melda the “hysterical” reaction of German-Turks towards the question “Where are you from” leads to their identities “being taken away”.

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Ela: We are (. ) SO EXTREMELY focused on being GERMAN ((angry tone of voice)) (. ) that we kind of see it as negative when you say ‘Ey you look DIFFERENT’ but (. ) what even is different? Like (. ) when I for example say to you ‘You look different you are very white for a Turk’ like is that negative now? You know it’s just like you have a certain image, but it is well I find it always so difficult when we say (. ) ‘Yes I am different and that means I don’t belong’ [5 seconds of transcription omitted]

Melda: But then again the problem here is WE let our identities GET TAKEN AWAY like we don’t have to let it get taken away because it actually could be an innocent question like ‘Hey I’ve never seen a Turk before I’ve never seen a Muslim before I would love to have a conversation with you’ but (. ) we let this chance go by (. ) instead we show an image of (. ) we are hysterical we are not talkative we are not open for discussions we are socialised in between different kinds of expectations (. ) are not adapted to German values

Ela: Wir sind (. ) SO KRASS darauf aus DEUTSCH zu sein ((wütender Stimmton)) (. ) das wir es irgendwie als negativ sehen, wenn man sagt ‘Ey du siehst ANDERS aus’ aber (. ) was ist denn anders? Also (. ) wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel (xxx) auch so zu dir sage ‘Du siehst anders aus du bist voll hell für ‘ne Türkin’ (. ) also ist es jetzt ne:gtativ? Weißt du ist es nur so du hast ein bestimmtes Bild aber ist doch also ich find’s halt immer so schwierig, wenn wir sagen (. ) ‘Ja ich bin anders und das bedeutet ich gehöre nicht dazu’ [5 Sekunden des Transkripts wurden ausgelassen]

Melda: Aber das Problem ist da halt auch wieder WIR lassen uns unsere Identität ABSRPECHEN also wir müssen uns ja nicht absprechen lassen weil es kann auch wirklich eine unschuldige Frage sein so ‘Hey ich hab noch nie ‘nen Türken gesehen ich hab noch nie ‘nen Muslimen gesehen so ich würd’ mich voll gerne mit dir unterhalten’ aber (. ) diese Chance lassen wir verstreichen (. ) stattdessen zeigen wir ein Bild von
This excerpt starts with Ela pointing out that German-Turks (“we”, line 1) “are SO EXTREMELY focused on being GERMAN” (line 1) (“sind SO KRASS darauf aus DEUTSCH zu sein”). She explicitly uses the identity category “German”. This statement suggests that, according to Ela, German-Turkish individuals do possess a German side (“being German”) but the fact that they have to focus on “being GERMAN” indicates that it is not natural or inherited. Thus, while Ela constructs her German identity for herself as well as for fellow German-Turks by using the pronoun “we” she at the same time indexes a negative stance with her strict and angry tone of voice. In accordance with the emergence principle, an anti-German identity emerges (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 587). It moreover aligns with the partialness principle in which Ela intentionally produces a non-German identity and at the same time unconsciously constructs a German identity (p. 608).

Interestingly, this behaviour is in contrast to what scholars such as Tajfel and Turner (2004) claim about reactions of devalued groups when facing perceptions of discrimination. The question “Where are you from” is mostly perceived as discrimination as it is a social identity threat (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001) which “results in being reminded again and again that a core identity of theirs is at best questioned, at worst denied” (Cheryan & Monin, 2005, p. 717). In this situation minority groups react by altering their behaviour (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001) and by “placing greater emphasis and value on how they differ from the dominant group” (Tajfel & Turner 1979 as cited in Jetten et al., 2001, p. 1205). Rather than focusing on how to “differ” from the German society as the above-mentioned literature argues, Ela declares that German-Turks focus on the opposite – to conform to the German group.

However, it is important to note that Ela simultaneously embraces Germanness as “they” – German-Turks – give high importance to “being German”. In this regard, Mete, another participant from another focus group, explains that sometimes there is
the issue of “being too German” for Germans: “We are perhaps sometimes too German for them” (“Wir sind denen vielleicht auch manchmal zu deutsch”). Mete thereby creates an “us” versus “them” dichotomy. This statement also nicely fits into the complementary identity relation *adequation*, in which Mete constructs himself as similar enough to be positioned like Germans (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 599). However, since he adds that “they” are too German, the relation of *illegitimation* comes into play, which counteracts adequation and constructs Germans as the ones who illegitimate their German identities (p. 602). Additionally, Mete implicitly undermines essential assumptions that Turks cannot be German and thus *denaturalizes* the notion that “identity violates ideological expectations” (p. 602).

Can, a participant from another focus group, provides another angle by stating that he was not accepted by other Turks because he was too German and not Turkish enough. This short excerpt illustrates how “being too German” can be seen as negative and lead to other “Turks” alienating German-Turks and not accepting them:

“\textquote{I am a Turk, my parents are Turks but for the Turks over there one was not accepted because we were already too German for them … that was crazy [laughs] we were not Turkish enough}”

“\textquote{Ich bin Türke meine Eltern sind Türken aber für die Türken dort wurd’ man auch nicht akzeptiert weil wir für die schon zu Deutsch waren … das war krass [lacht] wir waren nicht türkisch genug}”

Here, Can engages in *illegitimation* in which his Turkish identity is censored and dismissed by members of the Turkish community, as this group allegedly associates behaviours of Germanness as culturally inappropriate (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 604). Denying the acceptance of German-Turks who are “too German” signals the perceived inappropriateness of this behaviour whereby those Turks draw on a shared national identity to illegitimate Can’s Germanised identity.

In the second half of her statement, Ela – whilst still using the subjective pronoun “we” – explains that German-Turks regard it as negative when others refer to them as “different” (lines 2 – 3) (“anders”). This is linked to her previous claim that German-Turks want to be German and that differing from that very community is not perceived
favourably. Cheryan & Monin (2005, p. 717) refer to this as “identity denial wherein an individual who does not match the prototype of an in-group sees that identity called into question or unrecognized by fellow group members”. Here, the relation of *distinction* is not invoked but contested, as it is not aimed to “undermine the construction of difference” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 600).

In lines 2 and 3 she claims that “we” – their own in-group, German-Turks – “kind of see it as negative when you say ‘Ey you look DIFFERENT’” (“das wir es irgendwie als negativ sehen, wenn man sagt ‘Ey du siehst ANDERS aus’”). With the *positionality* principle, Ela takes on a role of a typical German and signals a negative stance towards difference in appearance (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 592). By this means, Ela implies that even German-Turks themselves can produce questions and comments that promote *Othering* and feelings of alienation. She highlights the word “different” very strongly and in a loud tone of voice, which indicates the (emotional) importance of the word “different” and indicates that it has a strong impact on her.

However, her comment takes a turn when she poses a rhetorical question “but (.) what is even different?” (line 3) (“aber (.) was ist denn anders?”). With this question she downgrades the word “different”, by questioning and/or reconstructing its meaning. She provides an example of a statement she hypothetically makes to one of the participants in the focus groups: “when when I for example say to you” (line 3 – 4) (“wenn wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel (xxx) auch so zu dir sage”) and states: “You look different you are very white for a Turk” (lines 4 – 5) (“Du siehst anders aus du bist voll hell für ‘ne Türkin”). With this hypothetical statement and self-assigned temporary role, Ela refers to stereotypical appearances of Turks and Germans. This links to the relation of *denaturalization* where “claims to the inevitability or inherent rightness of identities is subverted” (p. 602). Applied to this example, it can be interpreted that the right to be German is suppressed due to “ideologically motivated perceptions” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 602) of Ela’s identity as a Turk based on her phenotype as well as “unsettles the naturalized links between phenotype and ethnic identity” (p. 603). With the question “like is that negative now?” (line 5) (“also ist es jetzt ne:gativ?”) she contests the adequation of a non-German appearance with negativity, which entails both the relation of *adequation* and the *partialness* principle.
To illustrate how some participants regard being different as a disadvantage, Memo’s statement, which he made in another focus group, sheds light onto the way some German-Turks react towards the issue of “being different”:

“But during my studies I started to name myself Peter (...) And there I saw a big difference. As soon as people memorised my name, Peter, I was indeed let’s say 99% German for them. Other people who called me Memo because they didn’t know me, they were totally different towards me”

“Aber im Studium hab' ich angefangen mich Peter zu nennen (...) Und da hab' ich einen riesen Unterschied gemerkt. Sobald die Leute sich meinen Namen merken konnten also Peter, war ich dann tatsächlich ich sag mal so zu 99% deutsch für die. Andere, die mich dann halt Memo nannten, weil sie mich nicht kennen die waren dann total anders zu mir”

This excerpt demonstrates how being different in terms of having a non-typical German name can create disadvantages in contexts such as university. Memo implies that having a German name increases the reception of a more welcoming treatment by the majority society. Memo assumes a temporary role (positionality principle) of a German and positions himself as a particular kind of person – German (indexicality principle).

This can be linked to many participants’ claims that their names play an important role in being accepted and included in society: “My name makes me a foreigner” (“Mein Name macht mich zum Ausländer” – Toprak). Moreover, like Memo, Can – another participant who took part in another focus group – declared that he has changed his name so other people do not recognise that he is a Turk and to escape discrimination and racism: “Up until a few years ago I introduced myself as Max. So that no one immediately knew that I am a Turk, because I didn’t want to deal with disadvantages” (“Bis vor ein paar Jahren noch hab’ ich mich als Max vorgestellt. Damit keiner direkt wusste das ich Türke bin, weil ich keinen Bock auf Nachteile hatte”). Memo and Can are explaining that names construct people as “different” and can lead to disadvantages that German-Turks might experience. This statement stems from the pre-discussion in the “getting-to-know” phase, where no prompts or indications were given by me or by media articles.
In her last sentence Ela maintains “You know it’s just like you have a certain image” (lines 5 – 6) (“Weißt du ist es nur so du hast ein bestimmtes Bild”) and assumes shared experiences and/or opinions. Ela indicates that “you” – which could be referred to the other participants in the focus group and comprise other German-Turks as well – have a certain image in their minds about what a prototypical German is or how they look like and thus how German-Turks use those prototypical images to construct themselves as adequate enough to position themselves alike Germans, supporting the relation of *adequation* by supressing differences (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 599).

She then expresses that in her perspective it is difficult to relate “being different” with issues of belonging and that differing from Germans means that one does not belong: “but it is well I find it always so difficult when we say (.) ‘Yes I am different and that means I don’t belong’” (line 7) (“aber ist doch also ich find’s halt immer so schwierig, wenn wir sagen (.) ‘Ja ich bin anders und das bedeutet ich gehöre nicht dazu’”). She draws on mainstream and stereotypical integration discourses which create a picture that people who are different do not integrate and thus do “not belong”. According to the partialness principle, her construction of identity is “in part an outcome of others’ perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606). With this statement Ela problematises the notion about how individuals are phenotypically classified as “German” or “Turkish”.

After Ela expressed her opinion about issues of difference, Melda responds by directing the discussion to identities, without any reference to the word identity made by the interviewer. By explicitly orienting to identities, participants make this concept relevant and signal its importance to social integration. According to Melda, the fact that “being different” is considered as negative is problematic, as it results in a loss of identities of people in Germany with a migrant background, here German-Turks. This is highlighted by Melda’s following statement: “But then again the problem here is WE let our identities GET TAKEN AWAY” (line 8) (“Aber das Problem ist da halt auch wieder WIR lassen uns unsere Identität ABSRPECHEN”). Applying the relation of *illegitimation*, it can be said that Melda establishes that an imaged entity censors their German and/or Turkish identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 604).
Melda establishes this issue as a “problem” (line 8) (“Problem”), which indicates that Melda and her in-group do not want to lose their Turkish and/or German identities and thus embrace and value their Turkishness and Germanness. She emphasises the pronoun “we” and portrays other German-Turks like her to be in the same position as she is and constructs a group identity and thus orients to her in-group status as a German-Turk. This can also be interpreted as an attempt to motivate other German-Turks to collectively tackle this “problem” and challenge the extraction of their identities, which is “done to them”, especially by highlighting “BEING TAKEN AWAY” with a loud and determined tone of voice.

At the same time, Melda indicates levels of responsibility by German-Turks in letting their “identities GET TAKEN AWAY”. By projecting responsibility Melda blames her own in-group – German-Turks – for the confinement of their identities. Melda explains that “we don’t have to let it get taken away” (line 9) (“wir müssen uns ja nicht absprechen lassen”) indicating a choice or an opportunity that German-Turks have in this situation, whilst still retaining her in-group membership as being a German-Turk by using the pronoun “we”. She then continues and declares that the question “Where are you from” “could actually be an innocent question” (line 10) (“es kann auch wirklich eine unschuldige Frage sein”).

A number of studies investigate the recurrent question “Where are you (really) from?” and describe it as “palpable reminders of identity denial, of the fact that one is being relegated outside one’s in-group because one does not fit the picture (…) and does not match the prototype of an in-group” (Cheryan & Monin, 2005, p. 717). This could be factors such as having non-German names or “different” appearances as Ela examines above. For Melda, this question does not have to be a medium to be positioned outside of any in-group (German or Turkish) but an invitation to present their non-stereotypical identities and as individuals who belong to German society, which simultaneously can alter mainstream discourses around the social integration of German-Turks. With the word “innocent” she downplays the power of this type of question and rejects the negative implication that the question has and constructs Germans as “innocent”. Melda evaluates questions such as “Where are you from” as
a possibility for German-Turks to counteract stereotypes and clichés associated with Turks in Germany.

She then imitates a typical German who is merely interested in a person with a Turkish or Muslim background: “Hey I’ve never seen a Turk before I’ve never seen a Muslim before I would love to have a conversation with you” (lines 10 – 12) (“Hey ich hab noch nie ‘nen Türken gesehen ich hab noch nie ‘nen Muslime gesehen so ich würd’ mich voll gerne mit dir unterhalten”). She moves away from the belief that Germans engage in Othering German-Turks by asking them about their background. She explicitly assigns the identity categories of nationality, “Turk” and religion, “Muslim”, and constructs Turkish and Muslim identities for herself. In alignment with the relationality principle she presupposes an identity for other German-Turks (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 594). In addition, a national identity of a Turk emerges to a religious one, which complies with the emergent principle (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 587).

As the conversation continues Melda points out that “we let this chance go by (.) instead we show an image of (.) we are hysterical we are not talkative we are not open for discussions we are socialised in between different kinds of expectations (.) are not adapted to German values” (lines 12 – 15) (“diese Chance lassen wir verstreichen (.) stattdessen zeigen wir ein Bild von (.) wir sind hysterisch wir sind nicht kommunikationsfreudig wir sind nicht diskutierfreudig wir sind in irgendwelchen Zwängen sozialisiert (.) sind nicht an deutsche Werte angepasst”). Melda constructs an in-group membership by speaking on behalf of other German-Turks and by using the pronoun “we”. At the same time, she blames this very group in which she positions herself in for not taking the opportunity (i.e. responding positively to those “innocent questions”) to counteract and disprove stereotypical representations of German-Turks – their own group – and expose an authentic image of German-Turks. By explicitly portraying her own group as people who are “hysterical (…) not talkative (…) not open for discussions (…) socialised in between different kinds of expectations (…) not adapted to German values” she challenges and criticises the German-Turkish community for reinforcing such stereotypes that circulate in dominant German discourses. Thus, Melda adopts while at the same time distances herself from identities stereotypically assigned to Turks by mainstream discourses. In this way, supported by
the *positionality* principle, Melda occupies an interactional position and assigns certain identities to the German-Turkish group. She then abandons these identities by constructing them as ideological and stereotypical associations with Turks, which they can counteract (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591).

This type of anger/frustration was reported by many of the participants in the study (as well as by almost all my nine participants taking part in my MSc project), mainly as a response to discriminatory experiences (e.g., in school, at work or in casual encounters in daily life). This points to an issue that is related to social integration. Namely, participants are regarded as angry or aggressive individuals simply because of their ethnic background as Turkish – which is a stereotype about this group as Melda confirmed. Culturalist behaviours like this reduce Turkish Germans “as products of their heritage, denying them agency and throwing into question their identities as members of German society” (Moffitt et al., 2019, p. 842).

Such behaviour is moreover linked to personality as a character trait rather than as a momentary response to an experience or treatment. Such “person-centered interpretations remove blame for discriminatory actions by focusing instead on the response, ascribing anger as an individual trait instead of addressing its underlying cause” (Moffitt et al., 2019, p. 840). From Melda’s statement, it becomes pertinent that these stereotypical perceptions of Turkish origin Germans (i.e., “being hysterical”, “not talkative” etc.) are deeply held and unquestioned forms of ideologies that are manifested and reproduced not only by the white majority German society but by minorities themselves – leading to (an internalisation of) group-level stereotypes. However, Melda also calls for action – to not show this image and to not confirm mainstream perceptions of German-born Turks. The paradoxicality and complexity of the ways in which these ideologies/mainstream discourses affect participants are highlighted once more in this excerpt. It also “perpetuates an ethno-cultural norm of Germanness” (Moffitt et al., 2019, p. 842) – specifically that traits such as aggressiveness or “inappropriate” behaviour is associated with Turkishness and not with Germanness.
The data set of this study shows an abundance of examples where participants criticise Germans for “not accepting”, “discriminating” or “stereotyping” them, to name but a few, which makes this particular statement stand out. In this excerpt Melda challenges the German-Turks themselves and implies that the question “Where are you from?” can be seen as an invitation to get involved in a discussion about their Turkish backgrounds and to ultimately rectify stereotypes of German-Turks and reconstruct discourses around the social integration of German-Turks.

Lastly, it is important to mention that the rest of the participants in this discussion indicated agreement with Ela’s and Melda’s comments through their body language and paralinguistic features (i.e., nodding and assuring facial expressions). This signals shared experiences and opinions and ultimately shared group membership.

5.1.2 Embracing Turkishness

The two examples analysed above illustrate how participants construct their German, Turkish and German-Turkish identities by explicitly mentioning “identity”. In their discussions, the hybrid and complex nature of their identity construction and negotiation emerge, and the constant interplay between embracing their Turkishness and Germanness is demonstrated. In this section, I will specifically focus on how participants construct their various identities in favour of their Turkishness.

Example 5.3: “I am proud of where I come from”

Context: This group is debating whether or not the question “Where are you from” made by Germans to German-Turks is rather helpful, negative or insulting.

1 Yesim: So would you wish that people don’t ask you that and simply perceive
you as German people?
2 Sila: No I find it good that they ask that
3 Sena: I find like I am like I am proud of where I come from (.) and that my
parents (.) maybe are not just German yeah (.) that I have another
culture yeah and when they are interested in that //that’s cool/
4 Cemre: //But I know/ I also know many especially Germans, who think it’s a
5 shame (.) like they //ENVY us / that we were raised bilingual and like

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for example all our friends actually think it’s a shame that they only
uhm speak German and not like have a migration background

Sena: //Yes yes/
Sila: //Yes exactly/
Ayla: Hmhm yes

Yesim: Würdet ihr euch denn wünschen das Leute das nicht fragen und euch einfach als deutsche Menschen sehen?
Sila: Ne ich find das gut dass die das fragen
Sena: Ich find also ich bin also ich bin stolz darauf wo ich herkomme (.) und dass meine Eltern (.) vielleicht auch nicht nur einfach Deutsch sind so (.) das ich ‘ne andere Kultur hab‘ so und wenn die sich dafür interessieren //ist doch cool/
Cemre: //Ich kenn aber/ ich kenn auch vor allem viele Deutsche, die es schade finden (.) also die //uns/ so //BENEIDEN/ dass wir bilingual aufwachsen und also zum Beispiel alle unsere Freunde eigentlich die es schade finden das sie nur deutsch uhm sprechen und nicht irgendwie noch so einen Migrationshintergrund haben
Sena: //Ja Ja/
Sila: //Ja genau/
Ayla: Hmhm ja

The question “Where are you from” has been addressed numerous times by different participants from different focus groups (see also example 5.2). During the debate about this question, the interviewer then asked if participants would rather prefer to not be asked this question (lines 1 – 2). While most participants in this study reacted in a rather upset way to this question, Sila recognises this question as positive: “No I find it good that they ask that” (line 3) (“Ne ich find das gut dass die das fragen”). Using the pronoun “they” she positions herself in opposition to the German group.

Sena affirms Sila’s comment and directs the discussion to the topic of pride. She states: “I find like I am like I am proud of where I come from (.) and that my parents (.)
maybe are not just German yeah (.) that I have another culture yeah and when they are interested in that //that’s cool/” (lines 4 – 6) (“Ich find also ich bin also ich bin stolz darauf wo ich herkommte (.) und dass meine Eltern (.) vielleicht auch nicht nur einfach Deutsch sind so (.) das ich ‘ne andere Kultur hab so und wenn die sich dafür interessieren //ist doch cool/”). With a calm tone of voice Sena declares to be proud of “where she comes from” and embraces the fact she “has another culture”. With the repetition of “I” and the use of the pronoun “they” Sena creates an “I” versus “they” dichotomy and constructs the German community in opposition to herself. By referring to her ancestors and historical ties she verifies and authorises her Turkish identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 601).

She finishes her comment by saying “when they are interested in that //that’s cool/” (line 6) (“wenn die sich dafür interessieren //ist doch cool/”). In this comment, Sena expresses positive alignment with people who are interested in her “other culture” and thus takes a positive stance towards her Turkishness. An interesting observation here is that, in the previous example, participant Melda argued that in her opinion most German-Turks are not happy to answer questions like “Where are you from” and rather react “hysterically”. On the contrary, Sena explains she is happy to answer such questions and prefers interested individuals. She is below the legal age of 18 and so are the other three participants in this focus group. The age difference might be an indicator for the divergent perceptions and opinions regarding the question “Where are you from”. Therefore, the roles of different generations play an important role in negotiating identities and issues of belongingness. Cemre shapes attributes such as language and migration background as something that is an advantage and as a loss if a person does not possess them. She thereby embraces her multiple languages and backgrounds and positions herself within the Turkish community and constructs her German-Turkish and Turkish identities.

Cemre proceeds with the discussion and mentions that she knows “many especially Germans, who think it’s a shame (.) like they //ENVY us / that we were raised bilingual and like for example all our friends actually think it’s a shame that they only uhm speak German and not like have a migration background” (lines 7 – 10) (“//Ich kenn aber/ ich kenn auch vor allem viele Deutsche, die es schade finden … also die //uns/
so //BENEIDEN/ dass wir bilingual aufwachsen und also zum Beispiel alle unsere Freunde eigentlich die es schade finden das sie nur deutsch uhm sprechen und nicht irgendwie noch so einen Migrationshintergrund haben”). First of all, Cemre positions herself in opposition to “Germans” who do not possess another language nor a migration background as German-Turks do. In line with the *positionality* principle, Cemre’s utterance “like they ENVY us” marks Germans’ collective stance of awe and jealousy and signals her orientation of pride (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 593), just like Sena. Both participants jointly construct their German-Turkish identities and indicate how they embrace their Turkishness. The other participants take part in this co-construction. Sena, Sila and Ayla, all participants in this focus group, affirm Cemre’s announcement by saying “//Yes yes/” (line 11), //Yes exactly/ (line 12) and “Hmhm yes” (line 13). This signals shared knowledge, experiences and opinions on this matter and indicates in-group membership. Thus, all members of this focus group display the relationality principle by intersubjectively constructing their identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 598).

The pronoun “us” serves Cemre as a tool to construct an in-group and portrays herself as a multilingual person with the ability to speak more than the German language. By referring to the category of language (bilingualism) she orients towards both her Turkish and German identities. Thus, she constructs her identity intersubjectively by contrasting herself to the group of Germans. In this part, the relation of *distinction* can be seen (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 600) as Cemre suppresses similarities “that might undermine the construction of difference”. This excerpt illustrates how German-Turkish participants construct their identities as part of embracing their Turkishness. They display their pride of having a migration background and an additional language and announced that non-German-Turks envy them for these attributes.

Having illustrated how participants embrace their background of their heritage, their Turkishness, I will now move on to elucidate how they embrace their Germanness.
5.1.3 Embracing Germanness

While Turkishness is embraced in the previous example, this section will explicitly focus on how participants embrace their Germanness. The following example demonstrates that sometimes Germanness is favoured by participants, while German as well as Turkish identities are constructed.

Example 5.4: “I see myself as German”

Context: This group is discussing their attraction to Turkey and Germany and their feelings of belonging to both countries. Cemre shares her opinion on this matter.

1 Cemre: I can’t really say that I miss Turkey (.) I am a Turk I accept that and I stand behind that but I never lived there and I grew up here. I see myself as rather German (xxx) (. ) what is missing is that many Turks or foreigners lose their roots (.) like the newer the generation. I really feel as if I would lose my Turkish roots over Germany. I almost can’t speak Turkish anymore, I probably, most likely will not marry a Turk, not because I don’t like Turks, because I am not in contact, no clue what my children will be named, if I will raise them Turkish

Cemre: Ich kann nicht sagen, dass ich die Türkei wirklich vermisste (. ) ich bin auch Türkin das sehe ich auch ein und dazu stehe ich auch, aber ich hab’ da nie gewohnt und bin hier aufgewachsen. Ich sehe mich eher deutsch (xxx) (. ) was fehlt ist das viele Türken oder Ausländer ihre Wurzeln verlieren… also je neuer die Generation. Ich fühlt’ mich wirklich so als würde ich meine türkischen Wurzeln verlieren an Deutschland. Ich kann fast kein Türkisch mehr, ich werde wahrscheinlich ganz wahrscheinlich mit keinem Türken heiraten nicht, weil ich Türken nicht mag aber, weil ich kein Kontakt habe, keine Ahnung wie meine Kinder heißen werden, ob ich die türkisch erziehe

In this monologue, Cemre elaborates on her feelings of belonging towards Germany and Turkey and expresses her self-perception in terms of identification. She starts off
by clearly positioning herself in opposition to Turkey: “I can’t really say that I miss Turkey” (line 1) (“Ich kann nicht sagen, dass ich die Türkei wirklich vermisst”). In this sentence, she also signals that she has not been to Turkey for a specific amount of time, as “missing” something requires not to have been exposed to the object in question. At the same time, she implies a level of attachment to Turkey that might have existed in the past. Within the positionality principle the level of identity enacted by Cemre “encompasses[s] a macro-level demographic category” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 592), namely Turkey. Specifically, Cemre indexes a negative stance towards Turkey and thereby constructs a non-Turkish identity for herself.

Directly after, Cemre quite openly violates her own immediate previous identity claims by explicitly constructing herself as Turkish: “I am a Turk I accept that and I stand behind that” (lines 1–2) (“ich bin auch Türkin das sehe ich auch ein und dazu stehe ich auch”), where she then constructs a Turkish identity, which illustrates how identity is “shaped from moment to moment in interaction” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591). Moreover, the phrase “I stand behind that” indexes a positive stance towards her Turkishness and signals feelings of ownership. Thus, Cemre constructs a Turkish identity whilst also indexing a negative stance towards this ethnic identity category. She constructs herself in relation to her historic background as well as the society she grew up in. The partialness principle sums up this phenomenon as it states that identity is “inherently relational, it will always be partial, produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605). This highlights the complex process of identity negotiation, its intersectionality and ultimately the identity struggle that participants find themselves in (Jugert et al., 2020). This utterance unmasks the embracing of both Turkishness and Germanness and shows that Cemre’s different identities are deeply entwined. By first contesting her Turkish identity, taking on a German identity and then by contradictorily enacting a Turkish identity, Cemre not only positions herself as similar to the German community but also to the Turkish community, whereby she establishes a multicultural identity and portrays herself as part of both societies.

In the same sentence, Cemre states “but I never lived there and I grew up here” (line 2) (“aber ich hab’ da nie gewohnt und bin hier aufgewachsen”). The syntax in this
sentence is interesting as Cemre contrasts Turkey “there” and Germany “here”. The juxtapositioning of Germany and Turkey establishes a discursive ground for distinction of these two worlds (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 600). Therefore, Cemre positions herself in opposition to the Turkish community, “there”, and in favour of the German community, “here”, and constructs her German identity. She thereby constructs an “us” versus “them” dichotomy.

She discloses her own perspective by stating: “I see myself as rather German” (lines 2 – 3) (“Ich sehe mich eher deutsch”) and signifies her self-perception. Again, she portrays herself within the German community and claims a German identity. However, the “rather” indicates a possibility of another identity. Considering that prior to this statement she explicitly constructed her Turkish identity by highlighting her ethnic background, this statement possibly also illustrates that Cemre’s identity is not an issue of “either or” but rather a matter of degrees of identification to certain groups. In other words, Cemre problematises the overlap and intersectionality of her identities, which is evident and has been discussed in many other examples in this study.

Cemre then directs her focus to other “many Turks or foreigners” and their roots: “what is missing is that many Turks or foreigners lose their roots” (lines 3 – 4) (“was fehlt ist dass viele Türken oder Ausländer ihre Wurzeln verlieren”). Firstly, Cemre speaks of “many Turks” and portrays herself outside of this very community. Secondly, she utilises the label “foreigner” and categorises and engages in the process of Othering Turks. She engages in the relationality principle by assuming that Turks and foreigners lose their roots (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 593). Cemre specifies and narrows her statement by mentioning “like the newer the generation” (line 4) (“also je neuer die Generation”). Cemre herself is 17 years old and the youngest participants in this study. Thus, she can be considered as the younger generation, which indicates that she refers to herself, which will become apparent in what follows in Cemre’s monologue: “I really feel as if I would lose my Turkish roots over Germany” (lines 4 – 5) (“Ich fühle mich wirklich so als würde ich meine türkischen Wurzeln verlieren an Deutschland”). This struggle indicates regrets of losing aspects of her Turkishness. She simultaneously claims a Turkish identity for herself by authenticating its validity.
by referring to her roots, which is in alignment with the relation of *authentication* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 601).

Cemre starts listing the reasons for the loss of her Turkishness and maintains that “I almost can’t speak Turkish anymore, I probably, most likely will not marry a Turk, not because I don’t like Turks, because I am not in contact” (lines 5 – 7) (“Ich kann fast kein Türkisch mehr, ich werde wahrscheinlich ganz wahrscheinlich mit keinem Türken heiraten nicht, weil ich Türken nicht mag aber, weil ich kein Kontakt habe”). By deploying the relation of *illegitimation*, Cemre denies the adoption of a Turkish identity for herself as she does not fulfil the ideologically recognised expectations of being a legitimate Turk (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 604). Cemre builds an identity in opposition to Turkishness by performing the act of someone who does not inherit socially expected behaviours and attributes of a Turkish individual and displays an “epistemic and affective stance [...]” (Ochs, 1993, p. 289). Thus, in accordance with the *relationality* and the *positionality* principle she constructs this identity intersubjectively by positioning herself in opposition to the Turkish group. Cemre then mentions the future by stating that she “will most likely not marry a Turk”, thus uttering a position in which she does not fulfil ideological expectations regarding Turkish norms, values and beliefs. Hence, she creates enough differences to distinct herself from this very group with the relation of *distinction* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 599).

At the end Cemre then explains that she is “not in contact with other Turks”. This claim indicates that she has no other German-Turks in her immediate social environment and that she most likely is not in touch with her acquaintances in Turkey or Germany. This supports Cemre’s claim of “losing her Turkish roots over Germany”, which in turn signalises the importance of Germanness for Cemre to an extent that she “loses her Turkish roots” over that community. Ultimately, Cemre positions herself as part of the German community by claiming to lose all the above listed points (i.e., language and people) in favour of her Germanness.

Lastly, Cemre projects the future again and signals uncertainty in terms of how she will name her future children and whether she will raise them in line with Turkish
values (lines 7 – 8). Here, Cemre counteracts the prototypical presentation of a Turk who is only perceived and accepted as Turkish when adhering to culturally expected and accepted norms. With a slightly annoyed tone of voice, she denies revealing her choice of names and raising styles and does not want to justify her decision. Thereby, she rejects the phenomenon of an identity being imposed on her. Cemre thereby problematises an identity clash that exists between German and Turkish identity categories and the concomitant norms, values and beliefs that each culture typically inherits. Her way of critiquing this issue emerges as a tool to reject dominant racial, ethnic and cultural ideologies, existent in both Germany and Turkey. Ultimately, Cemre challenges the belief that a Turkish identity can only be enacted when displaying culturally appropriate behaviours.

Although Cemre clearly distances herself from the Turkish community in this excerpt, in some parts she constructs her Turkish identity and refers to it. Thus, while she embraces her Germanness, she does not completely deny her Turkishness. This is an interesting observation and confirms participants’ intersectionality of their identities and its dynamic nature and represents the idea that identity is not fixed or stable and that participants do not choose one identity over the other.

5.2 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter I started to address RQ2: “What kinds of identities do [German-Turks] construct and negotiate in the focus groups?” and both sub questions: (a) “Do they construct themselves as Turks, Germans and/or German-Turks?” and (b) “How do they position these different identities in relation to each other – sometimes combining them and at other times contrasting them?” I addressed these questions by exploring how participants discursively construct and negotiate their different identities by embracing their Turkishness and their Germanness against the background of mainstream discourses of social integration of German-Turks in Germany.

The analysis shows that participants construct various identities for themselves and others during the focus groups. I particularly focused on how they construct their German, Turkish and German-Turkish identities. With the aid of Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework, the analysed examples illustrate how participants discursively
perform these identities. All five principles: the emergence, the positionality, the
indexicality, the relationality and the partialness principles assisted in making sense
of and analysing the chosen examples, exploring the identity construction of
participants and exemplifying how they “evolve[e], interact[...], cooperat[e], at times
conflict[...], [or] all at once” (Mehdi, 2012, p. 13) and how they are “continuously
negotiated, revised, and revitalized” (Nagel, 1994, p. 153). Ultimately, participants’
performances illustrate that identity construction is a highly context-dependent
(Simon, 2004) collaborative process (Schnurr & Zayts, 2017) and is created and
recreated in and through interaction (Schnurr, 2013). Overall, the analysis illustrates
that the identity construction of participants is highly fragmented and dynamic, where
they embrace their Germanness and their Turkishness at different points during an
interaction, or both at the same time. The framework helped to link the macro with the
micro and to carve out the tensions in participants’ identity construction and the role
that mainstream discourses play in these processes.

During all seven focus group discussions, my participants collaboratively as well as
individually reflect on mainstream discourses of social integration in Germany,
thereby constructing their German, Turkish and German-Turkish identities. They do
this by embracing their Turkishness at times and their Germanness at other times –
sometimes within the same statement and sometimes as the interaction unfolds
(Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). They also embrace both their Germanness and their
Turkishness simultaneously during an interaction. Another frequent activity that
participants employ whilst constructing and negotiating their identities is rejecting
their Turkishness and their Germanness. This particular process of rejecting will be
examined in the following chapter (6), where I will further elaborate RQ2 by looking
at how German-Turkish adolescents from this study construct their identities while
distancing themselves from mainstream and traditional notions of Turkishness and
Germanness.

It is important to mention, however, that the two activities – embracing and rejecting
– constantly overlap in the chosen examples. Hence, while I tried to merely focus on
the activity of embracing in this chapter, there were some instances and overlaps with
the activity of rejecting. Example 5.4 nicely illustrates this intersectionality, where
Cemre maintains that she does not “miss Turkey” and sees herself “as German” at the beginning of her statement – thus embracing her Germanness and rejecting her Turkishness – while signalling an embrace of her Turkishness at the end of her statement by expressing regrets of losing aspects of her Turkishness. This example demonstrates that the construction of my participants’ German and Turkish identities are not fixed, stable, distinct or straightforward (Nagel, 1994) but rather ambiguous, fragmented, shifting, dynamic, very complex and context dependent.

The examples further illustrate a strong link between participants’ identity construction and social integration. Both identity and integration are highly problematised by participants without any reference to either by the interviewer. Participants link their identities with issues of social integration by talking about how their “name makes me a foreigner” (Toprak) and how they change those names to typical German names (i.e., Memo) to be accepted in society and avoid discrimination. This confirms research findings showing that Turks in Germany are exposed to higher levels of discriminations compared to other ethnic groups (Salentin, 2007; Schotte et al., 2018; Tucci et al., 2014). Moreover, the link between identity and social integration is addressed by explaining how Othering and “innocent questions” (example 5.2 – Melda) such as “Where are you from?” can produce alienation towards Germany and belonging to Turkey (Brüß, 2005) and vice versa. This in turn demonstrates the complexity of feelings of belongings of German-Turkish descendants. According to Tucci et al. (2014) migrants’ identification with Germany is strongly influenced by their social integration. This study adds a sociolinguistic perspective to this claim and shows how German-Turks discursively make sense of their social integration and how it is influenced by their experiences of discrimination and racism, as well as mainstream stereotypical discourses of German-Turks’ social integration and how all these factors affect their identity constructions.

The references participants make to larger stereotypical assumptions of German-Turks (e.g. “we are hysterical we are not talkative we are not open for discussions we are socialised in between different kinds of expectations … are not adapted to German values” – Ela in example 5.2) and expectations from German-Turks (e.g. “We are … SO EXTREMELY focused on being GERMAN” – Melda in example 5.2) reflect the importance of issues of social integration and identity in relation to German-Turks in
current Germany and confirm the topicality of this issue. Finally, the analyses of chosen examples shed light on how social integration functions through language. We can see that social integration is not a static concept that can be evaluated through certain factors (i.e., language proficiency or involvement in politics). It is constantly negotiated and renegotiated in interaction. Based on how participants perceive their image to be constructed in the media and in turn in public perception, they produce belonging towards or engage in the activity of embracing Germanness or Turkishness. Embracing Germanness hints towards a construction of a higher social integration, whereas embracing Turkishness can be associated with a construction of a lower social integration. These constructions are all context dependent and cannot be understood as fixed aspects of social integration. As mentioned before, participants constantly (de)construct social integration by making their Germanness or Turkishness relevant at different points during the focus group interactions.

While participants embrace their Germanness and/or their Turkishness, they simultaneously reject stereotypical and prototypical German and Turkish identities they feel are imposed on them by other entities. Thereby, they reject labels and critique racial, ethnic, cultural ideologies existent in both Germany and Turkey. The next chapter elaborates this notion of rejection in more detail and focuses specifically on the discursive processes through which the participants of this study construct and negotiate their various identities by rejecting Germanness and Turkishness against the background of German mainstream discourses of social integration.
Chapter 6: Rejecting Turkishness and Germanness

As established in chapter 5, participants construct and negotiate various identities whilst orienting to issues of social integration of German-Turks reflected in mainstream public and media discourses that circulate in Germany. Chapter 5 has started to address RQ2: “What kinds of identities do [German-Turks] construct and negotiate in the focus groups?” The first sub question looked at: “Do they construct themselves as Turks, Germans and/or German-Turks?” And the second sub question explored: “How do they position these different identities in relation to each other – sometimes combining them and at other times contrasting them?” and focused particularly on the activities in which participants construct their various identities whilst embracing Turkishness and Germanness, and thereby portray themselves as German, Turkish and German-Turkish. This chapter will further elaborate on RQ2 and explore what kinds of identities participants construct and how they do this by exploring the other main activity that occurred in my data, namely rejecting Germanness and Turkishness.

More specifically, this chapter will illustrate how participants of this study reject and challenge their Turkishness in certain contexts and their Germanness in other contexts, as well as rejecting both at the same time and positioning themselves in opposition to these communities, and thereby constructing themselves as “different”. Consequently, this chapter will aid in fully answering RQ2. Thus, I aim to further develop my argument constructed in the previous chapter and demonstrate the multiple, fragmented, shifting and dynamic nature of participants’ identity construction and the intersectionality of positioning themselves in favour of their Germanness and/or Turkishness or positioning themselves in opposition to both.

These levels of intersectionality between embracing Germanness and Turkishness and rejecting both are prevalent in most of the examples. In other words, participants sometimes embrace and sometimes reject Germanness and/or Turkishness during different points in an interaction and do not choose a definite position for themselves. Both activities are constructed and performed depending on the context. This showcases those processes of embracing as well as rejecting Germanness and/or
Turkishness can emerge concomitantly both individually or collaboratively during the same interaction or can be established in a dynamic interplay. That is, participants often index different kinds of positions simultaneously in a single interaction, which highlights the multiple facets of identity construction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). While this demonstrates how participants portray and position themselves, it aided me in exploring how they sometimes strategically, multifariously and contrastingly make Germanness and Turkishness relevant.

A statement from Melda, a member of one of the focus groups, sheds light on this multiple fragmented, complex process of identity negotiation: “I think it’s very difficult, I believe that our identity is very intertwined” (“Ich glaub’ das ist sehr schwierig, ich glaube unsere Identität ist sehr verzahnt”). Interestingly, while Melda emphasises the complexity of their (“our”) identity, “intertwined” with each other, she is only referring to it in singular (“identity”). This idea is supported by almost all of my participants – some of them state this opinion explicitly and some of them illustrate it implicitly and highlight the confusion and feeling of being torn between two worlds. Gemende (2002) claims “it is in these in-between-worlds, where individuals try to merge contradictory life worlds, to which they are dependent on” [my translation] (p. 24). My data shows that participants not only merge their Germanness and Turkishness by embracing or rejecting both simultaneously, they also (unconsciously, consciously, explicitly, implicitly) separate these worlds by sometimes embracing (chapter 5) and sometimes rejecting (chapter 6) Germanness and/or Turkishness. For this particular chapter, while I will acknowledge embracing activities, I will mainly focus on the analysis on the ways in which participants reject Turkishness and/or Germanness.

The chosen examples for this chapter are analysed by using the same framework utilised in chapter 5, the framework from Bucholtz and Hall (2005) for the analysis of identity as produced in linguistic interaction. This framework aided me in exploring how my participants construct their various identities and thereby portray themselves as Germans, Turks and German-Turks by rejecting notions related to Turkishness and Germanness. In this vein, this chapter will also illustrate another identity category that participants built up, which is constructing themselves as neither German, nor Turkish,
but as “different”, thus rejecting identities that relate to Germanness and Turkishness at the same time.

In what follows, I will first present the processes of rejecting and sometimes challenging both Turkishness and Germanness by constructing themselves as “different” and “unique”. Thereby, I will demonstrate how my participants position themselves in opposition to both the Turkish and German community in relation to mainstream discourses of social integration. I will then proceed with an in-depth analysis of relevant examples to illustrate how participants engage in the activity of rejecting Turkishness followed by an analysis of chosen examples to illustrate how they are rejecting Germanness to complement the analysis and findings of chapter 5, which focused on the processes of embracing, and thus fully address RQ2. Ultimately, this chapter aims to illustrate the complexity and diversity of my participants’ identity construction, the intersectionality of their German and Turkish identities as well as the construction of an identity that is “different” – not German, not Turkish, not German-Turkish.

6.1 Emergence of rejecting Turkishness and Germanness

Chapter 5 has established that this study’s data demonstrates the dynamic nature of participants’ identity work and how they construct multiple, intersecting, fragmented and shifting identities at different points in the interactions during the focus groups. While participants implicitly as well as explicitly signal their membership and alignment to both Germany and Turkey and thereby embrace their Germanness and Turkishness, which was explored in chapter 5, they also frequently position themselves in opposition to these worlds (e.g., when referring to “the Turks”, “the Germans”, “the German-Turks”), reject membership in them and construct themselves as “unique”, “special” and “different”. Can, a participant from one of the focus groups, illustrates this performance by replying to the interviewer’s question of “What is typical German and typical Turkish?” ("Was ist typisch deutsch und typisch türkisch?") with “No clue, but I can tell you that I am not either of them” ("Keine Ahnung, aber ich kann dir sagen, dass ich beides nicht bin"). This sentiment strongly highlights the activity of rejecting both their German and Turkish identities and how
participants can thereby take an opposite stance towards Germanness and Turkishness at the same time.

With regard to being “different”, particularly noteworthy are statements of participants claiming to be “something else”. Ela, who took part in the same focus group as Melda, declared: “I am as German as any other German (.) but I am still something else” (“Ich bin genauso Deutsch wie jeder andere Deutsche (.) aber ich bin nochmal was anderes”). In this statement, Ela constructs herself in various ways and takes on different identity positions. In the very first part of this statement, she constructs herself explicitly as German. By stating “as any other German”, on the other hand, she implicitly creates an “I” versus “them” dichotomy and positions herself in opposition to “the Germans”. This leads to her last part of the sentence, where she proclaims that she is “still something else” and thus not German and possibly not Turkish but “different”, thereby opening up a third possibility of the identity category “different”.

This short statement highlights participants’ distant attitude towards categorisations. By maintaining “I am still something else”, Ela constructs an identity which does not sit along demographic lines, such as race, age, gender or class (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) and is thus rather flexible and not specified by Ela. Throughout all focus groups this perspective becomes prevalent. Sila, a participant from another focus group, puts this tendency in a nutshell by announcing: “We are just different (.) especially than the others” (“Wir sind halt anders (.) besonders als die anderen”), hence in addition to portraying herself as “different” she constructs herself and other German-Turks (“we”) as “special”, which creates yet another identity category. While “different” exhibits a difference (between “we” and “the Other”), the adjective “special” features a unique quality.

In another part of the discussion, Sila summarises this sentiment further by stating: “I am me (.) I am not me because of my culture I am me because of my friends because of my character because of the people I love because of my family (.) well sure also because of my culture but that doesn’t define me” (“Ich bin ich (.) ich bin ja nicht ich wegen meiner Kultur ich bin ja ich wegen meinen Freunden wegen meinem Charakter wegen den Menschen, die ich liebe wegen meiner Familie (.) also klar auch wegen
meiner Kultur aber das bestimmt mich nicht”). Sila expresses her individuality influenced by her immediate social environment such as her “friends and family” and that while culture also plays a role in shaping her identity, it does not “define” her. With this statement she counteracts the stereotypical assumption that her Turkish ethnic background shapes her identity. She constructs an individual identity by crossing “cultural” boundaries (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), and at the same time minimises the importance of “culture”.

Participants’ emphasis on their unique and individual identities, which are not defined by the ethnic backgrounds they grew up with, is a dominant pattern in all focus groups. Sila’s statement appears to be contradictory, as she claims that “culture” does not influence her in the beginning of the sentence, but she says the opposite at the end of the sentence (“well sure because of my culture”). Conversely, this contradiction elucidates the ambivalence of Sila’s attitude towards “culture” and that it is indeed an important issue. Interestingly, when mentioning “my culture”, she does not specify which culture in particular she is referring to. Considering her background as a German-Turk, she might refer to the Turkish, the German, or one that is in-between these “two fat cultures” (Watzinger-Tharp, 2004, p. 291). What is striking, however, is the overlap and interconnectedness of Sila’s positioning of herself in and at the time distancing herself from both Germanness and Turkishness.

In this section, I illustrated the ways in which participants reject both Germanness and Turkishness simultaneously. Another frequent activity prevalent in the data is rejecting one, Germanness or Turkishness, during an interaction. These ways of distancing themselves from the German and Turkish worlds and the activities of rejecting them will be illustrated with the following in-depth analysis of longer examples. The first two examples will demonstrate how participants construct and portray themselves whilst rejecting Turkishness. I will then proceed to explore the process of rejecting Germanness whilst constructing their identities. Together with the in-depth analysis of these examples, I will also start to establish the link between social integration and identity construction in the context of rejecting Turkishness and Germanness, which will then be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter.
6.1.1 Rejecting Turkishness

As outlined above, during the focus group discussions, participants discursively engaged in rejecting both Turkishness and Germanness, by challenging traditional and stereotypical images attached to them by mainstream discourses and by distancing themselves from German and Turkish communities, societies and individuals, which will be demonstrated in examples 6.1 and 6.2.

By rejecting their Turkishness, participants at the same time make their social integration relevant, as this process indicates a stronger bond with their Germanness. Social integration can be captured with a person’s interest in becoming an integrated member of a group (Blau, 1960). Rejecting their Turkish side in order to be accepted in Germany suggests a high interest in being an integrated member, portray themselves as integrated or simply expresses that they are already integrated (chapters 4 and 5).

Another approach to capture social integration is a person’s self-identification (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017) which, by rejecting their Turkish identities, suggests a stronger identification with Germany and hence high levels of social integration (i.e. rejecting a Turkish name by adopting a German one, example 6.1). Another proxy for social integration is the level of trust and social preferences with respect to other members of their group, here German-born Turks, in comparison to corresponding levels with respect to the native group (Algan et al., 2012). This also links to the findings from Constant and colleagues (2013) that ethnic clustering can enhance the affiliation with the country of origin and thereby weaken the identification with the majority society. Naturally, rejecting Turkishness by distancing themselves from certain Turkish groups (example 6.2) shows rather low affiliation with Turkey and thus suggests stronger identification with Germany.

These particular ways in which participants portray themselves as integrated and discursively make social integration relevant by rejecting Turkishness will now be explored and illustrated in more detail with the following examples.

Example 6.1: “I wanted to escape from exclusion”

Context: This focus group consists of two male German-Turkish participants, Mete and Can. They are discussing the challenges that Turks in Germany face, for instance
that they have to work harder in school than Germans to prove themselves or that they sometimes change their names to German-sounding ones to escape from discrimination and exclusion. Names express, as well as constitute, social relations (Khosravi, 2012) and by covering their original names, participants perform a strategy to be “one of them” which has proven to be an easier way for people with a migration background to form relationships with the majority society, thus improving social integration. Participants, in this case Mete, try to portray themselves as integrated by eliminating an obstacle, the name, that has nothing to do with their behaviour or their socio-economic performance, but that still leads to discrimination and racism that this group experiences. The analysis of the following example will illustrate this further.

Mete: Yes, I agree with you that’s always like – one always has to prove

//oneself erm\

Can: /Hmhm\\

Yesim: Yeah Yeah

Can: That’s why in the past, I’ve always introduced myself as Max (.) like I have as I said I, I just didn’t want people to know that I am a Turk and then erm like ‘What? Is your name Max?’ ((imitating someone else)) and then this is how I got my nickname Max (.) erm and then like ‘No my name is Can’ ((imitating himself)) ‘What? You are a Turk? But a half Turk right?’ ((continues imitation)) ‘NO I am a full Turk’ like ((continues imitation)) ‘Woah that’s extreme I didn’t expect that’

Mete: [nods]:hmmm:

Yesim: Crazy

Can: ‘I. didn’t. expect. that.’ [slow and slightly loud tone of voice]

((repeats imitation))

All: Hmmhmm

Can: YEAH why not? Because I don’t speak broken German, because I don’t dress like their ideas of how a Turk dresses or whatever (.) like that’s why

Yesim: Back then didn’t you want them to know you’re a Turk, because you made racist experiences or because you wanted to escape from the
//discussion?

Can: /Discussion.\ [slow pronunciation] or just erm also to avoid EXCLUSION (.like because people are strongly biased especially-

hey honestly you want to enter a night club (.there’re

//[laughs]:problems:\ you want to meet girls (. there’re problems like

as soon as they know ‘hey a Turk’ then: yeah

29 Mete: /[nods]:hmm:\

Mete: Ja ich geb’ dir da Recht, das ist halt immer- man muss sich immer //beweisen erm\

Can: /Hmhmm\ 


Mete: [nicht]:hmm:\ 

Yesim: Krass


Ale: Hmm

Can: JA warum nicht? Weil ich nicht gebrochen deutsch spreche (. mich nach deren Vorstellungen wie sich ein Türke kleidet kleide so wie auch immer (. so deswegen

Yesim: Wolltest du damals nicht das die direkt wissen, dass du Türke bist, weil du rassistische Erfahrungen gemacht hast, oder weil du einfach dieser //Diskussion\ entgehen wolltest?
Can: /Diskussion:\n[langsam ausgesprochen] oder halt einfach ern auch AUSGRENZUNG entgehen wollte (.) so weil die Leute halt viel vor eingenommen sind vor allem- ey ganz ehrlich willst du in Klub reinkommen (.) gibt’s //Probleme [lachend], (. ) willst du Mädels kennenlernen (.) gibt’s Probleme so sobald die wissen ‘ey Türke’ und so nähr dann: ja
Mete: /[nickt]:hmm:\n
This excerpt starts with Mete stating that “one always has to prove oneself” (lines 1 – 2) (“man muss sich immer beweisen”), with which he refers to German-Turks living in Germany as they were discussing shortly before this exchange. He uses the impersonal third person pronoun “one” (“man”) and describes German-Turks without including himself, rather than using the inclusive pronoun “we”. Notably, before and after this exchange, Mete shared some of his discriminatory experiences and incidents where he had to prove himself more than others in order to be “accepted”. Both Can and Yesim²⁷ agreed with Mete by uttering “Hmmhmm” (line 3) to express agreement and “Yeah yeah” (line 4), which indicates shared experiences.

Can directed the discussion to his experiences about how he started to introduce himself with a non-Turkish and German-sounding name. In line 5 he states that he used to introduce himself as “Max” previously. By abandoning his Turkish name and adopting a German one, Can rejects his Turkishness. He starts to imitate a dialogue between himself and someone who does not have a Turkish background, where that person asks in a surprised way “What? Is your name Max?” (line 7) (“Wie? Heißt du Max?”). While “Max” is a pseudonym chosen to protect the participant’s identity, the real alternative that he chose for himself sounds similar to his real name and what others often confuse with Can’s real Turkish name. He explains that this name then became his nickname, which he is still using (he also introduced himself as Max to me during the recruitment process for this study).

²⁷ As the researcher, I was present in all focus groups as a moderator and engaged in the discussion as little as possible.
In this imitation sequence (lines 6 – 12) Can showcases that people who meet him for the first time and learn his Turkish name are startled to find out that he is a Turk, to an extent that they assume he is a “half-Turk” (line 10) (“halb-Türke”) rather than a “full Turk” (lines 10 – 11) (“ganzer Türke”), which in turn leaves them perplexed: “Woah that’s weird I didn’t’ expect that” (lines 11 – 12) (“Boah krass hätt’ ich jetzt nicht gedacht”). The fact that he is a Turk lead to a discussion about his name and background, which in usual introductions between individuals habitually does not happen. Mete agrees by nodding and uttering “hmmm” (line 13) thereby signalling mutual understanding and shared experiences, while Yesim reacts rather shocked: “Crazy” (line 14) (“Krass”) towards this incident.

Can’s story demonstrates that “names carry strong ethnic and religious connotations and reveal an individual’s affiliation to a specific group” (Koshravi, 2012, p. 65) which are associated with prototypical and stereotypical behaviours and appearances. In alignment with the emergence principle Can takes on a non-Turkish name generally understood not to “belong to his ethnic background” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591). Thereby, a non-Turkish identity emerges in the discourse in alignment with people with German names. The strategy of changing their names due to reasons of discrimination and acceptance was frequently observed in the focus groups.

Memo, a participant from another focus group, for instance, shared a similar circumstance, which I briefly mentioned in the previous chapter (5). He stated that “during my studies I started to name myself Peter (…) And there I saw a big difference. As soon as people memorised my name, Peter, I was indeed let’s say 99% German for them. Other people who called me Memo, because they didn’t know me, they were totally different towards me” (“Im Studium hab’ ich angefangen mich Peter zu nennen (…) Und da hab’ ich einen riesen Unterschied gemerkt. Sobald die Leute sich meinen Namen merken konnte, also Peter, war ich dann tatsächlich ich sag ich mal so zu 99% deutsch für die. Andere, die mich dann halt Memo nannten, weil sie mich nicht kennen, die waren dann total anders zu mir”).

Memo implies that having a German name increases the reception of a more welcoming treatment by, in this case, people in his studies. He claims that with the
name “Peter” he was perceived “99%” as German. This supports claims that ethnic groups do experience discrimination and racism in their daily lives. Being stigmatized as a person with a migration background, the relationship between names and social stigma becomes explicit, which leads to the belief that covering one’s ethnic identity will facilitate their individual integration into society (Koshravi, 2012).

Both Can and Memo’s experiences illustrate how being different in terms of non-typical German names can lead to disadvantages in certain contexts. According to the *positionality* principle, they assume a temporary role of a German citizen and a German student and, evidenced by the *indexicality* principle, position themselves as a particular kind of person (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), namely as integrated and accepted, evinced by their German-sounding names. They, moreover, construct a German identity for themselves. The identification with one’s social roles (Brissette et al., 2000; Holt-Lunstad & Uchino, 2015) is a crucial element of social integration. The behaviour that participants perform and their strategy of changing names to be accepted in and be treated like accepted members of society, gives clues about the ways in which German-Turks engage in social activities and forming of relationships in the majority society. Social connections are immensely important and have critical influences on health and longevity (Holt-Lunstad, 2018). These strategies illustrate how different – mostly astounded and negative – reactions towards their Turkish names and concomitant treatments affect their feelings of belonging and their identification towards Germany and Turkey. In terms of social integration, this strategy demonstrates that participants are highly willing to form and build relationships with the broader German society, which showcases their social preferences.

Nevertheless, social integration is a two-way process and “only feasible once immigrants are accepted as members of the society” (Laurentyeva & Venturini, 2017, p. 285) and the fact that participants’ own experiences are excluded by society due to their non-German-sounding names suggests that the improvement of German-Turks’ social integration is still challenging. On the other hand, their strategies to combat these challenges prove their willingness to integrate and thus also potential improvement, as well as high levels of social integration. The strategies also provide
information on how social integration can function through language. More specifically, participants discursively construct and position themselves as integrated by introducing themselves with a German-sounding name, eliminate obstacles created by ethnicity and in turn combat discrimination in certain contexts. Ultimately, they create their own opportunity to socially engage with members of the wider German society and form relationships.

Moving on, Can repeats the last imitated phrase, emphasises every single word, and takes on a slightly louder tone of voice and a slower pronunciation: “I. didn’t. expect. that.” (line 15) (“Hätt’. ich. jetzt. nicht. gedacht.”) to which Yesim and Mete signal understanding with “Hmmhmm” (line 15). The repetition, as well as his tone of voice, indicate notions of bewilderment as to why it is challenging for Germans to perceive him as Turkish. As the indexicality principle evinces, Can, first of all, signals presuppositions about Germans’ perception about Turks and implicatures about his own identity as a German (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). This phrase is particularly interesting, as it counteracts the common idea in the focus groups as well as in other research studies and the media, that “native Germans do not regard Turks as Germans”. However, Can implicitly refers to stereotypical and prototypical perceptions of Turks, which he does not confirm, as he describes in the following section.

Can resumes the imitation with the rhetorical question: “YEAH why not?” (line 18) (“JA warum nicht?”) whilst signalling nuisance to the imagined person’s reaction towards his name with his raised tone of voice. Can then answers this question with explanations as to why Germans might not “expect” him to be Turkish. By listing stereotypical images of Turks living in Germany, i.e. that they “speak broken German” or “dress in a certain way”, Can rejects and challenges these public images and counteracts them by talking about his own behaviour, in this context, his German which is “not broken” (line 18) (“nicht gebrochen”) and his way of dressing, which is not in accordance with “their ideas of how a Turk dresses” (line 19) (“deren Vorstellungen wie sich ein Türke kleidet”). In terms of the denaturalization principle, Can contests “their ideas of how a Turk dresses” and challenges “ideologically motivated perceptions of their identity […] based on their phenotype” (Bucholtz &
Hall, 2005, p. 602) and undermines essentialist assumptions of German-Turks. Can discursively and explicitly performs social integration by counteracting all the stereotypical behaviours associated with Turks with examples of his own “integrated behaviour” and thereby constructs himself as integrated. Indicated by the positionality principle, Can portrays himself as an integrated self as a German with a Turkish background and constructs himself as adapted and modern (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

According to the distinction relation, Can suppresses similarities with the Turkish group and constructs himself as different, thereby positioning himself in opposition to the Turkish community. Moreover, he creates a “them” versus “they” dichotomy between the German public and the Turkish minority by referring to “their” (Germans’) ideas of “a Turk’s” fashion sense and positions himself in opposition to both worlds. His initial rejection of his Turkishness now transitions to the rejection of both Turkishness and Germanness, showing the dynamic nature of his identification processes. The creation of this particular dichotomy is especially interesting as participants most frequent dichotomised “us” and “them”, as described in earlier sections. In this vein, while participants usually position themselves as part of either the Turkish or the German community, in this instance Can positions himself outside both worlds and thereby rejects both Turkishness and Germanness. Can’s “them” versus “they” dichotomy, however, is not an exception, although it does not appear as frequently as the “us” versus “them” dichotomy. Toprak, from another focus group, for instance constructed this very dichotomy by stating “And the good Turkish students who have a good degree bla bla those are the Germans those are not the Turks” (“Und die guten türkischen Schüler, die einen guten Abschluss haben blabla das sind ja die Deutschen das sind nicht die Türken”).

This imagined dialogue serves Can as a tool to address stereotypes and the dominant public perception in Germany regarding Turkish-origin individuals. It also showcases how “narratives of who is to integrate and who is part of the national group into which integration should occur are reiterated through discourse and action, often underscoring essentialist ideas of the national group and an immigrant Other” (Moffitt et al., 2018, p. 1) and how these discourses in time guide the behaviour and interaction of individuals with a migration background (McLean & Syed, 2015), such as Can’s
and Mete’s. This is done to such an extent that those individuals utilise strategies, such as name-changing, among others, in order to portray themselves as integrated and reject taking on the role of the “Other”.

The socio-economic status of German-Turks is found to be much lower compared to other ethnic groups in Germany and is mainly investigated employing quantitative methods (e.g. Jugert et al., 2020; Song, 2011; Strobel & Kristen, 2015; Tucci et al., 2014). In addition, the mainstream German media mostly depicts German-Turks as individuals who “do not want to integrate” (Mora, 2009) and “object to learn German” (p. 622) and as a group who “remain at the very bottom” as the online newspaper Neue Bürcher Zeitung phrased their headline for their article about German-Turks’ socio-economic status in 2017 (“Warum sie ganz unten bleiben”) (see Appendix 10.3 for a screenshot of the front page).

In sum, “[n]ewspaper articles as well as politicians and residents portray ⟨…⟩ Turkish immigrants as unwilling or unable to assimilate” (Caglar, 2001; Der Tagesspiegel 2004 as cited in Ehrkamp, 2006, p. 1674). Regarding language proficiencies, Can uses the term “broken German” indicating the incorrect use of German language by Turks. This stems from the large body of research and media which highlight that people from a Turkish background have low levels of German proficiency compared to other ethnic groups, which is ultimately manifested in public discourse and has led to the generalisation of individuals with a Turkish background.

Biedinger et al. (2015, p. 1) state that “[i]n Germany, about 35% of those with Turkish migration backgrounds speak predominantly Turkish, less than 5% categorize themselves as predominantly German speakers and 60% are bilingual”. Similarly, Alba (2005, p. 37) claims that “[in] Germany, the impressionistic evidence is that Turks are more likely to maintain the mother tongue at home” and have lower levels of German proficiency compared to other ethnic groups (Song, 2011). Language is generally understood to be a central part of successful integration (Esser, 2006) a major component of social integration and, while there is a high number of Turks with language problems (Klinkhammer, 2003), the percentage of second generation
German-Turks with high levels of German language proficiency is also very high (Bender & Seifert, 2003, p. 81).

By mocking an imagined person who reflects these perceptions, and portraying himself as someone who disputes these portrayals, Can challenges and contests the stereotypical discourses that exist in academia, politics and media. While doing so, he does not construct a German or Turkish identity but creates an alternative identity for himself, as the emergence principle describes (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). More specifically, this alternative identity sits in between the Turkish and the German identity, both rejected by Can.

In lines 21 and 23, the interviewer (myself) seeks clarification by asking Can the reason for his unwillingness to display his Turkishness and whether it is due to “racist experiences” or “to escape from the discussion” that he described in the beginning of his story. Can quickly responds to this question, confirming “Discussion.” (line 24) (“Diskussion.”). The slow pronunciation and a falling intonation indicate the importance of this term. Can adds on and highlights: to “avoid EXCLUSION” (lines 24 – 25). This presents a clear perceived link between a Turkish-sounding name and discrimination. Thus, Can not only positions himself as integrated and fosters his own sense of belonging to the German society, he also rejects discrimination. According to Koshravi (2012) name-changing by religious or ethnic groups is a “strategy to cope with and manage stigmatisation and discrimination” (p. 66).

Can produces these interactional identities via stance taking and while those identities are not only built individually by Can, but more broadly across the German-Turkish community, these identities accrue into more enduring ones, forming ideologies of the relationship between German-Turks and the wider German society (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). In this vein, these identities, as per the relationality principle, are co-constructed by German-Turks and mainstream discourses of integration and German-Turks (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). According to Mora (2009, p. 618), reality is established by language and “[d]iscourse not only reproduces the reality but also defines and builds it”.

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Issues of social integration are clearly highlighted in this excerpt. “Social integration is the creation of relationships and mutual knowledge and understanding across different societal groups” (Hasebrink, 1999 as cited in Arnold & Schneider, 2007, p. 117). Can stresses his effort to mingle with German society, to belong and form relationships but that, despite his efforts, he still experiences exclusion and discrimination, due to factors such as his Turkish name, to name but one, which diminishes his chances of building relationships and to feel belonging. As described in earlier chapters, receiving no acceptance by the German society leads to alienation and a stronger identification with Turkey, as Meryem puts in a nutshell: “The more I am pressed into this ‘THEY’, the Turks, the more Turkish I feel yes” (“Desto mehr ich in diese ‘DIE’ gedrückt werde, die Türken, desto türkischer fühle ich mich ja”).

This rather hostile reaction by German society experienced by Can has a strong effect on German-Turks – a denial and rejection of their Turkishness by hiding their Turkish names, as otherwise they experience discrimination on different levels, not only in personal relationships and conversations but more broadly in the employment market, in school or in public (Salentin, 2007, 2008).

Can claims that “people are strongly biased” (line 25). Talking about the context in Germany he refers to German “people” and links this to stereotypes of Turks circulating in the public. In alignment with the indexicality principles, Can imposes a certain biased attitude onto “people” in general (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). He then proceeds to list explicit examples of the problems that German-Turks deal with in daily life due to biases existing in German society: “you want to enter a night club (.). there’re //[laughs]:problems:

you want to meet girls (.). there’re problems like as soon as they know hey a Turk then: yeah (lines 26 – 28) (“willst du in Klub reinkommen (.). gibt’s //Probleme [lachend]\ (.). willst du Mädels kennenlernen (.). gibt’s Probleme so sobald die wissen ey Türke und so nà dann: ja”).

The contexts that Can refers to here are particularly noteworthy, as he problematises social integration in terms of social contexts such as night clubs or in interactional contexts and thus pragmatically when “meeting girls”. Many participants experience and talk about issues in education or employment and link discrimination and racism experiences to these contexts. This is supported by research reporting findings that show interpersonal, institutional and systemic discrimination in German university-track schools, where teachers very often
rate Turkish heritage students as academically less competent and expect worse performance than from white German students (Moffitt et al., 2019) linking their underachievement to internal factors while dismissing situational factors (Froehlich et al., 2015). Being “de facto categorised as immigrants” (Moffitt et al., 2019, p. 833) exposes German Turks to this type of institutional discrimination, as “being German still tends to be equated with exclusionary norms”, for instance being white (Hubbard & Utsey, 2015; Moffitt et al., 2018) speaking German accent free (Foroutan et al., 2019) and having German ancestry (Ditlmann et al., 2011). Schools are key institutions of norm reproduction (Bourdieu, 2000) which indicates a pivotal role of schools and teachers in influencing belonging of Turkish heritage Germans. Societal success and belonging are moreover informed by these exclusionary norms as well as self-perceptions of German Turks and their ability to form relationships with white German peers in schools or other contexts.

In this example, Can specifically refers to the relational aspect of social integration. For him, being a Turk or being perceived as a Turk, hinders his opportunities to build relationships, thus constitutes a problem for his social integration. This suggests that the pure willingness to integrate into society is not sufficient as social integration is only feasible once immigrants are “accepted into equal membership in the host society” (Karcher & Darity, 2010, p. 3). Nevertheless, it is interesting to observe how participants create strategies for themselves to find a way around problems of and/or requirements for acceptance by the “host” society to establish relationships. Similar to example 4.5, this focus group was not a mixed one in terms of gender but was only formed by male participants. Here again, no notable differences in participant reactions, meaning- and sense-making are evident. In terms of age/life phase, these two participants are more than a decade older than the female participants in focus group 7 and the way in which all participants approach mainstream discourses is one in which they reject and challenge these. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

Lastly, Can uses the personal pronoun “you” (“du”), which serves as a generic way to refer to other male German-Turks and assumes shared experiences with them. Mete signals his understanding and shared experiences by nodding and simultaneously
uttering “hmm” (line 29). They thereby jointly construct a group identity (relationality principle) and collaboratively complain about biases, prejudgements and stereotypes about Turks. The last part of Can’s statement especially indicates how Turks in particular are approached by the dominant society because “as soon as they know ‘hey a Turk’ then: yeah” (line 28) it leads to “problems” that Turks in Germany face. According to the partialness principle, the identity that Mete and Can collaboratively and intersubjectively construct is arguably an outcome of German society’s perceptions of Turks, as well as larger ideological processes that play a part in creating the dominant and stereotypical representations of German-Turks in Germany (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

All principles of Bucholtz & Hall’s (2005) framework evince the ever shifting and dynamic identity constructions of my participants. The partialness principle in particular illustrates how the process of rejecting and embracing Germanness and Turkishness is “constantly shifting, both as an interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606). The next example will further illustrate how participants reject their Turkishness by positioning themselves in opposition to a certain “class” of Turks, thereby categorising within the Turkish community in Germany.

**Example 6.2: “I also don’t identify myself with ‘those’ Turks”**

Context: The group is talking about the overall image of German-Turks in Germany.

1 Yesim: So do Southerners28 or Turks have a bad //reputation\ here you think?
2 Toprak: /NO\
3 Bora: /No\
4 Toprak: THEY DON’T HAVE a bad reputation (.) it is (.) but it is being //sorted out between (.) it is being sorted out between academic Turks (xxx)
5 who are not seen that much ((in the media)) (.) it is sorted out between those who kind of lagged behind in their – in their community who

28 The term “Südländer” means ‘Southerner’ and is mostly used to describe people from Southern Europe or the Mediterranean and is stereotypically linked to people with dark hair and skin.
reached a certain education degree who maybe don’t have an
apprenticeship or anything else those are certain traits which develop
(.) I SEE THOSE TOO (.I and I also don’t identify myself with those
TURKS (.) but there is (.I THIS class

All: /[nodding]\

Yesim: Also haben die Südländer oder Türken einen schlechten Ruf hier meint ihr?
Toprak: /NEIN\\
Bora: /Nein\\
Toprak: SIE HABEN KEINEN schlechten Ruf (.) es ist (.) es wird aber es wir
//aussortiert (.) es wird aussortiert zwischen den Akademikertürken (xxx) die ja gar nicht so viel gesehen werden ((in den Medien)) (.) es wird aussortiert zwischen denen die halt irgendwie zurückgeblieben sind in ihrer- in ihrer Community die einen gewissen Abschluss erreicht haben die vielleicht keinen Ausbildungsplatz haben oder sonst irgendwas das sind gewisse Merkmale die entstehen (. I DIE SEHE ICH
AUCH (.) und ich identifiziere mich auch nicht mit diesen TÜRKEN (.) aber es gibt (. I DIESE Klasse

Alle: /[nicken]\

The interviewer starts this exchange by asking the participants about the image of Turks in Germany and whether it is bad (line 1), to which Toprak – with an emphasis – and Bora quickly reply with “No” (lines 2 and 3). Emphasising “NO” and replying quickly signal certainty. Toprak then shares her opinion about the issue of Turks’ reputation in Germany. According to her “THEY” (the Turks) “DON’T HAVE a bad reputation” (line 4) (“SIE HABEN KEINEN schlechten Ruf”), through which she positions herself in opposition to “them” and concomitantly rejects Turkishness. The emergence principle suggests that Toprak contributes to the emergence of a new identity for Turks living in Germany by authenticating their reputation as “not bad” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). It is important to mention that the majority of my participants regard German-Turks’ reputation in Germany in the eyes of “native” Germans as
rather negative. However, while Toprak expresses an opposite viewpoint at this point in line 11, she identifies a lower social “class” (“Klasse”) and thereby agrees with common public perceptions as well as mainstream discourses of German-Turks. This suggests that Toprak takes on a “temporary and interactionally specific stance” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 592) towards Turks in Germany as well as their image, as the positionality principle suggests.

Before Toprak mentions this “class”, she first elaborates on a certain distinction between different groups of Turks in Germany, the “academic Turks” (“Akademikertürken”) whose presence in the media is not high (line 5) and the kind that “lagged behind in their – in their community” (“zurückgeblieben sind in ihrer Community”) in terms of education and employment (lines 7 – 8). With regards to the creation of this distinction, Toprak uses the passive voice and does not specify who or what distinguishes these two groups: “but it is being // sorted out between (…) it is being sorted out between”) (lines 6 – 7) (“es wird aber es wird //aussortiert (…) es wird aussortiert zwischen”). Accordingly, Toprak implicitly suggests that the distinction is something that is “done to them”. Thereby, as captured by the partialness principle, she creates an agency which “may be ascribed through the perceptions and representations of others or assigned through ideologies and social structures” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 606-607). Therewith, the source of the creation of this “distinction” is oriented to larger power structures and ideologies in Germany.

Toprak also acknowledges that in the media (as we discussed shortly before this exchange) the portion of “academic Turks […] are not seen that much” (lines 5 – 6) (“Akademikertürken die ja gar nicht so viel gesehen werden”). The relation of illegitimation, “addresses the ways in which identities are dismissed, censored, or simply ignored by […] structures of institutionalized power and ideology, whether local or translocal” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 603). This way, Toprak conveys that certain groups of Turks are ignored by the media and the construction of educated German-Turks is thereby challenged and dismissed.
At the same time Toprak positions herself outside of both of these categories of “academic Turks” and the ones who “lagged behind” socio-economically by distancing herself from them and referring to them in the third person. Hence, she rejects her Turkish identity at this point of the interaction. The bad reputation that Toprak was denying Turks have (line 4) now seems to be existent and addressed to the class of Turks who are rather lower positioned in the social class order and do not perform well socio-economically. It can be assumed that, in Toprak’s view (which is shared by the majority of my participants) this group is presented in the media as opposed to the “academic Turks”, as Toprak does not repeat her claim that they “are not seen that much” (line 6). As previously mentioned, typical portrayals of German-Turks in Germany consist of the lower-class group, who is not educated, criminal, and not willing to integrate (Kaya, 2007; Mora, 2009; Song, 2011) to name but a few features. These largely negative portrayals reflect and reconstruct stereotypes and prejudices that manifest in the public and that are associated with the share of German-Turks who do not share these traits – as Toprak defines them as “academic Turks”, which is what participants mostly reject and challenge in the focus groups.

Toprak confirms this by stating “I SEE THOSE TOO” (line 10) (“DIE SEHE ICH AUCH”) emphasising her choice of words, thereby signalling authentication and validating the existence of this specific “class” of Turks. She iterates her distanced position towards this class by referring to them as the third person “THOSE”. For this reason, she constructs herself in opposition to a Turkish identity, by rejecting one aspect of a collection of Turkish identities and characterisations. She keeps distancing herself from this group in what follows: “I also don’t identify myself with those TURKS” (lines 10 – 11) (“ich identifiziere mich auch nicht mit diesen. TÜRKEN”). Just like in her statement before, Toprak here outlines a negative stance towards “those Turks” and positions herself in opposition to this group. In alignment with the positionality principle, Toprak assumes a temporary participant role as an “educated” Turk and indexes towards her higher social class (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Moreover, she produces adequation by juxtapositioning the group of “academic Turks” and the group of those “lagged behind” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). According to the complementary identity relation distinction – the counterpart of adequation – Toprak distances herself from the group of Turks with lower social class by focusing on the
difference between herself and this very class. Bora and Betül utter their agreement with Toprak’s speech by nodding along (line 12), which signals shared understanding and creates a jointly constructed group identity.

In this section I tried to illustrate how German-Turkish participants construct their various identities by rejecting Turkishness and how these complex processes in turn convey how social integration can function through language. Participants portray themselves as integrated individuals, for instance, by applying name-changing strategies to form relationships more easily (example 6.1) or by positioning themselves in opposition to uneducated, and thus unintegrated, German-Turks (example 6.2). The next section examines the other main activity, rejecting Germanness, and explores how participants portray and construct themselves and others whilst making social integration relevant.

6.1.2 Rejecting Germanness

The previous section investigated the various ways in which participants reject their Turkishness by constructing their different identities to capture the relevance of social integration and illustrated that social integration processes are activated by indicating stronger bonds with Germanness. The data also shows, however, that participants frequently reject Germanness. By considering traditional definitions of social integration, which is measured by looking at whether individuals with a migration background feel attached to or identify with the wider majority society (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017), it can be assumed that this very activity of rejecting Germanness prevents social integration, as it implies a non-attachment and non-identification with Germany. The analysis shows that this process is not as clear-cut as these traditional proxies of social integration present and that participants’ rejection of Germanness is a complex process entangled with their various identities they construct and negotiate, as well as the ways they talk about their social integration. The following two examples will explore this in more detail. Example 6.3 is the longer version of what I briefly mentioned at the end of chapter 4 and will now present an in-depth analysis of the sequence.
Example 6.3: “I say NO! (...) don’t TAKE my migration background away!”

Context: The group is talking about the Turkish language and how it gains popularity within Germany both for Turks and Germans. Shortly before the following excerpt, they discussed how the use of Turkish ethnolects by German and Turkish youth in Germany increases, hence Turkish words in daily conversations gain popularity as opposed to being regarded as an indicator of unintegrated individuals. Participants claim that they as German-Turks can turn the mainstream discourse of the perception of Turkish language around.

1 Ela: When Germans tell me ‘you are German’ I say ‘NO you are not in a position to decide what I am and it’s not a compliment for me because don’t TAKE my migration background away’((annoyed tone of voice and strict facial expression)). That’s the problem (.) because many see this as a compliment ‘I am German thank you that I can be German I am accepted now’ (.) my migration background makes me what I am (.) I want to be accepted with what I am I am not German and that’s great

Ela: Wenn Deutsche mir sagen ‘du bist Deutsche’ dann sag ich ‘NEIN du hast nicht zu entscheiden was ich bin und für mich ist es kein Kompliment, weil NIMM mir meinen Migrationshintergrund nicht weg’ ((genervter Stimmtonton und ernster Gesichtsausdruck)). Das ist das Problem (.) weil viele sehen das dann als Kompliment ‘Ich bin deutsch, danke, dass ich deutsch sein kann, ich bin jetzt akzeptiert’ (.) mein Migrationshintergrund macht mich zu dem was ich bin (.) ich möchte akzeptiert werden mit dem was ich bin ich bin nicht Deutsch und das ist toll

This excerpt illustrates how Ela outlines a negative stance towards Germanness by mocking and ridiculing German-Turks who desire to be accepted as German, while she rejects the condescending attribution which erases her Turkish identity. The statement starts with Ela describing her feeling and reaction when “Germans tell [her]
‘you are German’ (line 1) ("Wenn Deutsche mir sagen ‘du bist Deutsche’"), in which she positions herself in opposition to “Germans”. This opposition is further strengthened by her hypothetical reaction towards “you are German”, she states “NO you are not in a position to decide what I am and it’s not a compliment for me because don’t TAKE my migration background away” (lines 1 – 3) (“‘NEIN du hast nicht zu entscheiden was ich bin und für mich ist es kein Kompliment, weil NIMM mir meinen Migrationshintergrund nicht weg’”). Drawing on the relationality principle, Ela illegitimates a German identity that, in her view, is not a decision someone else can or should make for her (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). This is supported by her highlighting “NO” with an annoyed tone of voice and an upset facial expression and body language, which signals an explicit rejection of Germanness which Ela depicts as an imposition by a “native” German in this imitated dialogue. She uses the personal pronoun “you” generically referring to “native” Germans. This can be linked to the perception of integration often falsely understood as assimilation (Lefringhausen, 2021) by participants and on a wider societal level.

Ela emphasises that being positioned as German is “not a compliment” for her, as this portrayal neglects her “migration background”. She challenges mainstream terminologies of integration in Germany, which highlight assimilation as successful integration into German society (i.e., to give up one’s migration background). The way she frames the latter is noteworthy, as she constructs her migration background as something that can be “TAKEN away”, thus she implies that her agency as an individual to accomplish her own identity as a social action is confined (Bucholtz & Hall). Ela’s statement can be linked to the partialness principle, which defines identity as constructed “in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation and contestation, in part an outcome of others’ perceptions and representations” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606). Interestingly, Ela reproduces mainstream perceptions of Germanness in which “the unmarked term ‘German’ remains reserved for white individuals without a ‘migration background’” (Moffit et al., 2018, p. 14).

Ela rejects Germanness whilst embracing her ethnic background. This implies that being German, thus being perceived as a member of the wider German society, leads
to the loss of her Turkishness, which in this statement Ela is not willing to give up. In terms of social integration, which can be measured by examining whether “immigrants consider themselves as – and act as – members of the host society, as well as whether they are perceived as such by the native population” (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017, p. 286), this definition suggests that the “host” society, here “German”, does perceive and construct Ela as a member of society. However, Ela’s non-identification with the broader German society suggests that social integration is not successful in this certain example. Through language Ela excludes herself from the social group of Germans. This result is the opposite to what has been established in the previous section (rejecting Turkishness), namely that the willingness to mingle and integrate, as well as the self-perception of being German, is existent, but the acceptance from the wider German society is missing.

Ela then describes this attitude as a problem, specifically that “many see this as a compliment” (lines 4 – 5) (“viele sehen das dann als Kompliment”) to be perceived and accepted as German. With “many” she refers to other German-Turks, like her. Once again, she showcases a sequence of imitation, this time a German-Turk: “‘I am German thank you that I can be German I am accepted now’” (lines 5 – 6) (”Ich bin deutsch, danke, dass ich deutsch sein kann ich bin jetzt akzeptiert”). This contradicts numerous other experiences and attitudes by participants, who complained about the struggles to be perceived and accepted as Germans in German society despite their integrated positions and their efforts to prove it.

In alignment with the positionality principle, Ela uses this represented discourse to ridicule those who regard the acceptance as a German as a compliment and make negative evaluations of this group of German-Turks and, implicitly, positively evaluates herself as someone who is not “fooled” by this unauthentic acceptance. She also marks the quoted German-Turks’ collective stance of awe towards Germans. Because this utterance is a represented dialogue, Ela at the same time signals her orientation of disdain towards fellow German-Turks’ desire to be accepted as a German (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).
Moreover, Ela implies that this is something which is given to them by Germans and for that they have to be thankful. She also ridicules that such German-Turks interpret this fact as being accepted by larger German society. Hence, she depicts “native” Germans as being superior to Turks for two reasons. Firstly, in terms of who decides when a person can be German or not, and secondly by implying that the German identity is more accepted and preferred by the receiving group. This way, Ela rejects the power move (hegemonic) rather than her aspects of her own German identity. Evinced by the indexicality principle, Ela exploits presupposition to, firstly, construct Germans as powerful and, secondly, presupposes that German-Turks are willing subjects to accept this power, which thus portrays them as inferior. Hence, Ela locates identity in the situated social positions of a powerful “host” versus powerless “migrants” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

In the last part of her statement, Ela refers to her “migration background” again and indicates a very strong link between her “migration background”, her non-Germanness, and her identity: “my migration background makes me what I am” (line 6) (“mein Migrationshintergrund macht mich zu dem was ich bin”). This sentence illustrates how Ela’s identities subliminally operate at multiple levels (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). First of all, the label “migration background” is in itself a distancing term toward the wider German society. With this label, she positions herself in opposition to German society, as she indicates a migration of herself or of her parents to Germany. At the same time however, this term also implies some level of belonging to Germany, particularly the word “background”, strengthened by the language she uses: German. More specifically, she constructs her identity somewhere in-between while also highlighting her background, which is different from German. Ela opens a new identity category and constructs herself as different, not specifically appointing the place of origin she or her ancestors migrated from.

Interestingly, the term “migration background” is largely contested by individuals who themselves or their ancestors immigrated into the country. In daily life it is mostly used to stigmatise certain groups (Yildirim, 2020) and many people feel diminished by this term (Leubecher, 2021). In this vein, the expert committee for integration ability as part of the German federal government (Fachkommission
Integrationsfähigkeit) suggested to eliminate this term, as many of those concerned do not feel represented and that the term “background” should be pushed to the foreground. They suggested to use the term “immigrants and their (direct) descendants” instead ("Eingewanderten und ihren (direkten) Nachkommen") (FachkommissionIntegrationsfähigkeit, 2021). Is that better?

In this particular example, Ela intentionally puts her migration background to the foreground and highlights it as part of her identity, part of “what [she is]” (line 6). As part of the partialness principle, Ela implicitly contests the act of claiming Germanness as well as the master narrative that integration is accomplished once a person “lives and acts like a German”, and fulfils all obligations required to be integrated (Amelina & Faist, 2008). Despite the fact that research-based definitions of integration also include links to heritage and home culture (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013), in public usage demands for integration often resemble assimilation, where (visible) diversity is understood as failed integration (Reijerse et al., 2013). It is this understanding that Ela rejects and challenges, as “even assimilation may not be possible in the face of rigid understandings of a homogenous national group, which offers a banal sense of belonging to some while excluding others” (Moffit et al., 2018, p. 4). Moffit et al. (2018) moreover argue that “the integration demand reiterates the narrative of Germany as ethnically homogenous while fostering a feedback loop of contested belonging” (p. 4). Ultimately, Ela’s line of argument challenges the concept of (social) integration as reflected in mainstream media, which Mueller (2006, p. 14) defines as “turning Turks into Germans”, while paradoxically “reinforcing the ethnic-oriented master narrative that to be German without explanation means having German ancestry” (Moffit et al., 2018, p. 7).

Under these circumstances, ethnic marking becomes a powerful tool used by Ela to constitute herself as a person who is more than “German”, who is “different” or “special”, which can be linked to Ela’s statement presented at the beginning of this chapter “I am as German as any other German (.) but I am still something else” (“Ich bin genauso Deutsch wie jeder andere Deutsche (.) aber ich bin nochmal was anderes”). Thereby, as evinced by the emergence principle, Ela discursively produces an identity emerged by constructing herself as “different” from “native Germans” but
in alliance with other people with a migration background. Additionally, she constitutes herself as a “non-native” German in opposition to what her peers, who she imitated, would expect to be seen like. Therefore, she positions her identity by the interactional demands of her narrative (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). The adequation relation shows that this speech also allows Ela to claim just enough similarity with people having a migration background to produce herself alike but also highlights that she is still “different” as evinced by the opposite relation distinction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

Ela protects herself from being labelled into any kind of ethnic category, neither German nor Turkish, or German-Turkish, but highlights the importance of her background. This way, Ela supports her claim from the beginning of her statement that she does not want to be German but wants to keep her migration background and position herself as an outsider to German society. “Social integration would imply that immigrants no longer consider the native population as an ‘outsider’ group and that they express trust and willingness to cooperate with them in the same way as they do with compatriots” (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017, p. 286). Therefore, this part of Ela’s statement would indicate low levels of social integration. It is important to note that Ela is a Master student, actively engaging in activities to support people of colour or religious minorities at the University by holding seminars or attending relevant workshops and lectures. Moreover, during other parts of the focus group Ela repeatedly embraced her Germanness and constructed herself as integrated and German at different points throughout the discussion. This illustrates the complexity and intersectionality of participants’ identity construction and gives clues about the sense-making mechanisms involved in the processes of social integration.

In this vein, as opposed to the previous sentence, Ela’s last sentence would imply higher social integration levels as she expresses a willingness to be accepted, which was not prevalent before. She adds that she wants “to be accepted with what I am” (line 7) (“ich möchte akzeptiert werden mit dem was ich bin”). Ela challenges the master narratives of belonging to Germany only when being a white German without a migrant background (Moffit et al., 2018). As a diverse country, which continues to diversify, people with a “migration background” are still marginalised and often
perceived as “the Other”. Ela implicitly argues that she can belong with “what [she is]” – namely as a person who is not “native” German and, thus, she is referring to discourses about what it means to be German in contemporary Germany (Elrick & Farah Schwartzman, 2015).

She finalises and states “I am not German and that’s great” (lines 7 – 8) (“ich bin nicht Deutsch und das ist toll”). In this sentence, Ela explicitly rejects a German identity and constructs a non-German identity for herself. She expresses her happiness about the fact that she is “not German” (‘that’s great”). In alignment with the indexicality principle, she indexes a negative stance towards the identity category of German, which she overtly mentions and openly and radically emphasises by celebrating this negative stance (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). As before, she does not provide an alternative belonging or ethnic identity but only emphasises that she is “not German”, which strengthens the rejection of Germanness. If linked to what Ela said shortly before, that she wants to be accepted, she calls for an acceptance by the wider society despite not being German and redefines narratives of belonging. Furthermore, she indexes a positive stance towards non-Germanness and implicitly portrays diversity as an enrichment in German society. According to the illegitimation relation, Ela censors and dismisses a German identity. Finally, Ela unmask3s herself as non-German and undermines essentialised demands of people with a migrant background to assimilate into German society by “being German”. Thus, she denaturalizes (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) such dominant perceptions of integration and assimilation and mainstream discourses around social integration in Germany.

The next example will further illustrate how participants reject their Germanness and explicitly construct themselves as Turkish, due to daily discourses by Germans which reinforce a “perpetual foreigner stereotype” among non-white individuals, who may experience regular feedback that they do not belong to the national group (Armenta et al., 2013), even in the most mundane interactions and situations and through seemingly innocuous questions.
Example 6.4: “Now I am all the more Turk”

Context: After talking about how my participants think they are perceived by others (e.g., Turkish and/or German) and about stereotypical labels used to describe Turks in public and media discourses, the discussion moved on to how they themselves would describe and position themselves in terms of nationality.

1 Meryem: The longer I live in Germany (.) because I was born and raised here (.) the more people I get to know or deal with more Germans although I had that my entire life (.) I realise more and more how they are against Erdogan how they are against this how they find everything stupid and too many Turks and too much (.) the more I feel inside of me like ‘pff fuck you I am a Turk’ (f) (.) yeah (.) like pff I wouldn’t have usually said that (.) but because of these – this annoyance because there’s always a question “What? You don’t eat meat? Why? You gotta eat Döner you gotta eat Sucuk” (ridiculing tone of voice)) it’s just the way (.) yeeeah fuck you now I’m all the more Turk (m) my honour and that ((sarcastic tone of voice)) [laughs]

12 Ersin: [laughs]


Sucuk or Sujuk is a dry, spicy and fermented sausage and a Turkish national dish, which is popular among the Turkish community in Germany. In German it is often called “Knoblauchwurst” (“Garlicsausage”).
In this excerpt Meryem narrates her experiences with regards to tendencies of “native” Germans to discriminate against people of Turkish heritage and the resulting action that she often takes – rejecting Germanness. She starts by mentioning the length of the time she has lived and lives in Germany: “The longer I live in Germany” (line 1) (“Desto länger ich in Deutschland lebe”), while also referring to her birth and upbringing: “because I was born and raised here” (line 1) (“ich bin ja hier geboren und aufgewachsen”). Engaging in autobiographical reasoning (Habermas, 2011) Meryem creates a relation between her past, present and future. At first, she only references her residual connection to Germany to then give a more detailed explanation and mention that she was born and raised in Germany as opposed to only “live there”, which signals certain levels of justification. Emphasising her birth and upbringing, Meryem positions herself as part of German society, which she implicitly counteracts with the next claim “the more people I get to know or deal with more Germans” (line 2) (“desto mehr Leute ich kennenlerne oder mit mehr Deutschen zu tun habe”). Here, she creates a “me” versus “them” dichotomy and constructs herself as non-German. First, she refers to “people” in general that she keeps getting to know, to then specifically mention “more Germans”. This statement is once again backed up by a justification that she has lived in Germany and/or has been meeting Germans her entire life “although I had that my entire life” (lines 2 – 3) (“obwohl ich das ja mein Leben lang hatte”). She is explaining away any potential threat of not belonging to Germany that she may receive. In line with the authentication relation, Meryem authenticates both her narrative about her life and upbringing in Germany, as well as her German identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

Meryem then continues to explain what happens the more Germans she meets throughout her life. She claims to realise “more and more how they are against Erdogan how they are against this how they find everything stupid and too many Turks and too much” (lines 3 – 4) (“krieg ich immer mehr mit wie die gegen Erdogan sind wie die gegen das sind wie die wie die alles doof finden und so viele Türken und zu
Meryem constructs Germans (“they”) in opposition to “so many Turks”. Just like Can in example 6.1, Meryem creates the rather exceptional “they” versus “them” dichotomy, excluding herself from both worlds and constructing herself as different. Thereby, she positions herself as being neither German nor Turkish and rejects both Germanness and Turkishness. Moreover, Meryem portrays Germans as a negative group, listing all the things they are against and how they dislike “everything” (i.e., Erdogan and “too many Turks”). As the indexicality principle evinces, Meryem signals presuppositions about Germans’ perception about Turks and implicatures about their identity as Germans not accepting “too many Turks” in the country (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

As explained in earlier sections, participants often experience how Germans associate the Turkish president with German-Turks and expect a positive attitude towards him. Can, from another focus group, highlights this sentiment by saying: “One gets asked straight away ‘what is your president doing there?’ (.) you have to justify right away (.) That is like, when you say ‘What do you think of Adolf?’” (“Es wird gleich gefragt ‘was macht denn euer Präsident?’ (.) man muss sich gleich rechtfertigen. Das ist wie, wenn man sagt ‘Was hältst du von Adolf?’”). In alignment with the adequation relation, Can’s juxtapositioning of Erdogan and Adolf [Hitler] “establishes discursive ground for the production of adequation between the two entities” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005. p. 600).

In the German media as well as among the German public, Erdogan is negatively perceived as a controversial politician Islamising Turkey and suppressing people who express dissent against him (Vogeler, 2015). This statement also showcases the negative perception of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, not only by German society but also by the German-Turkish group as well. Moreover, it signals a demand from German-Turks to support Erdogan. Melda, another participant (see example 5.1), expresses her aversion towards these links more extremely by declaring: “‘AND I want Erdogan in your face’ like that” (“UND ich will Erdogan in euer Gesicht’ so”). The expression “in your face” is generally used to cause feelings of anger and displeasure, and as an idiomatic phrase serves Melda to challenge alienations towards German-Turks. In addition, the fact that German-Turks are often linked to the
contested Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan demonstrates an implied negative perception of German-Turks in Germany. According to the *indexicality* principle a right-wing Erdogan-supporting identity is imposed on participants “from the top down by cultural authorities such as intellectuals or the media” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 596) and evinced by the *authorization* relation: an Erdogan-supporting identity is imposed on participants by creating an identification of a shared moral stance between Erdogan and German-Turks (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Can explains that he always has to justify whenever Erdogan appears in the media due to certain (mostly negatively evaluated) political actions. He intensifies Erdogan’s negative image by comparing him to the dictator Adolf Hitler and hypothetically asking Germans what they think of him.

Having said this, Meryem implies the negative perception of Turkish origin individuals in Germany by stating that Germans are against Erdogan. She explicitly sends out this message by stating that “they find everything stupid and too many Turks” (line 4) (“wie die alles doof finden und so viele Türken und zu viel”). By mentioning “finding everything stupid” and “too many Turks”, Meryem firstly implies that Turks are perceived as stupid and secondly that Germans find there are “too many Turks” in Germany. Thereby, Meryem indicates the levels of discrimination and racism that people of Turkish heritage might experience in their daily lives and constructs Germans as racist. In terms of social integration, this suggests a hindrance for German-Turks to socially integrate into German society, to build relationships and form friendships. In this particular example, the white German society seems to create the hindrance by not accepting German-Turks. Germany is often cited to be ethnic-oriented (Moffit et al., 2018) which is supported by Ditlmann et al. (2011) who claim that the conception of everyday individuals of the idea of who is German reflects a master narrative of having to have a German ancestry.

All these negative associations, the discrimination and overall attitude of Germans that Meryem represents, frustrate her: “the more I feel inside of me like ‘pff fuck you I am a Turk’ (f) (. ) yeah” (lines 5 – 6) (“desto mehr kommt in mir so ‘pff fick dich ich bin Türkin’ (. ) so”). Meryem describes her frustration and anger that are activated “inside of [her]” by being discriminated against in the dominant society. She expresses her
disappointment and anger uttering profane language and stating “pff fuck you”. The
interjection “pff” can be understood as an expression of annoyance or disappointment.
The personal pronoun “you” is used to refer to Germans engaging in these kinds of
discriminating and Othering actions and Meryem responds to them in an imitated
dialogue that she is “a Turk” out of defiance, which was uttered by many other
participants in this study. She implies that by not being accepted by Germans she
decides to embrace her Turkish identity. Thus, she rejects Germanness and actively
constructs a Turkish identity for herself. As captured by the partialness principle,
Meryem adopts an identity that seems to be demanded and expected of her, thus her
identity “may be ascribed through the perceptions and representations of others or
assigned through ideologies and social structures” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 606-
607).

In the last part of her speech, Meryem explains that she usually would not have said
that “like pff I wouldn’t have usually said that” (lines 6 – 7) (“also pff das hätte ich
sonst nicht gesagt”), where she once again utters annoyance and disappointment with
the use of “pff”. Meryem, thereby mitigates and justifies the fact that she used a
swearword. Meryem implies that in other circumstances she would not use a swear
word nor would she state she is “a Turk”. This sheds light on the possibility that
without these Othering processes, Meryem would “have not said that” she is “a Turk”
and would not feel this level of disappointment and annoyance towards Germans.

At the same time Meryem justifies her statement: “but because of these – this
annoyance because there’s always a question ‘What? You don’t eat meat? Why? You
gotta eat Döner you gotta eat Sucuk’ ((ridiculing tone of voice)) it’s just the way (.)
yeeeh fuck you now I’m all the more Turk (m)” (lines 7 – 10) (“aber durch dieses-
diese Genervtheit weil immer ‘ne Frage kommt “Was? Du isst kein Fleisch? Wieso?
Du musst doch Döner essen du musst doch Sucuk essen” ((verspottender Stimmtton))
ist halt so (.) jaa fick dich jetzt bin ich erst recht Türke”). In this last statement,
Meryem refers to everyday questions and comments she receives from Germans,
which seem innocuous at first but can have a strong effect in creating exclusionary
feelings among those who are being addressed (i.e., questions/comments such as
((ridiculing tone of voice))” (line 9). In alignment with the positionality principle, Meryem utilises this represented discourse to imitate a “native” German asking why she does not eat meat and that she ought to eat Döner, just because Döner is a Turkish dish. Utilising ridicule, she positions the imagined German as not intelligent enough to know that not every Turk has to eat Döner and that those comments and questions are unacceptable.

Meryem underlines the widespread nature of this exclusionary microaggression while expressing her resentment towards its existence and aggravation that it creates. Even if such questions and comments are well-intended, they highlight differences from the norm in the dominant society, which in turn creates exclusion and alienation. It deprives the person concerned of their individuality and limits them in their development.

In Meryem’s case, together with the above-mentioned consequences, it creates disappointment and anger and impacts Meryem’s feeling of belonging – she rejects her Germanness, her German identity and resentfully positions herself as Turkish: “yeeeah fuck you now I’m all the more Turk (m)” (line 10) (“jaa fick dich jetzt bin ich erst recht Türke”). Meryem’s narrative, her use of swear words and a construction of a Turkish identity out of defiance highlight the emotional labour she engages in as Othering prompts her to reject and challenge her German identity and negotiate her national belonging. This result showcases how even socially integrated individuals can be driven to lose their motivation to mingle with the German group and self-identify as “one of them”, which is an important indicator for social integration. The emotions that Meryem expresses signal a willingness and desire to be accepted (as opposed to Ela in example 6.3). Once again, it illustrates that even if the willingness to socially integrate and be part of the dominant society is existent and strong, the majority society plays an immensely important role in providing that possibility and creating the motivation for German-Turks to integrate. Most importantly the wider society plays a crucial role for (socially) integrated individuals with regards to

Racial microaggressions are defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271)
question and/or contest their belonging and attachment to Germany, “after a lifetime of already feeling German” (Moffit et al., 2018, p. 12).

Another interesting point in this particular statement is that Meryem uses the masculine version of “Turk” (“Türke”) and omits the article for the noun (the) “Turk”. In the Turkish language, articles can be highlighted through agglutination (Aksoy, 2005). This way of using German can also be associated with an ethnolect “Turkgerman” (“Türkendeutsch”), where speakers omit articles, pronouns, prepositions etc. as it is in the Turkish language (Aksoy, 2005). Meryem, thereby, intensifies the construction of a Turkish identity by marking it with stereotypical language use, the Turkish ethnolect. Finally, she links this defiance of “being all the more Turk” (lines 9 – 10) to stereotypes of this group in Germany (i.e., honour killings31) by stating “my honour and that [laughs]” (line 10). The laughter accompanied with the sarcastic tone of voice indicates humour, which she utilises to challenge and reject these stereotypes and to add on to her annoyance and anger of the first part of her statement of being othered by Germans with for instance microaggression. This sarcastic humour is supported and responded to by Ersin’s laughter (line 12).

This excerpt illustrates how conscious and intentional and sometimes unconscious and unintentional, even well-intended comments and questions can reinforce the “perpetual foreigner stereotype” (Armenta et al., 2013). This so-called (racial) microaggression creates frustration and Othering among Turkish heritage individuals in Germany. This in turn often leads to the development of alienation towards Germany and a rejection of Germanness. Ultimately, feelings of belongingness and attachment towards Turkey are more likely to be strengthened.

31 “Honour killings are most often the murder of a woman or girl by male family members. The killers justify their actions by claiming that the victim has brought dishonour upon the family name or prestige” (Britannica, 2019). Perpetrators with a Turkish background dominate honour killings in Germany with 63.4% (IGFM, 2018).
6.2 Chapter conclusion

The previous chapter has started to address RQ2: “What kinds of identities do [German-Turks] construct and negotiate in the focus groups?” and both sub questions: (a) “Do they construct themselves as Turks, Germans and/or German-Turks?” and (b) “How do they position these different identities in relation to each other – sometimes combining them and at other times contrasting them?”. The current chapter further elaborated on and aided in fully answering RQ2 by exploring what kinds of identities my participants construct and how they do this while rejecting and distancing themselves from mainstream and traditional notions of Turkishness and Germanness.

Before discussing the activity rejecting that this chapter has focused on, it is important to highlight the intersectionality and reciprocity of the processes of rejecting and embracing as the inclusion of membership to Germany and Turkey as well as the exclusion of both often happen simultaneously or alternately during an interaction – hence it is arguable that these two opposites are paradoxically closely linked together. Participants explicitly assign to themselves and others certain (ethnic) identity labels or implicitly by taking on particular stances that signal identity positions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). These identity positions in turn provide clues about the activities of rejecting or embracing Germanness and/or Turkishness to which participants orient themselves. Thus, while they construct their various identities interlocutors at the same time, position themselves in opposition to these, which I will discuss in detail in chapter 7.

With regards to the activity of rejecting, the examples above illustrate the intersectionality of rejecting Turkishness and/or Germanness. These highly context-dependent activity sheds light on the sense-making mechanisms involved in the process of social integration of participants and how it is intertwined with their identity construction and negotiation. On the one hand, they portray and construct themselves as integrated and discursively make social integration relevant by rejecting Turkishness, by changing their names to German-sounding ones to avoid associations with (stereotypical) Turkish behaviours, since “names carry strong ethnic and religious connotations and reveal an individual’s affiliation to a specific group” (Koshravi, 2012, p. 65). They also distance themselves from Turkishness by rejecting
to be part of certain Turkish “classes”, who are uneducated and not integrated, thereby signalling belonging to educated and integrated “classes” in Germany. In both examples, the willingness to be part of the society, to build relationships, form friendships, and to be perceived and accepted as “one of them” strongly appears. Taking social integration into account, these behaviours can be understood as a strong and successful social integration.

However, while the willingness to cooperate exists and is strongly apparent in participants’ dialogues and discussions during the focus groups, levels of trust seem to be lower and even decline due to experiences of discrimination, Othering, racism and the lack of acceptance by the majority population. In these situations, participants reject Germanness and construct themselves as non-German, by rejecting being trapped and framed into stereotypical discourses around German-Turks and Turkish origin individuals in Germany. This in turn leads to anger and resentment towards Germanness and in many cases activates participants urge to position and construct themselves as Turkish (example 6.4). It is thus not surprising that German-Turks alienate from German society in search for acceptance and belonging they sometimes feel to receive from their country of origin. While the rejection of Germanness and the lack of self-identification with Germany is stronger in these particular situations it is not to claim that these individuals lack in social integration. As seen in other examples, the same participants who self-identify with German values and embrace their Germanness can be the ones who reject and challenge those and portray themselves as socially not integrated.

Taken together, these dynamics showcase “that being German means being a white, non-Muslim native German speaker (Moffit et al., 2018, p. 14) and the additional perception that those perceived as “Other” must “integrate” into the national group, regardless of already existent (high) levels of (social) integration. If German-Turks are framed as refusing to integrate – as it is commonly the case in media and public discourse – it “certainly reinforces the perspective of their foreignness” (Baban, 2006, p. 190). This division activates contested belonging, as the same individuals told to integrate are excluded from a national group bounded by an ethnic nationalist narrative of identity (Ehrkamp, 2006; Kunst & Sam, 2014; Mandel, 2008). It furthermore demonstrates how these discursive divisions may work to exclude perceived “Others”.

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Consequently, the ways of Othering and being othered are powerful influences on how participants construct and mobilise their various identities whilst rejecting their Germanness and/or Turkishness. This illustrates how mainstream and stereotypical discourses of German-Turks in contemporary Germany influence the native population’s perception and the accompanied approach and attitude towards German-Turks (i.e., microaggression) as well as German-Turks’ identity construction. The analyses show that the latter is intertwined with social integration, because participants, both individually as well as collaboratively, problematise their identity and social integration often without the interviewer giving any reference to these factors. This in turn illuminates the topicality and relevance of issues of identity, (contested) belonging, social integration and discrimination (which is reinforced by mainstream discourses) in current Germany. It illustrates how discrimination relates to narratives of identity among German-Turks and how it can spur the urge to dispense aspects of their culture of origin – reject their Turkishness – or the urge (mostly in an enraged and disappointed state of mind) to deny themselves a German identity – reject Germanness.

As elaborated earlier, participants sometimes reject both, their Turkishness as well as their Germanness, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes at different points during an interaction. This observation is important to understand that participants reject being categorised and labelled and refuse to choose one over the other. They frequently tend to construct and portray themselves as “different”, “special” and as “something else”, highlighting their individuality that they aim to foreground and develop not as a “German” or a “Turk” or a “German-Turk”. Ultimately, issues of “either-or” are problematised and rejected.

With the aid of the principles of Bucholtz & Hall’s (2005) framework, in this and the previous chapter I have explored and illustrated the ever shifting and dynamic identity constructions of my participants, evinced by the chosen examples above in which participants demonstrate how the process of rejecting (and embracing) Germanness and Turkishness is “constantly shifting, both as an interaction unfolds and across Discourse contexts” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606). The sociolinguistic lens adopted
for this study aided in understanding how German-Turks discursively make sense of their social integration and how it is influenced by their everyday experiences of discrimination, racism as well as mainstream stereotypical discourses of German-Turks’ social integration and how all these factors affect their identity constructions.

Having analysed different interactional examples from the focus groups that reflect the overall experiences of and attitudes towards the social integration of German-Turks that are circulating in German media and reflected in public discourse (chapter 4) as well as the accompanying identity construction elucidating how participants embrace (chapter 5) and/or reject (chapter 6) their Turkishness and/or Germanness, I have illustrated the discursive, fragmented and dynamic nature and negotiation of social integration among participating German-Turks. In the following chapter, I will discuss the findings critically in light of previous literature and the guiding RQs to address this project’s core aims.
Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter discusses and summarises the findings of this study in relation to the RQs and critically positions the key findings within the larger body of knowledge whilst highlighting new contributions to previous research. This study has mainly set out to explore German-Turkish individuals’ identity construction against the background of mainstream discourses around the social integration of German-Turks in Germany from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Specifically, this was done to deepen the understanding of the sense-making processes of social integration by those who are targeted and positioned as integrators in mainstream discourses of social integration in Germany. Deploying the framework from Bucholtz and Hall (2005) to analyse identity within a sociocultural linguistic approach, this study explored the (discursive) processes through which German-Turkish participants experience, describe and make sense of their social integration, and how they thereby construct their various identities.

This study sought to make a contribution by raising awareness of the individual perspectives of those who are positioned as integrators and experience social integration in their daily lives. Although this study focused on German-Turkish individuals living in Germany, theoretical and methodological insights gained from this study can be applied to research on various other minorities in other receiving nations and societies, as integration is a key and pressing policy concern and a matter of significant public discussion for nations worldwide (Ager & Strang, 2008; Larin, 2020).

Before I go into the discussion, I will first reiterate the RQs that guided this study:

i. RQ1: How do German-Turkish descendants experience issues of social integration currently discussed in the media and/or reflected in mainstream public discourses?

ii. RQ2: What kinds of identities do they construct and negotiate in the focus groups?
a. Do they construct themselves as Turks, Germans and/or German-Turks?

b. How do they position these different identities in relation to each other – sometimes combining them and at other times contrasting them?

iii. RQ3: How can the insights of this study be used to enhance and contribute to Germany’s integration policies?

The insights gained from RQ1 and RQ2 are discussed in this chapter, which also outlines the main contributions of this study. Drawing on these insights, RQ3 captures socially applicable results and provides practical implications. These practical implications will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis (8), where I will present some of the ways in which the findings of this study can be used in the future to contribute to and feed into Germany’s integration policies to promote its integration strategies.

In what follows, I will provide a brief summary of the content of the analysis chapters 4, 5 and 6 to exemplify how this research has addressed the RQs (7.1). Thereafter, I will outline and critically discuss the contributions of this study (7.2), where I will discuss how discourses of social integration can be “recontextualised” (7.2.1) to then propose how the concept of social integration can be understood as a multi-participant, interpretive and discursive process (7.2.1.1) and examine participants’ identity construction (7.2.2). Lastly, I will illustrate the methodological contribution of approaching identity construction through the sense-making processes of social integration from a sociolinguistic perspective employing qualitative methods (7.2.3).

7.1 Overview of findings

Chapter 4 addressed RQ1 “How do German-Turkish descendants experience issues of social integration currently discussed in the media and/or reflected in mainstream public discourses?” and laid the groundwork for exploring participants’ individual perspectives of issues of social integration circulating in German media and public discourses. Chapter 4 thereby set out to understand how participants perceive and
approach mainstream discourses around (social) integration in Germany in relation to German-Turks, how they relate to these discourses and which positions they take in them by drawing on their own and others’ (i.e. friends, family, acquaintances) experiences.

The findings have shown that the overall perception of participants about social integration is divergent from mainstream discourses displayed in Germany’s current media landscape, as well as those circulating in societal discourse. They perceived the social integration of German-Turks residing in Germany – mainly addressing their own generation who were born and grew up in Germany – as something that is ‘not an issue’ anymore and as rather positive.

This opposes mainstream German discourses which depict the integration of German-Turks as topical, rather problematic and as something that has to be further developed (see Appendix 10.4 for some examples of related media articles). Consequently, participants strongly reject and challenge these mainstream discourses of (social) integration of German-Turks, both as depicted in the media and reflected in public perception. During the focus group discussions, they predominantly adopted a sarcastic and biting (and sometimes ironic and humorous) discursive style to contest mainstream discourses of German-Turks, and individually as well as collectively negotiate their understanding of (their own) social integration.

At the same time, it has been shown that participants have a very ambiguous relationship with the term integration and use it in different ways. At times they use the term to establish themselves as integrated or as not integrated while reiterating mainstream integration discourses. At other times, they challenge mainstream integration discourses whilst constructing themselves as integrated (or as not integrated). In addition, while some participants argue that integration is not a concern for second, third and following generations, and thus should not be associated with them anymore (example 4.1), others claim that integration has to be discussed due to clashing understandings of the concept by the majority society and the descendants of migrants (example 4.3). Moreover, the narratives of the participants show a number of contradictions. On the one hand, they reject the overall discourses that associate
German-Turks with integration, as well as mainstream terminology of integration, but could only do so by establishing themselves as “integrated” (examples 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). For instance, participants stressed that they “do not want to get integrated” (example 4.2) claiming to already be “fully integrated”, thus making integration relevant again.

Interestingly, much of their own narratives reflect mainstream German discourses (e.g., of “harming” others by living differently, example 4.3). The degree to which participants are “trapped in the discourse” will be elaborated in section 7.2.2 to illustrate how participants construct their identities, establish themselves as integrated – thereby challenging mainstream discourses of German-Turks’ (poor) integration – whilst what can be assumed to be unintentionally drawing on these very discourses and thus reproducing them. Ultimately, the participants’ interactions reflect the challenge that they still need to adopt part of the discourse to be able to reject aspects of it.

Another contradiction is that participants reject being generalised into the group of “the Turks” or “the German-Turks” while generalising themselves (i.e., “we German-Turks”, “we Turks” or “we Kanaks”) and others (i.e., “the/all Germans/Turks” or “the/those/all German-Turks”). This again highlights how powerful dominant discourses in this regard are, as participants relied on them to construct themselves as Germans, Turks and/or “something else” and to reject the portrayal of German-Turks that these discourses disseminate into the public arena.

Participants also seem to hint at participating in the positioning of a “good immigrant – bad immigrant” dichotomy that the mainstream media often displays (i.e., “I am now going to be a legal assistant, so I am practically fully integrated” – Betül in example 4.2). Very often the “bad immigrant” is constructed humorously or even sarcastically to ridicule and thereby reject mainstream discourses. Humour is one of strategies that participants frequently deploy to challenge mainstream discourses of social integration in relation to German-Turks (see Kakalic & Schnurr, 2021).

They often utilise different types of humour (i.e., self-denigrating) to sometimes portray themselves as fully integrated (thereby questioning the legitimation of current
media debates), while at other times ironically (and sometimes even sarcastically) portraying themselves as outsiders displaying the discriminatory stereotypical characteristics often assigned to German-Turks. In one example Melek links an “unacceptable behaviour” to her Turkishness and ironically calls “I better adapt myself” (see Kakalic & Schnurr, 2021 for a detailed analysis). Humour is thereby used as a coping mechanism to talk about the unsayable (Billig, 2001) (i.e., by referring to each other as “Hitler’s boy”)32), to collaboratively make fun of and at the same time criticise the difficulties of social integration – both on an individual as well as a wider societal level – and to “eventually challenge, resist and possibly change current mainstream discourses about the difficulties of social integration” (Kakalic & Schnurr, 2021, p. 68).

This might suggest that distorted representations of German-Turks in relation to integration are rather problematic to change and transform in order to present a realistic image of this very group – in the media and ultimately in public perception – despite the fact that participants challenge and reject mainstream discourses. In this study, I propose a different approach and perspective to social integration in order to understand the viewpoint of those who are targeted and positioned as integrators in media and public discourses in order to contribute to effective integration debates and to Germany’s integration policies in general. This aspect will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

While chapter 4 focused on the overall experiences of discourses around social integration in Germany, participant discussions and narratives in the chosen examples are strongly linked to identity construction and questions of identity generally. This aspect was explored in detail in chapter 5 and 6.

Chapters 5 and 6 addressed the second RQ (2) “What kinds of identities do [German-Turkish participants] construct and negotiate in the focus groups?” These chapters focused specifically on the discursive processes through which the participants of this study construct and negotiate their various identities against the background of

32 See Kakalic and Schnurr (2021) for a detailed analysis of this example
mainstream discourses of social integration in Germany. The analysis has shown a strong interconnectedness of constructing German and Turkish identities, as well as how participants construct themselves as neither one of those but as “different”, “something else” and “special”. Moreover, participants highlight their connection and attachment to both Germany and Turkey, as well as addressing issues of identity (i.e. “What am I actually?” – Meryem, chapter 5). Overall, both analysis chapters illustrate how fragmented, ambiguous, shifting, dynamic, complex and highly content-dependent participants’ identity construction is. In both chapters, participants highly problematise both identity and (social) integration by explicitly talking about and linking these terms, without any reference to either by the interviewer.

Chapter 5 started by elucidating how participants explicitly talk about integration when discussing issues of social integration (examples 5.1 and 5.2) and mainly focused on how participants construct their various identities by *embracing* their Germanness in some contexts and their Turkishness in other contexts, or both at the same time. This complexity was further supported by the analyses in chapter 6, which focused on the opposite activity: *rejecting* Germanness and/or Turkishness. Both activities are highly intertwined, and many examples include both activities, which once again demonstrates the fragmented and interconnected nature of their German and Turkish identities. In addition, the analyses highlight that certain discourses in media, politics and the public domain more generally impact feelings of belonging (Crul & Schneider, 2010) and attachment to either Germany or Turkey and how participants discursively “do” social integration.

More specifically, participants discursively construct themselves as socially integrated in various different ways. They often explicitly construct themselves as “German” and link this to the loss of their Turkishness. For instance, that they “lose [their] Turkish roots to Germany” (example 5.4), which can be interpreted as an indication of a successful integration into German society. Also, participants often justify their construction as German, by drawing on socio-economic aspects such as their educational levels, their language proficiencies, (little) contact to their home and (high) contact to the larger German culture. The rejection of Turkishness concomitantly illustrates the occurring of social integration, as in mainstream
understanding of integration, migrants or descendants of migrants are only integrated when they (fully) identify with widely accepted German values, as the “identification of subsequent generations with the receiving country is expected and demanded by the majority society and is classified as a distinctive symbol for integration” (Sauer & Halm, 2009, p. 58). One of the reasons for this perspective is that integration is often seen as a temporary state that will transition to assimilation (Geisen, 2010).

Participants, moreover, showcase their urge to be accepted as German by the broader German society, for instance by focusing on acting like or “being a German” (example 5.2), which reveals a willingness to be part of the society and an identification with Germany. This links to participants who separate themselves from certain – for instance uneducated – groups of Turks (example 6.2). At the same time, the identification with Germanness is rejected by some participants, who regard “being and being regarded as German” as depriving them of their migrant background, which they do not want to lose (example 6.3). In this regard, participants also highlight their pride of “where [they] come from” (example 5.3). This represents the activity of rejecting Germanness, which in turn illustrates how social integration is discursively minimised.

Another way of minimising social integration is when participants embrace Turkishness as an alternative strategy, which occurs when they experience discrimination, Othering or racism by the broader German society. Interestingly, however, cases of discrimination and Othering also lead to the rejection of Turkishness, by for instance rejecting their Turkish names (example 6.1). For most participants, discrimination leads to feelings of anger and disappointment towards German society where participants sometimes construct themselves as “all the more Turk” – Meryem in example 6.4). It is important to mention that participants who establish themselves as socially integrated during an interaction, sometimes establish themselves as not socially integrated at other points during an interaction. This illustrates the discursive nature of social integration and its dependency on context.

Finally, in the analysis some observations regarding the (non-) relevance of background/independent variables of identity positions could be made. For example, gender and age/life phase did not seem to be prime influencing variables in how
participants made sense of social integration and mainstream discourses and how they portrayed themselves (i.e., examples 4.5 and 6.1). Education and social class on the other hand, may have played a role in how participants positioned themselves and how they dealt with and reacted to mainstream discourses of social integration and how they thereby constructed their identities. While this can only be tentatively presented in this study, it is an interesting finding which should be investigated in more detail in future research.

Having provided a brief summary of the findings from the analysis chapters, I will now move on to discuss the study’s contributions.

7.2 This study’s contributions

This study makes one conceptual, two theoretical and one methodological contribution. At the very core of all these contributions lies an individual perspective to (social) integration through the eyes of those who are positioned as integrators in media, politics, public as well as academic research. In this section, I will thoroughly discuss the academic contributions by drawing across all three analysis chapters (4, 5 and 6). As mentioned earlier, the (fifth) practical contribution and implication will be presented in the subsequent and final chapter (8), where I will outline some of the ways in which the insights from this study can be used in the future to feed into Germany’s integration policies. To shed further light on revisiting the notion of integration as a discursively negotiated process, I will discuss how participants experience issues of social integration reflected in mainstream public discourses, thereby answering RQ1.

7.2.1 Recontextualisation of discourses of social integration

One of the main foci of this study was to explore how people affected by and experiencing social integration in their everyday lives talk about and view this concept; how they conceptualise it and how they operationalise it when they make sense of (their) social integration. This focus is reflected in the first RQ: “How do German-Turkish descendants experience issues of social integration currently discussed in the media and/or reflected in mainstream public discourses?”, which was addressed in the analysis in chapter 4, and summarised earlier in section 7.1. This
section further extrapolates this specific question by comparing participants’ perceptions and drawing on how integration is defined and conceptualised in the German media landscape and public and political discourses, as well as in research generally.

In this regard, the analyses of this study revealed activities of reproduction and (re)negotiation of the term integration by participating German-Turks. In showcasing the strong dichotomy and divergence of how the term integration is presented and negotiated in media, scientific, political and ultimately in societal mainstream discourses on the one hand, and the understanding of integration of those who are at the centre of attention of such discourses on the other hand, this study – from a sociolinguistic perspective – (re)visits the meaning of integration; what it means in the eyes of participants; how it is discursively (re)negotiated; and how this concept can be understood from different (individual and emic) perspectives.

Based on the study’s findings, it is important to critically reflect on the term social integration and its limited heuristic and academic value for discussing the issues that have been raised in this study. Similar to concepts such as politeness, gender and culture (e.g., Schnurr and Zayts, 2017) which are terms dominantly used in lay vocabulary in mainstream discourses but are problematic academically, so is the term social integration. The study argues that the term lost most of its meaning and what it sets out to convey is heavily blurred and problematic, especially academically. With all the definitions of this phenomenon together with massive amounts of depictions, approaches and discourses around this concept in the mass media and overall public discourse, it became an empty word. The fact that participants – i.e., “lay individuals” – challenge this issue strengthens the study’s call for reconceptualising the term. The lay vocabulary exists but it is problematic academically. What do we mean when we speak of social integration? Is this term still relevant for the individuals it includes in its discourse? Clearly, for the participants of this study it is not. In light of this observation, “social integration” is much less of an issue than perceived by wider society.

The study hence calls for a critical reflection on the term to acknowledge the static and restrictive nature of the dimensions it contains and definitions it has, as well as its
detrimental influence on those who moved beyond what the term sets out to capture. The term and its frameworks are still frequently used in research on migration, ethnic and cultural studies, and this study has shown that researchers should take a more critical stance to the term, acknowledging its limited heuristic and academic value. A more critical stance should be taken towards rather essentialist understandings of social inclusion which conceptualise “being socially integrated” as something very static and as something people have or do not have. However, the term is very fluid and dynamic and as findings show, individuals can discursively construct themselves as more or less socially integrated. Social integration thus is not a given a priori variable to explain the behaviour of individuals with a migration background, but it is something that is constructed and negotiated in and through language, dynamically, collaboratively, and individually. Ultimately, social integration can be understood as a dynamic process and as something that people do. By taking participants (or individuals with a migration background more generally) into consideration, their experiences and emotions towards the term and their way of challenging the concept and mainstream discourses around the concept, I hope will lead to a re-evaluation of the term both in academic as well as public discourses and conceptualisations.

Indeed, participants’ voices can contribute to possibly changing mainstream discourses of social integration which are enacted by powerful individuals and institutions such as the media, as “[p]ower does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term” (Wodak, 2001, p. 11). These alterations are of paramount importance as mainstream discourses can have negative effects on the perception of society towards German-Turks, as well as on the self-identification of German-Turks, which influences social integration as well as the discursive construction of social integration, as this study has revealed. In this vein, this section discusses the discursive and dynamic nature of social integration – in particular how participants do social integration.

The findings suggest that (social) integration is not limited to the existent terminologies set by dominant societies, policy-makers, governments and researchers and reflected in the national majorities’ expectations of what integration is and what
it means, but it is rather a process that is constantly (re-)negotiated in and through language and discursive interactions, and is thus a *multi-participant, interpretive and discursive process*. This perspective can help future research and policy-makers to design a clearer, more realistic and liberal understanding of integration for not only migrants and descendants of migrants but also for broader German society, as to date there is no single clear-cut paradigm to define integration and accompanying integration policies that migrants and descendants of migrants and receiving societies can follow (Gonda et al., 2020; Rudiger & Spencer, 2003). At the European level, integration strategies “are at worst xenophobic and exclusionary and at best filled with subconscious biases” (Rashid & Cepeda-García, 2021, p. 1), which creates concerns about the effectiveness of current integration strategies. In Germany particularly, the heated integration debate is largely directed at Turkish-origin individuals (Dieper, 2018), creating “us” versus “them” dichotomies and positioning German-Turks as “Others” which at best hinders effective outcomes of integration strategies. The strong influence of political debates, more specifically how effectively they enter and manifest in public perceptions (external ascriptions and self-perceptions), can be seen by the adoption of Thilo Sarrazin’s racist and conflict laden integration debates and theses (see section 2.3). The role of politicians and public figures in influencing societal and public perception is once more illustrated by this example and should be taken into consideration in policy-making. I will discuss some concrete suggestions for these in the final chapter.

Whilst being the most pressing key policy concern globally, the term integration is used in highly divergent meanings, due to the challenges associated with measuring integration. It has thus become a very ambiguous term with no consensus on its definition among scholars, politicians, intellectuals and everyday individuals – worldwide. In Germany specifically – being Europe’s largest immigrant country (Fertig & Schmidt, 2001) – debates on integration are multivalent, ambiguous and omnipresent (see chapter 2).

The ambiguity of the term is reflected in participants’ understanding of and relationship with integration. Terms and phrases such as “integration”, “being (fully) integrated” or “getting integrated” are constantly negotiated by participants, and this study carved out the multivariant and ambiguous nature of these terms and highlighted
the loopholes in the ways in which these terms are used in different contexts. Very closely linked to these (re)negotiations is how participants construct and position themselves in relation to dominant discourses of social integration. Particularly interesting are the ways in which participants reject mainstream discourses around the social integration of German-Turks – and sometimes the mainstream understanding of integration – while reflecting on and thereby reproducing them (e.g. “live my culture without harming anyone”, “I don’t identify with THOSE Turks”, “caught myself in not wanting to go through the group of Blacks/Turks”, “I don’t want to marry a Turk”). This illustrates how participants incorporate mainstream discourses in their own utterances such as the ones above, which can be explained by the dialogical nature of language (Todorov, 1984), which means that discourse is always shaped and influenced by other peoples’ discourses or other texts (Bakhtin, 2013; Blackledge, 2005). In this vein, social media (campaigns), politicians, and the media have strong potential and power in shaping and redirecting these discourses – highlighting and manifesting a new collective, pluralistic, and multicultural understanding of not only integration but Germanness more broadly. Some ideas in implementing this will be discussed in the final chapter.

The above-mentioned participant utterances reflect the ideologies of migrant groups that exist in Germany (and in many other nation states). They highlight the power of national and local political and media discourses in iterating and reiterating discriminatory discourses and ideologies (Blackledge, 2005), which in turn enter the social world and become social “realities”. Blackledge (2005, p. 181) claims that “[a]lthough they may at times contest and dispute the ideological battleground – these voices can be described as links in a chain of discourse, which becomes increasingly authoritative and less negotiable as they move up the chain towards policy-making and legislative centre”. The way that these “voices” transform the discourse through repetition and thereby shift meaning and understanding is referred to as “recontextualisation” by CDA researchers (Blackledge, 2005; Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2000).

While discourse is recontextualised as it travels, it gains power and authority in that it becomes less negotiable over time, especially when enshrined in law (Blackledge,
It is thus crucial to combat discourses that spread and emanate perceptions and stereotypical representations of individuals that belong to minorities, who are positioned as “the Other” and thereby are deprived of the privilege to really become and feel part of (German) society. Only then can (social) integration fully function and flourish in a society that values diversity and inclusion; a society that moves beyond the notion of a German identity and Germanness only evolving around people who do not have a migration background; a German identity that evolves around all who fully or partly identify with Germanness without having to give up parts of their (ethnic) identities. The final chapter will discuss some concrete examples of how awareness of the importance of inclusivity and diversity can be made more available to the general public to counterbalance the perceived differences of minorities that emanate from stereotypes and influence the “pictures in everyone’s head” (Lippmann, 2018) when thinking about German-Turks and possibly other groups.

Recontextualisation does not only happen through channels of mass media, politicians or other powerful institutions; “as soon as one writes or speaks about any social practice, one is already recontextualising. The moment we are recontextualising we are transforming and creating other practices” (Caldas-Coulthard, 2003, p. 276). Hence, while participants challenge and contest mainstream discourses of German-Turks in the context of social integration, they recontextualise. However, their voices and arguments can only gain legitimacy by beginning to get “reiterated in increasingly authoritative contexts […] and authoritative voices” (Blackledge, 2005, p. 207). Insights from this study, if presented to, for instance, integration offices from the state, or presented in public magazines or newspapers, may possibly give a chance to participant voices to receive attention (detailed discussion in chapter 8). By changing and/or adapting integration policies, mainstream public discourses around these might possibly change simultaneously, through individuals with more power, such as politicians or the media, which play an important role in transforming these discourses.

This study’s focus on mainstream and societal discourses of the social integration of German-Turks in Germany and its adoption of the perspective of this very group who is targeted and positioned as “integrators”, aided in making important contributions to the conceptualisation of the term integration – both for social sciences research as well
as for integration policies. This study adds a qualitative mindset to the concept of (social) integration – which is currently mainly quantitatively measured and presented while ignoring individual perspectives and discursive processes. It is hoped that these insights can be used to design improved interventions regarding integration policies and models in Germany and reshape discourses around the concept of integration, as discourse is most powerful when supported legally by law (Bourdieu, 2000), and can “act hand-in-hand with the law to create ‘common-sense’ realities which are held to be self-evident” (Blackledge, 2005, p. 123).

I will now discuss more specifically how the notion of social integration can be conceptualised as a multi-participant, interpretive and discursive process.

7.2.1.1 Social integration as a multi-participant, interpretive and discursive process

As outlined in the literature review of the study, a considerable number of studies have focused on the integration, assimilation and acculturation of migrants in the German as well as European context (e.g. Crul & Schneider, 2010; Crul et al., 2012; Larin, 2020; Mandel, 1990; Rudiger & Spencer, 2003; Tecmen, 2020; Tezcan, 2019; Zimmermann et al., 2008). Comparative studies most often included people of Turkish descent being the largest migrant group both in Germany as well as in Europe, as it would be considered “remiss to exclude second-generation Turks in any assessment of integration in Europe” (Crul et al., 2012, p. 15). The second generation specifically strikes a major focus “because it can respond to many universal questions concerning integration” (Crul et al., 2012, p. 11).

Research most often measures “integration” “by the present state or the final outcome in different domains” (Crul & Schneider, 2010, p. 1263) (e.g., education certificates of current employment). Besides these studies which assess “objective” successes and deficits of integration in certain areas (Müller & Pollack, 2017), there are some studies – yet not enough – that have evaluated integration from a subjective level – a level of perception and attitude with regards to questions of integration focusing on the

33 In this study classified as those born in Germany. See section 3.2.2 for a more detailed outline of the term “generations”.

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immigrants’ and their descendants’ point of view (some of them statistically elevated) (e.g. Müller & Pollack, 2017; Pollack & Müller, 2018; Pollack et al., 2016; Tucci et al., 2014). This level of subjective perception is adopted by this study, adding on the context of social integration discourses in Germany and a sociolinguistic and discourse analytical perspective, as questions about integration and disintegration through data from socio-economic panels cannot be sufficiently answered (Mannitz, 2015). This claim is supported by Fertig (2004, p. 8) who states that “[m]easuring social integration is anything but trivial. Since there is no objective scale, this phenomenon is by its very nature relative”.

In chapter 2 of this study, I discussed the various definitions and conceptualisations of integration in academia, such as in cross-cultural psychology and communication research, migration politics and law studies. I have highlighted that in the context of migration and ethnic minorities the term integration is ambiguous and undergoes a range of different definitions (Erhard, 2018; Rudiger & Spencer, 2003; Trebbe, 2007). In a broad sense, integration refers to the whole process of interaction and confrontation of migrants in the receiving country and its (new) social context (Trebbe, 2007). Many scholars acknowledge that integration rather refers to those whose roots do not reach deeper than two or three generations (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003, p. 4) and how they integrate into society. However, in mainstream understandings and debates of integration, the term most often revolves not only around those who are relatively new to the country but around individuals and groups who were born and socialised in the country and their descendants. As long as individuals have an ethnic background regardless of the level of generations they are in, they are perceived as “migrants” and associated with “unassimilability”. Hence, the concept of integration is not a neutral one that designates how different groups come together and merge, but is “ideologically loaded” (Olwig, 2011, p. 2), tied with “ideologies of nationalism and constructions of belonging and inclusion” (Spencer & Charsley, 2021, p. 3).

This is reflected in articles writing about “Turks”, who have the “the biggest integration problems” (“Die größten Integrationsprobleme haben demnach Türken” as part of the section called “migrant-study” (“Migrantenstudie”) (Der Spiegel, 2010).
This study was conducted by order of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior. Once again, in media pieces such as the above, all individuals of Turkish origin, no matter which generation they are part of, no matter if they were born in Germany, no matter if they possess the German citizenship, are constructed as a homogenous group – “the migrants”. However, Crul and Schneider (2010) argue that the second generation (or, depending on the adopted definition, the third generation) do not have a migration experience and thus tailoring who needs to be targeted in integration policies and debates is of paramount importance to avoid frustration (and in turn alienation) of those who are socialised and integrated in society. This is the case for all of this study’s participants.

Hence, integration or assimilation into the society are not required for this generation, which is what most of the participants convey in their statements and discussions (i.e., “why is integration still associated with us?” – Toprak). Therefore, “the common opposition between “the society” (or the “natives”, or the “autochthonous”, or the “residents”), on the one side, and immigrants as “newcomers”, on the other, does not apply to the second generation” (Crul & Schneider, 2010, p. 1251). Similarly, Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninx (2016), when describing the process of integration, refer to the “arrival” of immigrants in the immigrant country, which suggests that those born in the country are not supposed to be included in integration debates. This viewpoint is reflected in participants’ understanding of “who should be integrated” – which is not their generation born and socialised in Germany. They collectively construct integration as a concept that is supposed to involve immigrants newly arrived in the country or that “should have been enacted for the ‘guest workers’”.

In these academic conceptualisations, as well as in political debates and media discourses, the focus is clearly on migrants and all their descendants discussing their issues of integration, as to date descendants of migrants still face challenges in areas such as

achievement and access across the sectors of employment, housing, education and health; assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; processes of social connection within and between groups within the community; and structural barriers to such connection related to language, culture and the local environment (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 166).
In addition, stages of integration are often determined by demographic variables (e.g., age, length of stay, citizenship), individual language skills and use, social interaction and political interest (Trebbe, 2007). These factors are often drawn on by participants when trying to justify the idea that they are already integrated. Hereby, participants collectively interpret their (social) integration as “completed” and thus irrelevant. They do this by discursively constructing themselves as (socially) integrated. In this way, (social) integration is a multi-participant discursive process that is constantly negotiated as the interaction unfolds. Individuals do social integration.

The role of the receiving society in the integration of “migrants” has significantly improved through the contribution of integration studies (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016). In particular, more and more nation states move away from a “one-way” process of integration and adopt a “two-way” process (see section 2.3.1). In participants’ discussions about (social) integration, however, their perception of Germany’s integration concept is rather perceived and presented as a “one-way” process, as often they highlight the pressures they feel they are under in order to be accepted.

Participants in this study discussed numerous experiences of discrimination that they suffered despite their high socio-economic and educational status or their identification as German. These experiences lead to marginalisation and alienation from German society and ultimately harm (processes of their social) integration. While discussing such circumstances, participants collectively negotiate their social integration, sometimes constructing themselves as integrated, at other times as not accepted – which indicates low social integration if the two-way process of integration is considered.

With regard to discrimination, mainstream discourses of German-Turks that are presented in the media and in turn circulate in public discourses intensifies the perception of German-Turks (and possibly other ethnic minorities) as alien and as people who are not yet sufficiently integrated. If individuals are made to feel as though they do not belong, excluded, and given an identity as a “foreigner”, it seems paradoxical for these individuals to participate in the world of a group that is not willing to accept them as part of their society (Uslucan, 2017).
This highlights the importance of the responsibility that a nation has to take in order to facilitate successful integration. It is the responsibility of not only the government but the media, politicians, researchers and broader German society. In the final chapter (8) I will provide concrete suggestions as to how the different individual voices of participants could (and should) be included in and inform German integration policies on social integration, and how the proposed reconceptualisation of social integration can have a real-life impact by helping policy-makers to make decisions.

Overall, conceptualisations and definitions of integration in research reflect the desire of most participants about what integration “should be” (e.g., “accepting the law” – example 4.3; “speaking German [highly proficiently]”– example 4.4). These behaviours can be operationalised without giving up parts of their heritage culture and identities, which participants state they do to receive acceptance (e.g., “being extremely focused on being German” – example 5.2; “losing my Turkish roots – example 5.4; “name myself Peter” – example 6.1; “don’t identify with THOSE [uneducated] Turks” – example 6.2).

Children born in Germany to immigrant parents are not automatically naturalised (Faist, 1995), for which a high degree of cultural assimilation is usually expected (Ager & Strang, 2008). In this vein, “[e]thno-cultural political exclusion tends to be associated with ‘assimilation’ models of integration: the expectation that refugees will adapt to become indistinguishable from the host community” (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 174). To reach this “indistinguishableness”, the participants adopted strategies to discursively construct themselves as socially integrated, despite the fact that they themselves are not “refugees” or immigrants. By “being more German than Germans” (chapter 4) or changing their names to for instance “Max” (example 6.1) and “Peter” (chapter 5), they try to gain acceptance and inclusion by majority society, thereby socially integrating themselves.

In addition to political debates the mainstream media presents integration as a concept that requires migrants and descendants to assimilate, which is what participants most often complained about. Their understanding of the term “integration”, the way it is represented in mainstream discourse, is very similar to assimilation, which is the non-willingness to maintain the cultural identity of origin (Trebbe, 2007) and seeking daily
interaction with the larger social network (Berry, 1997). This is reflected in participants’ responses to what they believe the broader German society expects from them in order to be perceived and accepted as “integrated”. They are expected to actively showcase and prove their willingness to integrate (Geisen, 2010) and face pressure for assimilation (Zick et al., 2001), which can be observed from participants’ responses, who feel that they “will always be the outsider” (Sila, chapter 4) and will never be accepted as part of society “no matter how well [they are] integrated, (Sila, chapter 4). Due to this fact, they often do not feel sufficient acceptance by broader German society. In fact, for the Turkish-origin youth in Germany the social climate is less welcoming than for other ethnic or re-settler groups (Jugert et al., 2020; Schotte et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, participants’ willingness to integrate is existent and apparent, whereby they construct and position themselves as “German” or “assimilated”, while also highlighting the advantage of having “more than one culture”. At the same time, they contest demands of the majority society to “become integrated” as they do not consider themselves as a group that needs “to be associated with integration”. This demonstrates that integration is rather evaluated negatively by imposing some sort of “depth” or obligation to the migrants and their descendants (Geisen, 2010), in terms of being responsible to integrate, which is prevalent in participants’ statements and discussions.

Similar to this claim, in my participants’ understanding, integration comes with the perceived expectation of German society to “eat pork” (example 4.3), be “more German than a German” (chapter 4) or to be “so much assimilated that they don’t speak a word of Turkish” (example 4.4). Therefore, the participants change their names to German-sounding ones, articulate themselves in the best possible “educated” way, “have German friends” and thereby discursively establish themselves as socially integrated. Integration thereby receives a repressing character (Geisen, 2010, p. 16) whereby diversity and differences are oppressed and established as not desirable. Mannitz (2015, p. 9) states that perspectives that evaluate integration efforts tend to create double standards through which migrants and their descendants are
discriminated structurally through observation as no member of the majority group has to fear suspicion of insufficient integration.

This section has discussed and outlined the various conceptualisations and understandings of (social) integration in scientific, media and political discourses in light of participants’ voices; their understandings, viewpoints and interpretations of this concept to propose a revisited understanding of social integration. Being addressed in and problematised in integration discourses, hence positioned as “the integrator”, German-Turks can be said to be the most important part in these discourses, that they can only observe as an audience but not actively shape. In interaction, these debates have an influence on the way participants construct themselves as well as their social integration. The analysis illustrates that social integration is never fully “completed” but is deconstructed and constructed depending on the context-specific norms and negotiated, shaped and reshaped discursively as the interaction unfolds.

Needless to say, their own individual voices must be included in these discourses to spread authentic and real experiences and information that the public can refer to. In this way, the abstract and confusing concept of integration can be shaped collectively by society as a whole with real-life experiences (and expectations) of minority groups. A more realistic and effective conceptualisation, and with it, integration plans for Germany, can be worked out by policy-makers. As established in this study, different aspects of identity work feed into our overall understanding of integration as a process in the context of mainstream discourses, and vice versa, integration discourses highly influence the self-perception, identity construction, feelings of belongingness and ultimately the social integration of German-Turks. The next section focuses specifically on the identity construction of participants, which is highly linked to social integration.

7.2.2 Identity construction against the background of mainstream discourses

Although much qualitative research on identity and belonging of German-Turks exist (Boz & Bouma, 2012; Cigirli, 2012; Ehrkamp, 2005, 2006; Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2003;
Feldmann, 2006; Moffitt et al., 2018), to the best of my knowledge, no study has yet explored German-Turks’ identity construction in combination with the discursivity of social integration and against the background of mainstream discourses of social integration of this very group from a sociolinguistic and discourse analytical perspective. This section focuses specifically on the identity construction of participants and addresses the second RQ: “What kinds of identities do [participating German-Turkish participants] construct and negotiate in the focus groups?” Thus, this section aims to discuss the theoretical contribution to questions of identity.

In the analyses in chapters 5 and 6 I established the complex dynamics, intersectionality and reciprocity of the processes of embracing and rejecting Germanness and Turkishness. The inclusion of membership in Germany and Turkey, as well as the exclusion in both, often happens simultaneously or alternately during an interaction. The paradoxical link of these two opposites is observable in both individual monologues and group interactions, where the dependency on context comes strongly to the fore. These activities evolve explicitly by participants mentioning and assigning to themselves and others specific ethnic identity labels (e.g., “the Turks are (not) integrated”) or more implicitly by taking on particular stances (“Germans will never accept us”), which are attributed to certain identity positions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). These identity positions indicate the engagement of rejecting and/or embracing Germanness and/or Turkishness to which participants orient themselves. In the context of mainstream discourses of social integration, these identity positions and accompanying activities of rejecting and embracing in turn provide clues about the discursive (de)construction of social integration, which I discussed in the previous section.

Overall, the dynamic and context-dependent activities of embracing and rejecting shed light on the sense-making mechanisms involved in the process of social integration of participants and how it is intertwined with their identity construction and negotiation. The study’s findings highlight the ever-changing and dynamic nature of identification, attachment and belonging of participants and confirm the fluidity and context-dependency of identity construction and that an absolute determination of
cultural or ethnic identification is not existent – rather a reconcilement of ethnic and cultural discrepancies and multiple identities.

These identities are frequently linked to issues of social integration, for instance by talking about how their “name makes me a foreigner” (Toprak) and how they change those names to typical German-sounding names (i.e., Max and Peter) to be accepted in society and avoid discrimination. This confirms research findings showing that Turks in Germany are exposed to higher levels of discrimination compared to other ethnic groups (Salentin, 2007; Tucci et al., 2014; Schotte et al., 2018). Moreover, the link between identity and social integration is addressed by explaining how Othering and “innocent questions” such as “Where are you from?” (example 5.2 – Melda) can produce alienation towards Germany and belonging to Turkey (Brüß, 2005) and vice versa. This in turn demonstrates the complexity of feelings of belongings of German-Turkish descendants. According to Tucci et al. (2014) migrants’ identification with Germany is strongly influenced by their social integration. This study adds a sociolinguistic perspective to this claim and shows how German-Turks discursively make sense of their social integration and how it is influenced by their experiences of discrimination, racism as well as mainstream stereotypical discourses of German-Turks’ social integration, and how all these factors affect their identity constructions.

The numerous layers of identities created by the media and emanated and reproduced by the public (regardless of good or bad intentions) cover the authentic sense of self of German-Turks. This reaches a point in which German-Turks themselves question their own identity (“What am I actually?” – “Was bin ich eigentlich?”). Through imposed identities and distorted images created by mainstream discourses, the larger society cannot relate to the authentic person (who exists outside of these stereotypes and discourses), their authentic values and personalities, but to society’s mental image of German-Turks – “the Other”. This mental image or public perception (Lippmann, 2018) results and manifests itself in ideologies of Otherness and ideologies of Germanness that excludes those who are not of German descent. This ultimately impacts the social integration of German-Turks, as they live their lives in a constant battle of being in between meeting expectations of society to conform to its norms and cultural values – to adapt and integrate – and the exposure to exclusion because of that
very negative mental image of them. German-Turks do not have the chance to
represent themselves (and other in-group members) in light of who they really are –
integrated or not. Nor do they have the chance to build relationships, as the prejudices
that the larger society holds about them prevents relationships to develop. This in turn
often results in social segregation and ethnic retentions of this minority (Çelik, 2015).
Social integration, identity construction and belonging are all strongly affected by this
situation. This development is highly problematic in terms of building a society that
is inclusive, that fosters and supports belonging, attachment, participation and
ultimately harmony to eliminate, for instance, racism and discrimination.

While constructing certain identities in the context of discourses of social integration,
such as “foreigner”, “German”, “Turk”, “Kanake”, “Ausländer”, “migration
background”, “guest worker” (embracing), participants at the same time position
themselves in opposition to the identity labels and categories listed above (rejecting).
This illustrates an ongoing “us” versus “them” dichotomy, whereby “us” can stand for
“Germans”, for “Turks” as well as for “German-Turks”. The analyses show that even
the latter is sometimes rejected in order to escape labels. In this situation, participants
construct themselves as “different”, “special” or as “something else”. This has shown
to be a defence mechanism towards the labels that have been and still are ascribed and
imposed on participants, or German-Turks in Germany more generally. Hence,
participants often create “them” versus “them” dichotomies and position themselves
outside of both the German and Turkish groups. This is interesting as we often see
“us” versus “them” dichotomies in the construction of in- and out-groups in other
contexts.

In light of this distancing from macro categories and constructing themselves as
“something else”, participants often emphasise their individual identity (“I am who I
am”). By emphasising their individuality – “that which makes each individual like no
other person” (Dollinger & Dollinger, 1997, p. 337) – participants reflect the
irrelevance of large cultural categories by rejecting them. Sila nicely reflects this
approach with the following quote: “I am me (.) I am not me because of my culture I
am me because of my friends because of my character because of the people I love
because of my family (.) well sure also because of my culture but that doesn’t define
me” (“Ich bin ich (. . . ich bin ja nicht ich wegen meiner Kultur ich bin ja ich wegen meinen Freunden wegen meinem Charakter wegen den Menschen, die ich liebe wegen meiner Familie (. . . also klar auch wegen meiner Kultur aber das bestimmt mich nicht”). Like Sila, many other participants aimed to foreground their unique personality over their ethnic backgrounds, which is what the media and the public often make relevant, resulting in prejudices, stereotypes and generalisations.

The findings reveal strongly perceived categorisations. As German-Turks participants are integrated into multiple and complex identification processes which result in categorisations into two groups and by two groups (e.g. “In Germany I am ‘the Turk’, in Turkey I am ‘the German’”). In the German context, literature has provoked the stigmatisation of German-Turks as the “problem-group” (Gemende, 2002, p. 11) by focusing on them as Germany’s largest ethnic group and has thus contributed to the generalisation of this group. Sila’s quote demonstrates the insignificance of cultural differences and a striving to cross national, cultural and societal boundaries. With the globalisation of the world, multicultural societies emerge and grow and perceptions about the meaning of community is constantly being challenged and reconstructed, resulting in the elimination of these rigid boundaries and replacing them with a fluid nature (Meadows, 1991). This creates “opportunities for groups to reconstitute themselves around various kinds of shared identities” (Kennedy & Roudometof, 2001, p. 36).

By emphasising their individuality, participants establish an overarching identity – being “something else”, “different” and “special” – which can comprise their various (ethnic) identities (Gaertner et al., 1993). With this study I aim to contribute to research that highlights the importance of individuality and the deconstructive nature of labelling and ethnic categorisations, moving away from generalisations. This highlights that issues of “either-or” are problematised and rejected. These constructions and resulting “either-or” rejections further signal the importance of individuality. Can puts this in a nutshell by declaring: “No clue, but I can tell you that I am not either of them” (“Keine Ahnung, aber ich kann dir sagen, dass ich beides nicht bin”). Can implicitly contests these large cultural categories (being German or Turkish) and foregrounds his unique personality by looking behind those labels.
Therefore, German-Turkish “biculturnals” or “multiculturals” are urged to highlight their exclusiveness and individuality to break all labels of “The Turk” or “The German” and even “the German-Turk”.

Human beings already have a complex relationship with their identities – always being in search of who they are. For ethnic minorities, this is further complicated by the identities that are, firstly, imposed on them (“I am always the foreigner!”) and secondly deprived of them (“Don’t take my migration background away!”). This is why German-Turks established strategies to overcome this complex game of identity imposition and deprivation. Linked to social integration, they challenge this process by, first, complying with the expectations of society to integrate themselves and become more “German” thus constructing themselves as socially integrated and, secondly, by employing a counter strategy, to reject these expectations overall and construct themselves as socially not integrated.

Regarding the former, for instance, as mentioned above, they apply this strategy by changing their names to German-sounding ones (socially integrated) and thereby reject Turkishness to avoid associations with (stereotypical) Turkish behaviours, since “names carry strong ethnic and religious connotations and reveal an individual’s affiliation to a specific group” (Koshravi, 2012, p. 65). For the third generation, this goes further and is reflected in their connection to their home country (i.e., “I really feel as if I would lose my Turkish roots over Germany (...) can’t speak Turkish anymore (...) will not marry a Turk (...) no clue what my children will be, if I will raise them Turkish” – Cemre, example 5.4). These ways of intentionally and unintentionally distancing themselves from Turkishness is prevalent in the data.

Regarding the latter, the strategy to challenge mainstream discourses and societal expectations is, for instance, to declare their pride to be Turkish and not German (socially not integrated) or adopting linguistic markers that are linked to Turkishness and typically associated with unintegrated individuals. The distancing and rejecting of Germanness is strongly observable as well and showcases the unwillingness to lose their connections to Turkey, as well as the power of mainstream discourses to push minority groups away from an attachment to Germany. However, this does not eliminate the willingness to be part of society, and to be accepted as “one of them”. In
the context of social integration, this would imply a strong and successful social integration, as participants “express trust and willingness to cooperate with [the majority population] in the same way as they do with compatriots” (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017, p. 286).

Despite this willingness to belong, however, discrimination, Othering, racism and the lack of acceptance by the majority population contribute to the declining of levels of trust of German-Turks. This in turn leads to rejecting Germanness and the resentment of being trapped in stereotypical and mainstream discourses around this very group. Over 80% of individuals with a migration background in Germany feel German (Foroutan et al., 2019). Most participants in this study explicitly claimed a German identity at some point during the focus group discussions, and expressed their attachment to Germany, which many of them perceive as their “home”. Yet, as described above, these feelings of belongingness are also often contested as many of these individuals do not feel included when the label “German” is used, instead referred to as “im/migrants,” or “people with migration background” (Moffit & Juang, 2019, pp. 2-3). Being classified into certain groups strengthens boundaries and creates social hierarchies within society (Miller, 2007) (i.e., the racialized inferior “Other” versus the white, superior and powerful).

Regardless of the possession of a German citizenship, the categorisation as “Other” is not eliminated, as “my name makes me a foreigner” (“mein Name macht mich zum Ausländer” - Toprak) and “no matter what I do, I will never be accepted as German” (“egal was ich mache, ich werde niemals als Deutscher akzeptiert” – Bora). This sentiment represents most participants’ experiences regarding the perception of German-Turks by dominant society. Pollack et. al., (2016), found that more than half of all individuals with a Turkish heritage said they thought they would never be accepted as German by the broader society. Those perceived as “Other” are often referred to as migrants and thus perceived as foreign and are viewed less favourable if they are understood to belong to an outgroup (Moffitt & Juang, 2019; Tajfel & Turner, 2004), regardless of where they were born.

These types of Othering stigmatisse German-Turks (and possibly other minority groups in Germany and beyond) and makes full social acceptance, and hence social
integration, problematic to reach (Canales, 2000). Ultimately, (already existing) levels of (social) integration are more likely to decline (Kontos, 2020). The understanding of Germanness as “being a white, non-Muslim native German speaker” (Moffitt et al., 2018, p. 14) can be combatted by replacing it with a discourse that values and highlights inclusivity, diversity and embracing the diversity that is represented by the ethnic minorities and individuals with a migration background in Germany. Participants embarked on a journey in starting to reshape this discourse (see section 7.2.1) by “collaboratively mak[ing] meaning of their own experiences in a difficult context, and to eventually challenge, resist and possibly change current mainstream discourse about the difficulties of social integration” (Kakalic & Schnurr, 2021, p. 68) as well as their stigmatisation as “Other”.

In this section, I presented participants’ identity construction against the background of discourses of social integration of German-Turks in Germany to illustrate the complexity involved in these mechanisms and to highlight the strong connection between identity construction and social integration. I shall now move on to a discussion of the methodological contribution of this study.

7.2.3 Methodological contribution

Although there is a vast amount of research on the Turkish community in Germany, research on the (social) integration of German-Turks is largely conducted quantitatively and mostly on the first and second generations (e.g. Lodigiani, 2018; Jugert et al., 2020). Most of these studies tend to identify general patterns rather than attempt to understand the individual perspectives of the group under investigation – which this study aims to do by focusing on the second and third generation.

A qualitative approach was therefore immensely useful to “understand the world from the subjects’ points of view and to unfold the meaning of their lived world” (Kvale, 2006), as it provided in-depth insights and helped to identify some of the specific processes through which participants make meaning of social integration and negotiate this meaning among themselves during the focus group discussions. Thus, I was able to gain insight into their experiences, perspectives and opinions (Flick, 2009).
By collecting video- and audio-recorded focus group interactions, it was possible to capture empirical evidence of social integration as a discursively negotiated process.

A sociolinguistic approach to sense-making processes of social integration and to identity construction in relation to mainstream and societal discourses of social integration of German-Turks was useful for this kind of study because it enables researchers to look beyond what participants say and explore how they construct and negotiate meaning (Schnurr & Omar, 2021) and how they “convey and construct aspects of their social identity through their language” (Holmes, 2013, p. 1). With the support of Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework for a sociocultural linguistic analysis of identity, it becomes possible to provide new insights into the complex processes through which social integration is experienced and talked about by those who are affected by it in their everyday lives and how they thereby construct their various identities. Moreover, investigating identity construction from a sociolinguistic perspective and against the background of mainstream discourses of integration revealed the power that such discourses have on the identity construction of German-Turks, as participants define their identities by drawing on those discourses, which they constantly and inherently reject and challenge (i.e. “trapped in the discourse”).

In order to capture these power relations and hierarchies of discourses, especially the power of media discourses (e.g., van Dijk, 1995), some CDA studies played an important role as they influenced the study’s critical approach. Discourse constitutes social relations (e.g. Angouri & Wodak, 2014) and contributes to “reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations” (Fairclough et al., 2011, p. 370). In this vein, CDA in particular helped to draw attention to the ways that (more) powerful groups or institutions (by accessing the public through the media) have the “potential to control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 10).

The overall critical approach of the study enabled a critique of the power relations between media (and ultimately public) discourse and those who are positioned as integrators in these discourses – German-Turks. More specifically, it made it possible to reveal and criticise the ways in which media uses and proliferates the meaning of (social) integration in relation to German-Turks, and to draw attention to “the
pressures from above and possibilities of resistance to unequal power relationships that appear as societal conventions” (Wodak, 2001, p. 3) and to possibly contribute to social change (Wodak, 2011). With respect to social change, I hope that the insights of this study will contribute to and ideally assist in reshaping discourses of social integration to foster and deepen more effective and liberal understandings and conceptualisations of social integration in Germany.

After having explicitly outlined the findings generated from the RQs and discussed the contributions that this study made, the next chapter will propose more concrete suggestions of how the insights of this study can be utilised to feed into Germany’s integration policies.
Chapter 8: Concluding remarks

The current study sought to explore, capture and better understand German-Turkish descendants’ sense-making processes of (their social) integration in the context of mainstream discourses of social integration in Germany. With special attention on the discursive processes involved in the construction and negotiation of participants’ identities within these sense-making processes, this study demonstrated how social integration is negotiated in and through language and shed light on the salient link of social integration and identity construction. Moreover, the study has shown the value of both a qualitative research design, specifically the use of focus groups, and discourse analysis coupled with a sociolinguistic perspective to unpack some of the complexities of definitions and conceptualisations of the notion of “integration” in media, political, academic and public discourses. Previous research has extensively dealt with conceptualisations of integration as well as the integration of Turkish migrants and their descendants into German society. This study contributes to such studies by focusing on the individual perspectives and experiences of the individuals/group under investigation – here German-Turks. In addition, this study illustrated the highly complex, fragmented and dynamic nature of participants’ identity construction.

In this final chapter, I will propose some concrete practical implications that this research has – in particular for Germany’s integration policies and anti-discrimination campaigns (8.1). This will be followed by outlining the study’s limitations (8.2). Finally, the chapter will conclude with suggestions for some possible directions for future research (8.3).

8.1 Implications for Germany’s integration policies

Germany is a culturally diverse country and still continues to diversify. Consequently, it is crucial to understand and conceptualise what it means to be German, not only for policy-makers (Elrick & Schwartzman, 2015), but also “for everyday individuals who construct and reiterate conceptions of belonging” (Moffit et al., 2018. p. 14). Reshaping current mainstream understandings of Germanness in contemporary Germany for society as a whole and reconstructing this notion as more inclusive and
collective, fully comprising the diversity of its citizens, will help in creating a more harmonious environment in which every individual – *with or without a migration background* – can thrive in identifying with and fully feeling belonging to Germany and thus become immersed in society. Successful social integration moreover means better individual well-being, social cohesion and substantial economic implications for the society (Laurentsyeva & Venturini, 2017). This can moreover be a way to combat discrimination, racism and “xenophobic attitudes” towards German-Turks (Neumeier, n.d.). Additionally, the fact remains that the integration of Turkish-descent individuals is still problematic and there is a general complaint that integration in Germany overall has failed (Schneider, 2018).

The first step towards a more inclusive, collective and diversity-focused understanding of Germanness is to establish a common understanding of integration and to clearly determine the target group in integration policies (Pott & Schneider, 2019). As discussed in the literature review of this thesis, the group of interest (i.e., “migrants”) is broadly and generally defined in public mainstream discourse. The term “integration” is consequently targeted at individuals with a migrant background (Pott & Schneider, 2019) *regardless of their generation*. As a result, feelings of exclusion and alienation in second, third, fourth and possibly fifth generations of descendants of migrants who do not have direct migration experience (Crul & Schneider, 2014) and who fulfil all cultural, social and juridical requirements (Pott & Schneider, 2019) are being exacerbated, as the findings of this study have illustrated.

This is where the government and its integration concepts come into play (Bommes, 2018; Schneider & Pott, 2019). In order to create a common understanding of social integration and/or to reconceptualise current understanding of this concept, the whole discourse around this concept has to be reshaped to then enter, circulate and manifest itself in society’s everyday discourse. Schneider and Pott (2019) suggest that “integration work” (“*Integrationsarbeit*”) has to include long-term residents and “locals” and has to make sure that the part of society that does not feel addressed in integration debates is as small as possible, as the “demographic reality is mainly depicted as problematic in political-medial Discourse” (p. 17).
Here, the government has both a key responsibility and the power to engage in such an endeavour. With legislations, regulations, policies, jurisdictions, laws, official documents and campaigns, to name but few, the government has the possibility to shape current conceptualisations of integration. With the national integration plan, which commenced in 2007, the first significant steps have been taken to reinforce integration of migrants and refugees. This official plan aims at “developing a collective understanding of integration” (“Es gilt, ein gemeinsames Verständnis von Integration zu entwickeln“) (Nationaler Integrationsplan, 2007, p. 7). The definition goes further:

Naturally, part of this is the recognition of Germany’s legal system and the constitutionally protected values. Those who want to live with us and seize the diverse opportunities that our country offers on a sustained basis, are bound to learn the German language adequately. Integration thus concerns all of us – people from migrant families as well as citizens, who have lived here for a long time. Integration can only succeed collectively.

Germany’s national integration plan conceptualises and presents integration as a “two-way” process and as a mission that the whole society has to address as a collective. While the “two-way process” is supported by this study, the onus in texts such as the above is still on “migrant” families to learn German. For this reason and considering that integration is still a major issue in Germany, steps need to be taken to improve and shape the overall discourse of all these various concepts, approaches, definitions, notions and words associated with integration – not only in the specific context in Germany but internationally.

As discussed in the previous chapter, insights from participants’ discussions about integration suggest that they perceive integration as “a strong assimilation pressure”
in which “immigrants must conform to the norms and values of the dominant majority in order to be accepted” (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 12), which is a one-sided perspective on integration. Integration is perceived as a pressure to be “fully German”, “to eat pork”, to “have a German name”, to “marry a German” and “to be fully assimilated”. In fulfilling these factors, minority groups, who want and need to integrate into society, give up parts of their own identities, more specifically parts of their heritage identities and cultural traits. From the participants’ perspectives, the above listed behaviours are necessary in order to be accepted by the majority society. Mainstream discourses contribute to the creation of these realities about German-Turks and about their integration, which in turn creates expectations of the German society on how this very group has to behave in order to be (perceived as) integrated. For instance, some participants are prejudged for not eating pork for the mere fact that they have a Turkish (and supposedly Islamic) background. Instead of emanating presuppositions and accompanied negative perspectives of German-Turks (i.e. Islamic and not integrated) it is time to accept that belonging to Germany and social integration go far beyond “eating or not eating pork”. It is time to arrive at an understanding that after an over 60-year long history of Turkish migration to Germany, several generations have been born and have grown up in the country and see Germany as their home. These individuals (and all other minority groups with various ethnic backgrounds) belong to Germany together with all their religious or cultural preferences and languages, and these do not interfere with successful social integration and with feelings of belongingness. In terms of Islam, the religion “belongs to Germany” as former President of Germany Christian Wulff said in 2010 in an interview, to which Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel agreed (“Our former President Christian Wulff said, the Islam belongs to Germany. And I share this opinion” (“Unser früherer Bundespräsident Christian Wulff hat gesagt, der Islam gehört zu Deutschland. Und dieser Meinung bin ich auch”) (Die Bundesregierung, 2015)). This inclusive discourse, with regards to other notions and attributes of Germany’s diverse ethnic and minority groups, should be adopted to spread the idea of an inclusive, diverse and welcoming Germany that fosters social cohesion.

Following on from my comment on the government’s responsibility to shape current conceptualisations of integration, it is important to link back to the idea of
recontextualisation to understand the power of authority that governments have in shaping discourses and ideologies. According to Blackledge (2005), discourse, whilst being recontextualised and transformed, “gains authority as it travels, until it is enshrined in the least negotiable domain of all – the law” (p. 1). Therefore, it is all the more important to consider the nature of mainstream discourses of social integration of German-Turks and the ways in which it “gains authority as it travels” and manifests itself in people’s perception of German-Turks (and possibly individuals of various other backgrounds in Germany) and of the concept of integration.

In order to avoid static and stereotypical discourses of German-Turks to reach a “non-negotiable materiality” (Blackledge, 2005, p. 13), this study proposes to utilise participants’ individual voices to contribute to possibly changing mainstream discourses of social integration, which are enacted by powerful individuals and institutions such as the media, as “[p]ower does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term” (Wodak, 2001, p. 11). These alterations are of paramount importance as mainstream discourses can have negative effects on the perception of society towards German-Turks, as well as on the self-identification of German-Turks (and other minorities), which influences social integration as well as the discursive construction of social integration, as this study has revealed.

In the following section, I will propose some concrete ways in which the insights of this study can be utilised to inform Germany’s integration policies, as “it is in the institution of the State, and its law-making authority, that the unofficial becomes the official and the illegitimate becomes legitimate” (Blackledge, 2005, p. 181).

8.1.1 Concrete suggestions for impact work in Germany

This study’s findings may be applied to the impact work in Germany in manifold and meaningful ways. Most importantly they can be used to contribute to awareness creation in different ways, some of which I suggest below.
**Awareness-creating campaigns**

One possibility to create public awareness are campaigns such as #DarüberReden (#SpeakAboutIt), that was introduced and commenced by Germany’s antidiscrimination office of the federation (“Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes”) in 2018, and which is the biggest publicity awareness creating and social media campaign in Germany. This campaign was designed to encourage young individuals, who were discriminated against based on their religion, gender, disability or ethnicity, to name but few, to talk about their experiences of discrimination. Commissioner leader of the antidiscrimination office of the federation Bernhard Franke stated in an interview that “[o]nly if we manage to make inequalities visible and take them seriously, we can actively initiate changes” (“Nur wenn wir es schaffen, Benachteiligungen sichtbar zu machen und ernst zu nehmen, können wir aktiv Veränderungen anstoßen”) (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2018). #DarüberReden aims to sensitise people towards inequalities and clarify how those who experience them can combat discrimination. Image 8.1 shows one of the posts/tweets that this campaign designed.

*Image 8.1 Example campaign poster from # DarüberReden*

![Example campaign poster from # DarüberReden](Source: Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes (2018))

Via posts, stories, videoclips and live events with prominent people on social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as well as advertisements on city busses, it
was planned to thematise experiences of discrimination due to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion or sexual orientation of young people (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2018). Daily racism played a pivotal role in this campaign, and was problematised most frequently, which shows the topicality of issues of racism in Germany. This campaign has been successful in reaching a high amount of people on social media: 2.8 million on Instagram and 2 million on Facebook. Moreover, 1,600 individuals shared their discrimination stories which were liked and commented on by 118,500 people (annual report of the Antidiscrimination Office of the Federation, 2018). In addition, it was planned to develop teaching materials for schools, which by bringing discussions about issues of discrimination can possibly provide a helpful basis to spread awareness of these issues and how to tackle them amongst children. However, according to latest information on the website (last accessed on June 2021) there is no outcome about the success or results of this campaign. Similar endeavours could be done with the data collected for this project to then feed into the development of school curricula in Germany.

Similar to the #DarüberReden campaign, the #MeTwo movement gained popularity in Germany, initiated by social activist Ali Can to encourage people to share their experiences of harassment and discrimination due to their migration background. This movement was effective in creating general public awareness of these problems faced by migrants in Germany. With 159,114 tweets on #MeTwo from July 24 to August 03, 2018 and a peak with more than 7,000 tweets per hour, #MeTwo has been a successful online debate (Gavras et al., 2019).

Considering the effectiveness of reaching a high number of individuals on social media of both the #SpeakAboutIt campaign and the #MeTwo movement, this study proposes a similar type of campaign to be implemented as part of integration policies. In this way policy campaigns can create awareness about the individual perspectives and experiences of first, second, third and fourth and possibly fifth generation of migrants’ descendants living in Germany. Making their life realities and understandings of what integration means to them more visible to the public will create general public awareness of how they feel addressed (and marginalised) by integration and migration discourses. Here, statements of migrants, such as the ones who
participated in this study, can be displayed as, for instance, Instagram posts or Tweets. Moreover, because politicians play a central role in the production and reproduction of ideologies relating to minority groups (Blackledge, 2005), this study proposes to include politicians, especially those with a migration background, to talk about these issues, particularly about individual experiences and perspectives of migrants on social media, during live events or in political debates and their political speeches, given that public migration and integration debates in Germany are mainly led by politicians, experts and intellectuals without a migration background (Kontos, 2020, p. 15). In this way, individuals with a migration background become active participants as well as the audience of integration discourses and debates, and do not only remain the “object under investigation”, about whom decisions need to be made to integrate them into society. Not only will this development yield more subjective understandings of integration debates, issues of social integration, discrimination and racism, but will contribute to representations of diversity in media, which to date lacks diversity.

Aside from those who are depicted in the media, those who present the media, such as journalists, have to represent and be represented with more diversity. The diversity in German media companies, its editorial staff and journalists is scarce (Köhler, 2020). Van Dijk (2007) claims that access to hegemonic editors for minority journalists is mainly restricted (as cited in Wagner, 2010). Sheila Mysorekar, Chairwoman of journalism group “Die neuen deutschen Medienmacher*Innen” calls for more diversity in editorial staff (Schwegler, 2020). According to Mysorekar, “currently certain themes and people are presented with regards to problems which results in a distorted perception” (“Bestimmte Themen und Menschen kommen aktuell in den Medien nur in Zusammenhang mit Problemen vor. Daraus folgt eine verzerrte Wahrnehmung”) (see Schwegler, 2020). Homogeneity leads to life realities of individuals with a migration background in Germany, thus different perspectives, being omitted, which contributes to this distorted image of society and its members.  

34 Many participants complained about the fact that most articles were written by “white” Germans without migrant history and thus from a white perspective without “possibly knowing what we feel” (Toprak) and “without having a shared experiences with us” (Melda).
According Vanessa Vu “Many reports sound similar, because they are written from the same perspective – male, white, privileged” (“Viele Reportagen hören sich gleich an, weil sie aus dem immer gleichen Blickwinkel geschrieben werden – männlich, weiß, privilegiert”) (Hein, 2020, Süddeutsche Zeitung).

Furthermore, once the impact of the teaching materials as part of the #DarüberReden campaign are published, similar materials can be worked out in the context of individual perspectives of migrants on issues of social integration to create awareness amongst children and offering them a foresight into what a future diverse society could and should look like. Addressing these issues amongst children and teenagers can have a stronger impact in tackling and eliminating racism, discrimination and Otherness in German society. Especially in education, teaching and awareness creation among children, this is a successful way of tackling racism and discrimination to move towards inclusive societies (ECRI, 2007). “Children can and should be taught early about equality, respect and tolerance” (ECRI 2007, poster).

These types of campaigns are fruitful platforms for migrants to problematise and share and make their individual experiences visible. They can be effective ways for migrants’ perspectives to enter public discourses and help those in German society who do not have a migration background to understand discriminatory life realities of migrants from their perspectives. However, it is important to mention that the approach of campaigns such as #DarüberReden can be problematic as they imply that discrimination is the “problem” of those who experience discrimination. This is absolutely the opposite of what this study aims to do. Concerned with individual voices of offspring of migrants, it has to be criticised and addressed that discrimination and racism (and integration) are not “problems” of those with a migration background and that they need to tackle and talk about these issues then “avoid” WRITE CORRECTLY (i.e. Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2018). Rather, future campaigns, for instance used with the insights of this study, can move towards emanating that racism and discrimination are “problems” of society as a whole.

As discussed earlier, integration and thereby racism and discrimination are issues that should concern society as a whole. If individuals with a migration history experience
racism, then this can only happen because there are racists who attack minorities. Similarly, if Germany is experiencing challenges in integrating certain minorities, it is not only the responsibility of these groups, but also the responsibility of the State to find ways to improve this situation as well as society as a whole (i.e., two-way process of integration). Thus, if used in the context of the findings of this study, it is crucial to make explicit and create awareness that discrimination and racism are real issues in Germany that minorities experience in their daily lives and that these issues have to be tackled in a determined, concrete and drastic way. And if such a campaign is being implemented in future with the insights of this study, a strong awareness of the responsibility of German society as a whole for the integration of migrants and descendants of migrants and refugees, for racism and discrimination has to be established and the responsibility of the whole society in combating these issues has to be made explicit.

Creating visibility and presenting life realities to the wider German public

It is highly important to create more visibility and presence of migrants and their descendants in the public discourse; in media, on television, in (children) books, to name but a few, to display generations of migrants as a “normal” part of society, reflecting reality, and as part of German identity and to represent the diversity of Germany (Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011). This will harvest the life realities of members of minority groups or people with a migration background into media representations and ultimately enhance the population’s view of ethnic minorities, which will further combat migrants’ feelings of exclusion. For example, the initiative “Wetterberichtigung” (“Weather correction”) created a subtle way of constituting the presence of migrants in Germany for the general public to foster the perception of Germany as a culturally diverse country where individuals with a migration background are part of Germany, German society, German nationhood and Germanness, by naming low and high pressure areas in weather forecasts for example “Ahmet”, “Chana”, “Khuê” “Romani” (see Image 8.2 below).
These are non-German names to represent all those individuals with a migration background living in Germany and to visualise the diversity of Germany. This campaign was a volunteer action by an international weather alliance of German and Swiss Journalists (“Neuen deutschen Medienmacher:innen” and “Neuen Schweizer Medienmacher:innen”). They bought 13 sponsorships for high and low pressure areas in 2021 and highlighted that Germany is not only a country with “Gisela’s” and Helmut’s” (#wetterberichtigung, 2018) (as weather high and lows are mostly named German names) but an immigration country accommodating millions of people with international backgrounds who belong to society (#wetterberichtigung, 2021). Their motto is as follows: “A little correction for the weather, a big for our society. Surprise our society is diverse!” (“Eine kleine Korrektur fürs Wetter, eine große für unsere Gesellschaft. Überraschung unsere Gesellschaft ist divers!”).

Their framing is subtle but helpful in stressing that even names that are non-typical German, are “German”: “We seize the weather and channel new German names into the weather forecast”. This way of depicting non-German-sounding names from various ethnic minorities creates a more inclusive discourse and perception of German
society, to which every resident belongs to. This is a successful way to incorporate and include generations of descendants of migrants in public discourse. This study’s insights suggest that participants feel excluded and not accepted as part of society by still being expected to integrate and being addressed in Germany’s integration discourses. Seeing traditional names (non-German) in the official weather forecasts of the country can foster feelings of belonging and acceptance and promote a feeling of being equal to “Germans”.

Integration policies in Germany can support this initiative or adopt the strategy of this alliance and implement diverse names for weather high and lows, or storms in the national weather service. Alternatively, policies can concern other areas where individuals with a migration background (or names, traditions, customs, dressing, life realities etc.) are less represented or non-existent to aid in entering general public discourses. Television shows or movies offer possibilities to depict diverse individuals that are part of Germany and showcase real-life issues of individuals of various backgrounds to manifest amongst the general public and enhance the understanding of Germanness with diversity. To date in Germany representations of individuals with diverse ethnic backgrounds have been limited. Diversity representation is of paramount importance to create equal opportunities for members of society, not only for ethnic minorities but for all minorities in Germany. Actor and activist Tyron Ricketts, who for decades has engaged with discrimination towards BIPOC and called for more diversity in the media, founded a company “Panthertainment” which aimed to establish “diversity as normality” to provide alternative perspectives towards the leading Eurocentric narrative in the media world (Panthertainment, 2021). With hashtags such as #representationmatters, #changingnarratives and #diversityasnormality, Panthertainment tries to create awareness about the importance of diversity in the German media and to reflect Germany’s diversity.

Toprak, one of this study’s participants, is an actress and expressed similar concerns regarding Germany’s media and theatre worlds, which shows a “Lisa with blue eyes and blonde hair” for many roles and herself as the “foreigner”. Together with other participants in the focus group, participants agreed that “in action movies the criminals are always [played by] the AUSLÄNDER” (“In Aktionfilmen sind die kriminellen
To depict more diversity in the German media landscape, media companies and movie producers must include more journalists, actresses and actors with a migration background who represent individuals with a broader variety of roles (i.e., not always portraying a “foreigner”).

The German television series “Druck” for instance deals with daily and current events of a group of young friends, featuring friendship, love, pressures in school, outings, increasing exclusion from family, mobbing and the search for their own identity (FunkPresse, 2021). The contents are designed to be authentic and close to the attitudes of life of the target group (FunkPresse, 2021). Television shows such as “Druck” not only foster feelings of belongingness of descendants of migrants being an integral part of society but normalise these life realities in the eyes of the general public. For social integration in particular, media representation of ethnic minorities is crucial (Trebbe et al., 2017). A frequent observation in the literature on media representation is a “low visibility or marginalization as well as their negative generalizations and contextualization” (Trebbe et al., 2017, abstract). This also entails stereotypical representations such as a Turkish character, looking prototypically Turkish and owning a Döner shop, for instance. These stereotypical representations further contribute to stigmatisations of minorities and lead to racism and discrimination and ultimately to ethnic retention and alienation of these groups from society. More authentic representations are needed in television and theatres. Another very important observation is that these stereotypical illustrations of German-Turks (and other ethnic minorities) also lead to minorities to discriminate against each other. As active participants in society they too are exposed to mainstream discourses, which they internalise, adopt and reproduce. Thereby, they form a stereotypical image of their own in-group or other ethnic groups that they construct as “Other” (Kakalic, in press). Hence, discrimination and racism are not only intensified but evolve to more complex and fragmented phenomena that further divides society, which is highly harmful to social integration.

The government could launch more official television shows or a mini-series to deal with authentic life realities of individuals with a migration background to contribute to an inclusive discourse around “migrant” generations and to create higher
representativeness of these groups. Insights from this (or other similar) study’s participant voices could be used as sources of inspiration to model the content of such series for authentic output. Thereby, the danger of mis- and under-representation of ethnic groups can be combatted.

**Passport ownership**

Participants in my study often problematised the fact that they do not want to lose their ties to their heritage culture and expressed that they belong (or want to belong) to both Germany and Turkey. Ela’s following quote illustrates this sentiment: “Don’t take my migration background away!” (“Nimm mir meinen Migratioshintergrund nicht weg!”). In 2000, the government implemented a new nationality law, in which individuals with passports other than the German one have to choose between their German or foreign passport after the age of 23 (Bendel, 2017). The governments’ argument of implementing this limitation of passport ownership is that the nationality of the country of origin from the “grandchild generation” (“Enkelgeneration”) is passed on from generation to generation, although no or little ties to the origin country remain (Bendel, 2017). Findings in this study clearly show the opposite. Firstly, not allowing German-born Turks to hold both passports does not only uphold a mono-cultural and mono-national norm but deny the values of multiculturalism in Germany, as well as its existence in and belonging to the country. Most importantly, participants embrace not only their Germanness, but also their Turkishness and value both their Turkish and German identities. It is not an issue of “either or” but having, living, constructing, experiencing and at times even rejecting both of these worlds and identities. In fact, the inhabitation of being able to claim belonging to Turkey (i.e., “When Germans tell me I am German, I say NO, because don’t take my migration background away” – Ela – chapter 4) results in the rejection of Germanness. This nationality law achieved the opposite of what it was initially designed for by the government.

This study suggests that integration policies should revisit this nationality law and consider offering the freedom of owning both a German and the passport of their country of origin(s), so that individuals do not feel limited in their choices of national belonging and can enjoy the freedom and awareness of being part of both their nationalities. Future research can address the effects of passport ownership in more
detail to understand its impacts on migrant generations and their identification processes and suggest implications for policy-makers. This legal barrier to societal inclusion is extremely relevant in the social integration of all generations of German-Turks, as well as other minority groups and must be considered in future policy-making.

Having discussed some concrete ideas and implications in which this study’s insights can be utilised to inform integration policies and anti-discrimination and racism campaigns, and how the media can contribute to awareness creation about the life realities of ethnic minorities by offering authentic representations of ethnic diversity in Germany, I will now move on to discuss the study’s limitations.

8.2 Limitations of the present study

Overall, this study has shown how mainstream discourses of the social integration of German-Turks create social realities that influence not only the public’s perception of this very group but the group’s self-identification, and illustrated how these dynamics influence the social integration of German-Turks. The insights have contributed to important implications in the fields of discourse analysis and social integration and propose a reconceptualisation of social integration. Most importantly, the study has given those affected by mainstream discourses a voice to emanate their life stories and their life realities and to be seen for who they are and not for that they ought to be.

Of course, like with much qualitative research, this study has a number of limitations that have to be acknowledged. First of all, it is important to note that the use of focus groups and interviews as the only data collection method can only capture the perceptions of the participants. Schnurr and Zayts (2012) point out that there are often discrepancies between what people say they do (self-perception) and what they “actually do”. Therefore, an ethnographic approach with observation as a supplementary data collection method would strengthen the study and prevail how individuals construct their identities other than in the focus groups and interviews and include details as to how they speak about their experiences of issues of social integration in their daily lives. It would also be interesting to explore naturally occurring data of actual exchanges in multicultural settings.
Recruiting participants with whom I have a personal relationship may cause a limitation insofar that it could have created a bias in both the focus groups and interviews, whereas individuals whom I do not know might have experienced difficulties to open-up themselves, especially when the subject included sensitive topics. To eliminate possible disadvantages resulting from relationship dynamics, I recruited acquaintances and those without any pre-existing relationship to exhibit a greater variety of different information, experiences and perspectives (Sandelowski, 1995). As discussed in chapter 3, all participants acknowledged in their feedback that they found it easy to open up, even with topics of a sensitive nature. Those who knew me stated that a pre-existing relationship with me helped them to “be honest and easily open up” and those who did not know me found the socio-cultural background that we shared helpful in opening up and feeling “understood”. This feedback turns this limitation into an advantage in terms of receiving authentic data.

Moreover, the number of focus groups is rather small with seven in total, however given the limited time and scope of the study these seven focus groups were seen as feasible and sufficient for the purpose of this qualitative study. Also, this number is acceptable considering that the aim of this study is not to make general claims. In addition, the number of interviews is rather small with only three, however, the interview data has been surveyed and used to reflect on the examples chosen for the analysis that stem mainly from the focus groups. While it was attempted to conduct more interviews, participants simply preferred focus groups instead, which provides clues about the attitude of participants towards the study’s topic – an issue that concerns collectives rather than individuals and an issue that is preferred to be discussed in a group in order to share sentiments, relate and reflect and seek and provide support to each other to collaboratively make meaning of issues of social integration.

In terms of the location for the collected data, it is important to acknowledge that recruited participants for the focus groups and interviews resided in three different places in Germany – one island and two large cities. Participants who filled in the questionnaires resided in different parts of Germany, however the data from the questionnaires was not used extensively as it could not provide insights as strong and
valuable as the focus group and interview data. Thus, it would be valuable to recruit participants from different areas of Germany as their experiences possibly differ from individuals coming from other parts of Germany, taking differing numbers of Turkish or immigrant populations into account.

Another limitation that I briefly mentioned earlier in this thesis is the prompts that I provided at the beginning of the focus groups and the possibility for these to have influenced participant responses or the direction of the discussions. However, the pre-focus group phase, where participants got to know each other casually, already demonstrates that even without the prompts or any reference to the issues under investigation by the interviewer, participants had a strong interest in problematising issues of (social) integration, identity, and belonging, to name but a few. Due to the limited time and scope of the study, I did not include the data from the pre-focus groups in the thesis. For future research, however, this would be an interesting aspect to further investigate in detail.

Lastly, all data were collected in German and relevant excerpts were later translated to English for analysis (see section 3.3). In these excerpts it was sometimes challenging to reflect the same meaning that they entailed in German, which might have led to some level of deviation from the original meanings in German. This is why I present both translations in the study. Also, I received feedback on the translations/transcriptions from my supervisor whose mother tongue is German, which helped to address this issue.

8.3 Suggestions for future research

The study’s contributions and limitations indicate the need for future avenues of investigation that can follow this research. Due to the lack of sociolinguistic research into the discursive processes of social integration among German-Turkish individuals, there are plenty of potential areas to investigate in the future. With this research, I have explored the identity construction of German-Turks against the background of mainstream discourses of social integration from a sociolinguistic perspective. As a possible next step, future research could expand the focus into other national and local contexts, as cross-national comparisons of individuals from the same ethnic group
provide valuable insights into the role of contextual factors such as integration, welfare policies and citizenship “adding further explanatory power for differences in immigrants’ integration outcomes” (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 4).

Research can (and should) also go beyond the group of Turkish Germans, assessing different ethnic/immigrant minority groups in Germany to capture their experiences of social integration and identify possible similarities or differences to Turkish-origin Germans. Moving beyond Germany, scholars can approach similar issues of various ethnic minorities internationally to analyse issues of integration (and identity construction), which is a pressing policy concern for nations worldwide. Such studies can aid in contributing to understanding issues of integration and to help foster integration in respective nation states.

Moreover, future research could explore of the sense-making processes of all existing “generations” (first, second, third, fourth and possibly fifth) of Turkish “migrants” in Germany, which may offer interesting findings, and which can potentially generate insights to design more concrete suggestions for integration policies and documents that this study has already put forward. A comparison of those generations has potential in providing insights into those individuals’ differing experiences of issues of social integration, belonging and nationhood. Moreover, unpacking possible discrepancies, contrasts and/or similarities in experiences between these “generations” may help to inform integration policies in a more effective and exhaustive way by taking all generations’ individual perspectives into account.

As already mentioned in the limitations section, although this research presented valuable insights into the sense-making processes of social integration and identity construction of participating German-Turks, future research could involve observations as well, to capture not only participants’ viewpoints and statements but also what they do (Schnurr & Zayts, 2012). In addition, I suggest a larger sample size to encompass more data and more different perspectives of German-Turkish descendants.
This research has only explored individual perspectives of participating German-Turks, which offered invaluable insights on their sense-making processes of the highly topical and problematic issue of social integration in Germany and the discursive construction of their identities. Media articles were used in the focus groups to provide prompts for discussion, however future research could analyse media reports themselves, for instance utilising CDA to explore how the media creates and proliferates representations and discourses of German-Turks and meanings of social integration and to understand its effects on migrants and their descendants, especially their identification with or alienation towards Germany and Germanness.

Racism and discrimination played a pivotal role in participants’ statements and discussions. While this study partly addressed these issues, it could not fully focus on these topics due to the limit in scope and time of this project. Future research could address issues of racism experienced by migrants and their descendants in a more detailed and in-depth way to enrich the discussion and contribute to the limited research on racism in Germany. Critical Race Theory (CRT) in particular can be utilised to “allow for the deprivileging of mainstream discourses while simultaneously affording the voices, stories, and experiences” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004) of marginalised groups.

To combat racism and discrimination the changes needed in Germany are manifold. All actors in society should be encouraged to examine and reflect on their preconceptions of ethnic minorities to combat stereotype-laden reproductions of discourses, to stop structural inequity. The government, via its integration policies, should invite everyday individuals to discussions about (the impact) of everyday racism, white privilege, systematic and institutionalised discrimination (Goldenberg, 2014; Moffitt et al., 2019). Not only governments and the media but scholars working in the area of Turkish German studies (and/or on other ethnic minorities) have great responsibility to give a voice to suppressed and marginalised groups and individuals (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). The German Turkish community in particular remains marginalised in empirical research (Moffitt et al., 2019). By mainly focusing on the “downsides” (i.e., poor integration and their poor performance socio-economically) on particular areas in Germany (i.e., with high density of Turkish origin Germans)
academic research feeds into the stereotypical-laden discourses of this very group and further contributes to their stigmatisation and marginalisation in society.

Having said this, I see great potential in working on an interdisciplinary project with researchers on racism and German studies with the aim of refining the implications for integration policies and suggestions for impact work that the study’s insights generated. The element of racism and the perspective of experts in this area can potentially contribute to the study’s empirical evidence for the discursive processes of social integration, in combination with the reshaping of its definitions and conceptualisations and to possibly reconceptualise the phenomenon of social integration even further. Here, it is immensely important to shift the meaning of what the “problem” is from the “migrant” to society as a whole. In Germany issues of integration are still seen as problems of migration, which turns the victim into the perpetrator. This in turn fosters division in society, which harms social integration by creating “the Other”. Racism in Germany exists. It is now necessary to analyse German discourse and identify who benefits from a system that favours and fosters racism, and to what extent, in order to break these structures.

The notion of Othering has emerged as an important aspect in participants’ narratives. As indicated in the thesis, I have submitted an article on the construction of identities by German-Turks through different forms of Othering (Kakalic, in press). In this article, I illustrate that mainstream discourses of social integration in Germany contribute to public’s perception of German-Turks as “the Other” which intensifies the declining of their social integration and in turn leads to racism and discrimination. The paper also demonstrates that minorities internalise mainstream discourses that stereotype ethnic minorities and in turn discriminate against each other. This means that discrimination and racism grow into even deeper levels and layers and divide society even further. More in-depth research is needed to examine these mechanics of Othering and to make this empirical data tangible, and to understand the social processes between media, public and ethnic minorities.

In closing, by investigating a minority group’s processes of identity construction in the context of mainstream discourses of social integration, this study aimed to
contribute to bringing more clarity and transparency into public discussions and debates on integration, migration and racism in Germany (and beyond) and to de-silence the voice of Turkish German individuals. By approaching these themes critically and from the individual perspectives of those who are being marginalised and stigmatised, this study invites its readers to challenge discourses that contribute to this kind of oppression. Udah’s (2019, p. 3) call nicely reflects this appeal:

Let us change the system that favours some and disadvantages others. Let us begin to change our mindset regarding the Other and challenge how we represent them. Let us see the humanity in all people.

I hope that future research from various disciplines will find the insights of this study useful to foster society’s awareness about these issues. Such research will hopefully contribute to more inclusive discourses in Germany to eventually move towards an understanding of Germanness that embraces and reflects the diversity represented by the country’s minorities who make Germany what it is.
9 References


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10 Appendices

10.1 Focus group guide

Following are prepared questions for starting the focus group discussions and to give prompts to participants in case they do not start the discussion themselves. It is important to note that some of these questions were used in some focus groups and some have not. In some focus groups, there was no need for any questions as the group initiated the discussion themselves:

- What do you think about this excerpt/talks show?
- Can you resonate with what has been said/presented?
- Do/did you have similar experiences?

10.2 Interview guide

*German version:*

- Wie würdest du dich selbst beschreiben?
- Was glaubst du wie andere dich wahrnehmen?
- Du bist mit beiden Kulturen aufgewachsen, fühlst du dich zu einer Kultur mehr angezogen als zu der anderen?
- Sprich: Fühlst du dich eher Deutsch oder Türkisch?
- Warum und woran äußert sich das?
- Welche Nationalität trägst du ein, wenn du Formblätter jeglicher Art ausfüllst?
- Ist es immer die gleiche? Warum?
- Fällt es dir schwer, dich für eine zu entscheiden?
- Kannst du dich an ein Beispiel erinnern?
- Glaubst du es wird von dir erwartet „Türkisch“ oder „Deutsch“ zu sein, oder dich so zu verhalten?
- Schaust du häufig Nachrichten oder liest gerne bestimmte Magazine?
- Wie findest du werden Menschen mit türkischer Abstammung in deutschen Medien dargestellt?
- Gibt es ein generelles Bild von Türken in deutschen Medien?
- Denkst du man kann das pauschalisieren? E.g. „Typisch türkisch“?
- Denkst du, das ist im Einklang mit deinen eigenen Erfahrungen?
- Hast du Beispiele?
- Oder ist es im Einklang mit der Realität, mit dem was da draußen wirklich passiert?
- Kannst du dich an bestimmte Artikel oder Nachrichten erinnern, die dich sehr beeinflusst haben?
- Was genau war es, dass dich so fühlen ließ?
- Glaubst du andere Menschen denken auch so wie du darüber?
- Findest du so manche Artikel oder Shows peinlich? Oder das Gegenteil: angenehm/stolz?
- Fühlst du dich angesprochen, wenn über Menschen mit ‚türkischer Abstammung‘ in den Medien geredet geschrieben wird?
- Hast du Beispiele?
- Und denkst du, dass du deutsche mit türkischem Hintergrund, über die in den Medien berichtet wird, irgendwie repräsentiert?
- Wenn ja, wie würdest du dieses Gefühl beschreiben?
- Hast du manchmal das Gefühl, du musst dich dann für solche Berichte rechtfertigen?
- Redest du oft über aktuelle Themen in den Medien mit anderen ‚Deutsch-Türken‘, oder mit Deutschen, seien es Bekannte oder Fremde?
- Wirst du oft darauf angesprochen und sind andere interessiert deine Meinung über bestimmte Themen zu hören?
- Gab es mal Berichte, wo du dir dachtest, HEY das könnte auch ich sein? Beispiel?
- Oder genau das Gegenteil, wo du dir dachtest: Wow! das ist sehr übertrieben?
- Glaubst du, dass solche Berichte/Medien andere Menschen bzw. die Gesellschaft sehr stark beeinflussen? Egal ob sie deiner Meinung nach stimmen oder nicht?
- Glaubst du, dass die deutschen Medien mitverantwortlich für die verbreitete Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Deutschland sind?
- Meinst du, dass Menschen mit türkischem Background in deutschen Medien als Schauspieler, Journalisten und Moderatoren hinreichend repräsentiert sind?
- Was hältst du von der Idee, einen ‚deutsch-türkischen‘ Kulturkanal (ein „deutschtürkisches ARTE“) zu gründen?
• Machen Freunde aus Deutschland Witze über die deine türkische Herkunft, oder der Türkei? Was empfindest du in solchen Momenten? Spielen Medien hierbei eine Rolle?

• Sind Medien vielleicht sogar fähig Menschen mit türkischem Background zu beeinflussen?

• Ist es Dir wichtig, dass andere ein gutes Bild von den Menschen mit türkischem Background haben oder ist Dir das egal?

• Was für eine Rolle spielen Medien hierbei?

• Was hältst du dem Satz: „Deutschtürken haben gar nichts ‚Eigenes‘ was es wert wäre, in Medien darzustellen. Es gibt nur entweder Türken oder Deutsche, ein Deutschtürke ist eine künstliche Konstruktion“?

• Möchtest du abschließend noch was sagen?

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**English version:**

• How would you describe yourself?

• How do you think others perceive you?

• You grew up with both cultures, do you feel closer to one culture over the other?
  • If yes, why?

• Which nationality do you choose when you fill in forms of any type?
  • Is it always the same or does it change, why?

• Is it difficult for you to choose one of them?
  • Can you think of an example/experience?

• Do you think it is expected from you to be “German” or “Turkish”, or to ‘behave’ like that?

• Do you often watch the news or read certain magazines?

• How do you think are Turkish heritage individuals depicted in German media?

• Is there a general image of Turkish people in the German media?

• Do you think it can be generalised? I.e. “Typical Turkish“?

• Do you feel that this reflects your own experiences?
  • Do you have examples?

• Or does it reflect the real live, with what is happening out there?

• Can you remember any article or news that influenced you?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What exactly made you feel that way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think other people feel the same way about this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you find some articles or shows embarrassing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel addressed, when media articles talk/write about people with a Turkish background?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you think of examples?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think you represent Turkish heritage people that are being talked/written about in the media?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, how would you describe this feeling?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you sometimes feel that you have to justify such media pieces?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you often talk about current news with other Turkish origin Germans or Germans, both people you know and/or strangers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you often approached regarding such news about Turkish origin Germans and are others interested in your opinion regarding these themes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever seen media news/articles where you thought to yourself “Ah that could be me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or the exact opposite, where you thought: “That is exaggerated!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that such articles/news strongly influence other people or the society at large? Regardless of if in your opinion they are true or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that German media is partly responsible for the widespread hostility towards foreigners in Germany?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that people with a Turkish background are sufficiently represented in German media as actors/actresses, journalists, and moderators?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think about establishing a “German-Turkish” culture channel (a “German-Turkish” ARTE)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do German friends make jokes about your Turkish origin or Turkey?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you feel in those moments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does media play a role in / have responsibility for this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are media articles maybe even possibly able to influence people with a Turkish heritage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it important to you that others have a good image about people with a Turkish origin or you don’t mind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is media’s role in this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • What do you think about the statement: “German Turks don’t have anything in ‘particular’ that would be worth presenting in the media. There is whether Turks or Germans, a German Turk is an artificial construction”?
| • Is there anything you would like to say that we have not talked about or anything you wish to share? |
Summary in English: According to a new study 61% of German-Turks feel a stronger connection towards Turkey. This is strongly influenced by campaigns from the Turkish government and experiences in discrimination. Especially individuals who objectively seem more integrated are sensitive towards societal discrimination. (https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2018-07/studie-tuerkei-deutschland-diskriminierung-heimat)
Warum sie ganz unten bleiben

Die Türkischstämmigen in Deutschland haben die schwierigsten Lebensverhältnisse. Auf der Suche nach den Gründen.

Inna Hartwich, Berlin
06.01.2017, 05.45 Uhr

Translation to English: “Why they remain at the very bottom – Turkish-origin people in Germany have the most difficult living conditions. On the search for reasons.”

Translation to English: “I am not perceived as German by Germans” – Since Mesut Özil’s withdrawal integration is being discussed again. We want to hear from GermanTurks: How German do they feel?” (https://www.zeit.de/zeit-magazin/leben/2018-07/deutschtuerken-integration-mesut-oezil-debatte-heimat)

Talk show presented at the beginning of focus groups:
Political talk show with Maybritt Illner: “Türken in Deutschland” (“Turks in Germany”). (00:00 – 07:0035)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoJvlQvD9o&t=57s)

I mostly aimed to show the first five minutes and see if participants wanted to watch more. Hence, the lengths presented in the focus group varied from five to up to fifteen minutes (when participants requested to watch more).

35
Some Google headline for key word “German-Turk”:

**Situation der Deutschtürk en : Die Zerrissen en | tagesschau.de**
https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/deutsch-tuerken-101.html |
10.09.2018 - Wie gut sind die Deutschtürk en integriert? Studien zeigen: Trotz mancher Erfolgsgeschichte geht es ihnen wirtschaftlich schlechter als der ...

**Deutschtürk en: Fremd in der Heimat | Das Erste - Panorama ...**
Die Spannungen zwischen Berlin und Ankara machen sich bemerkbar - werden Deutsche und Türk en sich tatsächlich fremder? Panorama-Reporterin Esra ...

**Studie zur Integration Immer mehr Deutschtürk en ... - Süddeutsche**
https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/deutschtierven-integration-studie-1.4067731
24.07.2018 - Die Bedeutung der Türkei wächst für Deutschtürk en seit einigen Jahren wieder. Immer mehr Angehörige der zweiten Generation betrachten ...
Du hast diese Seite 2 Mal aufgerufen. Letzter Besuch: 31.03.19

**Integrationsdebatte: Wenn Deutsche Deutsche Türk en nennen - Politik ...**
https://www.tagesspiegel.de > Politik
Du hast diese Seite 2 Mal aufgerufen. Letzter Besuch: 17.11.18

**Der Deutschtierven-Report - Reportage & Dokumentation - ARD | Das ...**
https://www.daserste.de/information/reportage.../der-deutschtierven-report-100.html |
★★★★★ Bewertung: 3,5 - 23 Abstimmungsergebnisse
10.09.2018 - Auf die Frage, ob sie einen gerechten Anteil in diesem Land bekommen, antworten nur 50 Prozent der knapp drei Millionen Deutschtürk en mit ...
Du hast diese Seite 3 Mal aufgerufen. Letzter Besuch: 19.11.18

**Studie: Wie gut sind Deutschtürk en integriert? - ZDFmediathek**
10.4 Examples of front pages of media articles of “German-Turks” and “Turks”

Translation to English: “Migrant-study – Turks with the biggest problems. According to a study by the government the majority of the around 6.8 million foreigners living in Germany are well integrated. Apparently Turks have the biggest integration problems.” (https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/tuerken-mit-groessten-problemen-migranten-studie_id_1730420.html)
Probleme türkischer Einwanderer

Integration ist mangelhaft

Laut einer neuen Studie sind Einwanderer aus der Türkei besonders schlecht integriert. Fragt sich bloß: Warum?

Translation to English: “Problems of Turkish immigrants. Integration is deficient”
(https://taz.de/Probleme-tuerkischer-Einwanderer/!5168947/)

Migrantenstudie des Bundes

Türken haben die größten Integrationsprobleme


18.04.2010, 12:33 Uhr

Translation to English: “Migrant study of the federal government. Turks have the highest integration problems”
Translation to English: “Follower of the Turkish president. If you don’t want us, well then Erdogan” (https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/anhaenger-des-tuerkischen-praesidenten-wenn-ihr-uns-nicht-wollt-dann-eben-erdogan-1.4150552)

Translation to English: “German-Turks: Stranger in their homeland”

10.5 Overview of participants

Table 10.1 Overview of participants in focus group 1 (pilot)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length/h</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sevgi</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Master student</td>
<td>02:02</td>
<td>18.11.2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toprak</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>actress</td>
<td>02:02</td>
<td>18.11.2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melek</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Kinder garden teacher</td>
<td>02:02</td>
<td>18.11.2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 10. 2 Overview of participants in focus group 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length/h</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melda</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>02:38</td>
<td>18.05.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ela</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>02:38</td>
<td>18.05.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cansu</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Buyer</td>
<td>02:38</td>
<td>18.05.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10. 3 Overview of participants in focus group 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length/h</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mete</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>01:18</td>
<td>19.05.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Sales assistant</td>
<td>01:18</td>
<td>19.05.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10. 4 Overview of participants in focus group 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length/h</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betül</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Legal assistant</td>
<td>01:22</td>
<td>19.05.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bora</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>01:22</td>
<td>19.05.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toprak</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Actress</td>
<td>01:22</td>
<td>19.05.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10. 5 Overview of participants in focus group 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length/h</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meryem</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Event manager</td>
<td>01:54</td>
<td>26.05.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onur</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>01:54</td>
<td>26.05.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. 6 Overview of participants in focus group 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length/h</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memo</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Student and Taxi driver</td>
<td>02:05</td>
<td>04.08.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levent</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Sales assistant</td>
<td>02:05</td>
<td>04.08.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemil</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>02:05</td>
<td>04.08.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batu</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Childcare worker</td>
<td>02:05</td>
<td>04.08.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. 7 Overview of participants in focus group 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length/h</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sila</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Highschool student</td>
<td>01:56</td>
<td>20.08.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayla</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Highschool student</td>
<td>01:56</td>
<td>20.08.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sena</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Highschool student</td>
<td>01:56</td>
<td>20.08.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemre</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Highschool student</td>
<td>01:56</td>
<td>20.08.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. 8 Overview of interview participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length/h</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meryem</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Event manager</td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td>23.11.2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(pilot study)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevgi</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Master student</td>
<td>01:30</td>
<td>23.07.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naz</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Sales assistant</td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td>28.07.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. 9 Overview of participants, who answered interview questions in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship to researcher</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melis</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Senior partner manager</td>
<td>30.07.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feyza</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Medical assistant</td>
<td>11.08.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gün</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Medical assistant</td>
<td>01.08.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gül</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>09.07.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>29.07.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betül</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>Legal assistant</td>
<td>17.07.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cem</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Policeman</td>
<td>12.07.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Centre for Applied Linguistics

Application for Ethical Approval
MPhil/PhD Students

A Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of student:</th>
<th>Yesim Kakalic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of registration:</td>
<td>01.10.2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title:</td>
<td>Exploring hegemonic discourses in German media in the context of identity construction of second-generation German-Turkish descendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor:</td>
<td>Dr Stephanie Schnurr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRB Clearance:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B Texts

If your research does not include any textual data, please confirm this below and go to Section C.

Yes, it includes written texts from online sources such as newspapers or magazines.

If all or some of your texts are not in the public domain, please explain what steps you have taken to obtain relevant permission for their collection and use. Please also complete any relevant parts of Sections C and D.

This does not apply to my research, because all the texts, that I will use are publicly available, such as newspaper articles that have already been published.

If some or all of your texts are in the public domain, give details of this and explain what steps you have taken to obtain any relevant permissions. When these permission have been obtained, please pass a copy to the Research Secretary to be added to your file. (You may not need to complete Sections C and D.)

Since, I will only use texts (such as newspaper articles), which are publicly available and have already been published, I do not need to obtain any relevant permissions.

C Participants

Details
Please describe the participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. as a result of learning disability.

I am going to conduct in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus groups. My participants can be described as second-generation adolescents of Turkish descent born and raised in Germany. All participants will be of legal age, therefore there is no need to obtain consent from any other person, except from the participants themselves.

**Respect for participants’ rights and dignity**

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

I will not disclose any information, that interviewees do not want to be disclosed. Research participants have the right to withdraw at any point – even after the data collection phase. If they feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, the focus groups or the observations, they have the option to omit or not answer the questions, take a break or to postpone or stop the interview, the focus groups or the observations. I will strive to eliminate bias in all research activities, and I do not tolerate forms of discrimination based on age, gender, (race, ethnicity, national origin,) religion, sexual orientation, disability, health conditions, or marital, domestic, or parental status. Universal human rights are respected.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

Participants’ names will not be disclosed at any time, and any information that would refer to their identity will be deleted or replaced with anonymised information. Moreover, real names will be replaced with pseudonyms throughout. Care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview, observation and focus group that could identify participants will not be revealed.

**Consent**

Will prior informed consent be obtained? — from participants **YES/NO** — from others **YES/NO**

Explain how this will be obtained. Provide details of the relevant procedures and any issues associated with them.

A consent form and information sheet will be provided for each participant to be signed, explaining their right of anonymity and withdrawal at any time and asking for their consent to use their recordings/data for the study. Participants will be informed that the research may be published. Any summary content of the interviews, focus groups and observations, or direct quotations from the interviews, focus groups and observations, that
are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that participants cannot be identified. Moreover, participants will be informed about their opportunity to ask questions about any aspect of the research, at any time during or after their participation in the research. Care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify participants is not revealed.

**If verbal rather than written consent is to be obtained, give reasons for this.**

All consent will be obtained in written form (see above).

**If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reasons for this. If the research involves observation where consent will not be obtained, specify situations to be observed and how cultural/religious sensitivities and individual privacy will be respected.**

Prior informed consent is to be obtained and will be obtained in written form.

**Will participants be explicitly informed of the student’s role/status? If not, give reasons for this.**

YES

**Will deception be used? If so, provide a clear justification for this and details of the method of debriefing.**

NO

**Will participants be informed of the use to which data will be put?**

YES

**Will participants be told they have the option to withdraw from the study without penalty?**

YES

**Attach a copy of all consent forms to be used in the study.**

### E Security and protection

**Data storage**

**Where will data be stored and what measures will be taken to ensure security?**

The data will initially be stored in my password protected computer and will be transferred to my password protected University computer as soon as possible.

**For how long after the completion will the data be stored? (All data must be kept at least until the examination process is complete.)**
For 10 years.

F Protection

Describe the nature and degree of any risk (psychological as well as physical) to participants and the steps that will be taken to deal with this.

I do not anticipate any psychological or physical risks or emotional disturbances for the participants associated with the participation in the study. However, if participants feel uncomfortable, they have the right to take a break, decline to answer a question, stop the interview and withdraw from the research at any time.

Identify any potential risks to the researcher and the procedures that will be in place for dealing with these.

I do not anticipate any risks or emotional disturbances associated with conducting the interviews, the focus groups and observations. However, if I feel uncomfortable at any point, I will ask for a break, postpone or stop the interview, focus group or observation.

How will participants’ well-being be considered in the study?

I fully understand my responsibility to protect participants from any harm arising from this research. Participants in this study will not be exposed to any risks. If participants feel uncomfortable or unwell, they have the right to take a break, decline to answer a question, stop the interview or the focus group discussion and withdraw from the research at any time. If I notice any stress or discomfort, I will speak to the participant and remind him/her of her option of withdrawal and breaks.

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

Firstly, I will not, under any circumstances, use deception in my study and during the collection and analysis of my data. I am honest, fair, and respectful of others in their activities and do not knowingly act in ways that jeopardize either their own or others’ welfare. I will not knowingly make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive.

How will you ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

All data will only be stored in my password protected University computer and only I will have access to that data. Moreover, all transcripts will be anonymised. More specifically, participants’ names will not be disclosed at any time, and any information that would refer to their identity will be deleted or replaced with anonymised information.

G Ethical dilemmas

How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research? Please give details of the protocol agreed with your supervisor for reporting and action.
I do not anticipate any dilemmas, but in case any ethical dilemma will occur, I will consult my supervisor immediately to discuss further and necessary steps to be taken.

**H Authorship**

Have you and your supervisor discussed and agreed the basis for determining authorship of published work other than your thesis? Give brief details of this.

Yes, I have discussed this with my supervisor and we agreed on the basis for determining authorship of any published work. This will be decided on a case by case basis and will be decided before working on a certain paper.

**I Other issues**

*Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.*

N/A

**J Signatures**

Research student: Date 07 November, 2018

Supervisor: Date 08 November 2018

**K Action**

Action taken

☑ Approved

☐ Approved with modification or conditions – see Notes below

☐ Action deferred – see Notes below

☐ [Where applicable] CRB clearance reported to HSSREC

Name Date

Johannes Angermueller 09/11/2018
Signature

Notes of Action

Date of Approval by Graduate Progress Committee
10.7 Focus group consent form

German (original) version:

Einverständniserklärung zur Teilnahme an einer Studie – Fokus Gruppe
Version 1, 01/11/2018

Teilnehmer ID:

Projekttitel: Repräsentation von Deutsch-Türken
Name der Forscherin: Yesim Kakalic
Name ihrer Mentorin: Dr. Stephanie Schnurr


2. Ich hatte ausreichend Zeit, mich zur Teilnahme an diesem Forschungsprojekt zu entscheiden und weiß, dass die Teilnahme daran freiwillig ist. Ich weiß, dass ich jederzeit und ohne Angabe von Gründen diese Zustimmung widerrufen kann, ohne dass sich dieser Entschluss nachteilig auf mich auswirken wird.

3. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass im Rahmen der Fokus Gruppe eine Video- und Tonaufnahme gemacht wird. Mir ist bekannt, dass meine Daten anonym gespeichert und ausschließlich für wissenschaftliche Zwecke und Veröffentlichungen verwendet werden.


5. Ich erkläre mich hiermit damit einverstanden, an der Fokus Gruppe teilzunehmen.

Alter und Beruf des Probanden: ________________________________

Name des Probanden __________________________ Datum __________ Unterschrift __________

Name der Forscherin __________________________ Datum __________ Unterschrift __________

English version:
CONSENT FORM – FOCUS GROUP
version 1, 01/11/2018

Participant ID:

Title of Project: Media representations of German-Turks
Name of researcher: Yesim Kekalic
Name of their Academic Supervisor: Dr Stephanie Schnurr

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my medical, social care, education, or legal rights being affected.

3. I consent to the focus group being audio- and video-recorded.
   I consent to the use of anonymised verbatim quotations in publications resulting from this study.

4. I understand that my data will be securely stored for a minimum of 10 years, in line with the University of Warwick’s Research Data Management Policy.

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant __________________________ Date __________ Signature __________

Name of Researcher taking consent __________________________ Date __________ Signature __________
10.8 Interview consent form

German (original) version:

Einverständniserklärung zur Teilnahme an einer Studie - Interview
Version 1, 01/11/2018

Teilnehmer ID:
Projekttitel: Repräsentation von Deutsch-Türken
Name der Forscherin: Yesim Kakalic
Name ihrer Mentorin: Dr. Stephanie Schnurr


2. Ich hatte ausreichend Zeit, mich zur Teilnahme an diesem Forschungsprojekt zu entscheiden und weiß, dass die Teilnahme daran freiwillig ist. Ich weiß, dass ich jederzeit und ohne Angabe von Gründen diese Zustimmung widerrufen kann, ohne, dass sich dieser Entschluss nachteilig auf mich auswirken wird.

3. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass im Rahmen des Interviews eine Tonaufnahme gemacht wird. Mir ist bekannt, dass meine Daten anonym gespeichert und ausschließlich für wissenschaftliche Zwecke und Veröffentlichungen verwendet werden.


5. Ich erkläre mich hiermit damit einverstanden, am Interview teilzunehmen.

Name des Probanden ____________________________ Datum __________ Unterschrift __________

Name der Forscherin ____________________________ Datum __________ Unterschrift __________
CONSENT FORM - INTERVIEW
version 1, 01/11/2018

Participant ID:
Title of Project: Media representations of German-Turks
Name of researcher: Yesim Kakalic
Name of their Academic Supervisor: Dr Stephanie Schnurr

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.  

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that he or she is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my medical, social care, education, or legal rights being affected.  

3. I consent to the interview being audio-recorded. I consent to the use of anonymised verbatim quotations in publications resulting from this study. 

4. I understand that my data will be securely stored for a minimum of 10 years, in line with the University of Warwick's Research Data Management Policy.  

5. I agree to take part in the above study.  

__________________________  ____________________  ____________________
Name of participant               Date               Signature

__________________________  ____________________  ____________________
Name of researcher taking consent               Date               Signature
10.9 Consent form for parents (for participants under 18)

*German (original) version:*

Einverständniserklärung von Eltern zur Teilnahme an einer Studie  
Version 1, 01/11/2018

Teilnehmer ID:  
Projektstitel: Repräsentation von Deutsch-Türken  
Name der Forscherin: Yesim Kakalic  
Name ihrer Mentorin: Dr. Stephanie Schnurr


2. Ich hatte ausreichend Zeit, mich zur Teilnahme meines Kindes an diesem Forschungsprojekt zu entscheiden und weiß, dass die Teilnahme daran freiwillig ist. Ich weiß, dass mein Kind jederzeit und ohne Angabe von Gründen diese Zustimmung widerrufen kann, ohne, dass sich dieser Entschluss nachteilig auf sie/ihn auswirken wird.

3. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass im Rahmen der Fokusgruppen eine Tonaufnahme gemacht wird. Mir ist bekannt, dass die Daten meines Kindes anonym gespeichert und ausschließlich für wissenschaftliche Zwecke und Veröffentlichungen verwendet werden.


Name der Kindes

Name des Erziehungsberechtigten  
Datum  
Unterschrift

Name der Forscherin  
Datum  
Unterschrift

*English version:*

10.9 Consent form for parents (for participants under 18)

*German (original) version:*

Einverständniserklärung von Eltern zur Teilnahme an einer Studie  
Version 1, 01/11/2018

Teilnehmer ID:  
Projektstitel: Repräsentation von Deutsch-Türken  
Name der Forscherin: Yesim Kakalic  
Name ihrer Mentorin: Dr. Stephanie Schnurr

1. I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the provided information sheet. I had the opportunity to review and reflect on the information sheet and to ask questions that were satisfactorily answered.

2. I had sufficient time to decide on my child’s participation in this research project and I know that participation is voluntary. I am aware that my child can revoke this consent at any time without giving any reason, and that this decision will not negatively affect them.

3. I consent to the recording of the focus groups. I am informed that the data of my child will be stored anonymously and exclusively for scientific purposes and publications.

4. I consent to the data of my child being stored for a minimum of 10 years in accordance with the guidelines of “Research Data Management” at the University of Warwick, ensuring its safe storage.

Name of the child

Name of the authorized guardian  
Date  
Signature

Name of the researcher  
Date  
Signature
Parental Permission for Children Participation in Research
version 1, 01/11/2018

Participant ID:
Title of Project: Representations of German-Turks in German media
Name of researcher: Yesim Kakalic
Name of their Academic Supervisor: Dr Stephanie Schnurr

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet (version 1, 01/11/2018) provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my child’s participation is voluntary and that she/he is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

3. I consent to the focus group being audio- and video-recorded.
   I consent to the use of anonymised verbatim quotations in publications resulting from this study.

4. I understand that my child’s data will be securely stored for a minimum of 10 years, in line with the University of Warwick’s Research Data Management Policy.

5. I consent for my child’s participation in the above study.

Printed name of child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Parent(s) or Legal Guardian</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigator</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10.10 Information sheet

*English version:*
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
version 1, 01/11/2018

Study Title: How are German-Turks represented in German media and how does this affect them?

Investigator: Yesim Kakalic

Introduction
You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

(Part 1 tells you the purpose of the study and what will happen to you if you take part. Part 2 gives you more detailed information about the conduct of the study)

Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

PART 1

What is the study about?
This study is about German media representing Turks in Germany and how those representations affect German-Turks.

Do I have to take part?
It is entirely up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through this information sheet, which I will give you to keep. If you choose to participate, I will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you have agreed to take part.
You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and this will not affect you or your circumstances in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you decide to take part in an interview, you will be interviewed by me. I will ask you questions about yourself and about your thoughts on German media and German-Turkishness in general. This interview will last approximately 1 hour. This interview will be audio-taped.

If you decide to take part in a focus group, you will be included in a group discussion with 3 to 4 other German-Turkish individuals. The focus group discussion will last about 1 to 2 hours and will be audio- and video-taped.

What are the possible disadvantages, side effects, risks, and/or discomforts of taking part in this study?
There are no possible disadvantaged, side effects, risks, and/or discomfort of taking part in this study. If, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable during the study, you have the right to amend, pause or cancel your participation and this will not affect you or your circumstances in any way.
What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?
You have the opportunity to get to know other German-Turkish individuals and share your ideas, thoughts and knowledge with them, if you wish. You have also the chance to get explore different point of views.

Expenses and payments
There are no costs involved for you in taking part in this study.

What will happen when the study ends?
Once the study ends, you will be informed. Your anonymised data will be stored in my university computer for at least 10 years.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?
Yes. I will follow strict ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence. Further details are included in Part 2.

What if there is a problem?
Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm that you might suffer will be addressed. Detailed information is given in Part 2.

This concludes Part 1.

If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participation, please read the additional information in Part 2 before making any decision.

PART 2

Who is organising and funding the study?
This study is organised and funded by myself. I am conducting this study as part of my University course.

What will happen if I don’t want to carry on being part of the study?
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. If you decide to take part in the study, you will need to sign a consent form, which states that you have given your consent to participate.

If you agree to participate, you may nevertheless withdraw from the study at any time without affecting you in any way.

You have the right to withdraw from the study completely and decline any further contact by study staff after you withdraw.

Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?
Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study:
Head of Research Governance  
Research & Impact Services  
University House  
University of Warwick  
Coventry  
CV4 8UW  
Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk  
Tel: 024 76 522746

Will my taking part be kept confidential?
Your data will be kept confidential during the study and after the study. Everything that you say remains anonymous and your name and identity will not be shared with anyone. I will use pseudonyms for names, places and organisations, and care will be taken to ensure that any information that could identify you will not be revealed. Your data will be securely stored in my password protected university computer and I will be the only person who will be able to have access the anonymised data.

What will happen to the results of the study?
Anonymised excerpts from the interview and the focus group discussions will be used for my PhD research and for academic and professional publications. If you wish to receive a copy of my findings, I will provide these to you. The results (which will only include anonymised data) might be discussed with my supervisor, with fellow research students or other academic staff from my academic department at the University of Warwick.

Who has reviewed the study?
This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the "Graduate Progress Committee" from the Centre of Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick.

What if I want more information about the study?
If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, or your participation in it, not answered by this participant information sheet, please contact:

Me, the researcher: Yesim Kakalic, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK, Tel.: +44 (0)7542 075757 or +49 (0) 15255401338, Email: Y.kakalic@warwick.ac.uk

My supervisor: Dr Stephanie Schnurr, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK, Tel: +44 (0) 24 761 51092, Email: S.Schnurr@warwick.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet.
Titel: Repräsentation von Deutsch-Türken
Forscherin: Yesim Kakalic

Einleitung

(Teil 1 informiert Dich über das Ziel und Zweck dieser Studie und was genau passieren wird, wenn Du daran teilnimmst. Teil 2 gibt Dir detaillierte Informationen über die Durchführung der Studie)

Bitte zögere nicht, alle Punkte anzusprechen, die Dir unklar sind. Du wirst danach ausreichend Bedenkzeit erhalten, um über Deine Teilnahme zu entscheiden.

TEIL 1

Worum geht es in der Studie?
In dieser Studie geht es um Deutsch-Türkische oder Türkische Personen in Deutschland, die in den deutschen Medien repräsentiert werden und wie diese Repräsentationen wiederum Deutsch-Türkische Personen beeinflussen.

Muss ich teilnehmen?

Sofern Du nicht an der Studie teilnehmen oder später aus ihr austreten möchtest, wird sich dies in keiner Weise nachteilig auf Dich auswirken. Du musst Deine Entscheidung nicht begründen.

Was passiert mit mir, wenn ich teilnehme?

Ich werde Dich eventuell danach nochmal kontaktieren, um offene Fragen zu klären, oder,
um Dich zu fragen, ob Du offene Fragen hinsichtlich der Gruppendiskussion hast -natürlich nur, wenn Du zustimmst.

**Welche Nachteile, Risiken, Nebenwirkungen und/oder Beschwerden sind mit der Teilnahme an dieser Studie verbunden?**

**Welche möglichen Vorteile sind mit der Teilnahme an dieser Studie verbunden?**
Du erhältst die Möglichkeit andere Deutsch-Türkische Personen kennenzulernen, Dich mit ihnen auszutauschen, und deren Sichtweise auf bestimmte Themen zu erkunden, sofern Du es wünschst.

**Aufwandsentschädigungen**
Für die Teilnahme an dieser Studie erhältst Du eine Aufwandsentschädigung entsprechend der folgenden Bedingungen: Finger Food und Getränke.

**Was passiert, wenn die Studie endet?**
Deine anonymisierten und pseudonymisierten Daten werden für mindestens 10 Jahre in einem passwortgesicherten Computer der Universität verwahrt. Die Daten sind gegen unbefugten Zugriff gesichert.

Pseudonymisiert bedeutet, dass keine Angaben von Deinem Namen oder Initialen verwendet werden.

**Wird meine Teilnahme an dieser Studie geheim gehalten?**

**Was passiert, wenn Probleme entstehen?**
Jegliche Beschwerden darüber wie Du während der Studie behandelt wurdest oder irgendwelche möglichen Schäden, die Du erleiden könntest, werden angegangen. Detaillierte Informationen hierzu findest Du in Teil 2.

Teil 1 ist hiermit abgeschlossen.

Wenn die Informationen in Teil 1 Dein Interesse geweckt haben und Du eine Teilnahme in Erwägung ziehst, bitte lese die zusätzlichen Informationen in Teil 2 durch, bevor Du eine Entscheidung trifft.

**TEIL 2**

**Wer organisiert und finanziert diese Studie?**
Diese Studie wird von mir organisiert und finanziert. Ich führe diese Studie als Teil meiner Anstellung an der Universität durch, um meine Promotion zu erlangen.

**Was passiert, wenn ich meine Teilnahme an dieser Studie vorzeitig beenden möchte?**
Die Teilnahme an dieser Studie ist freiwillig. Du kannst jederzeit, auch ohne Angabe von

Du hast das Recht jederzeit von der Studie vollständig zurückzutreten und jeglichen Kontakt vom Studienpersonal abzulehnen, nachdem Du zurückgetreten bist.

Wen kann ich kontaktieren, wenn ich mich Beschweren möchte?
Jegliche Beschwerden darüber, wie Du während der Studie behandelt wurdest oder irgendwelche möglichen Schäden, die Du erleiden könntest werden angegangen. Bitte richte mögliche Beschwerde(n) an folgenden Kontakt, eine amtliche Führungskraft an der Universität Warwick, die vollständig unabhängig von dieser Studie ist:

Head of Research Governance
Research & Impact Services
University House
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 8UW
E-Mail: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk
Tel: 024 76 522746

Wird meine Teilnahme an dieser Studie geheim gehalten?
Deine Daten werden während und auch nach der Studie geheim gehalten. Alles, was Du sagst, bleibt anonym und dein Name und Deine Identität wird mit niemandem geteilt.

Ich werde alle Daten von Dir pseudonymisieren und sicherstellen, dass jegliche Informationen, die Deine Identität preisgeben könnten nicht offenbart werden.

Pseudonymisiert bedeutet, dass keine Angaben von Deinem Namen, Initialen, Orte, Organisationen verwendet werden.

Deine Daten werden in einem passwortgesicherten Computer der Universität verwahrt und ich werde die einzige Person sein, die Zugriff auf diese anonymisierten Daten haben wird.

Was passiert mit den Ergebnissen dieser Studie?

Wer hat diese Studie überprüft?
Diese Studie wurde vom “Graduate Progress Committee” vom Zentrum für angewandte Sprachwissenschaften der Universität Warwick überprüft und hat eine befürwortende Stellungnahme abgegeben.

Was ist, wenn ich weitere Fragen zu dieser Studie habe?
Falls Du Fragen über jeglichen Aspekt dieser Studie oder Deiner Teilnahme daran hast, die in diesem Informationsbogen nicht beantwortet wurden, wende Dich bitte an:
Mich, die Forscherin: Yesim Kakalic, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK, Tel.: +49 (0) 15255401338 oder +44 (0)7542 075757, E-Mail: Y.kakalic@warwick.ac.uk

Meine Mentorin: Dr. Stephanie Schnurr, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK, Tel: +44 (0) 24 761 51092, EMail: S.Schnurr@warwick.ac.uk

Vielen Dank, dass Du Dir die Zeit genommen hast, um diesen Informationsbogen durchzulesen.
## 10.11 Transcription Conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[laughs]</td>
<td>Paralinguistic features in square brackets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short pause (under 1 s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Long pause (3 to 5 s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . / . . . \</td>
<td>Simultaneous speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((snips fingers))</td>
<td>Researcher’s comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hello)</td>
<td>Transcriber's best guess at unclear utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERY</td>
<td>Capitals indicate emphatic stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[. . .]</td>
<td>Section of transcript omitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Cut off sentences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>