“Reactive Ethnicity” or “Assimilation”? Statements, Arguments, and First Empirical Evidence for Labor Migrants in Germany

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In this article, we scrutinize the often stated assumption that labor migrants in Germany turn away from integration and reaffirm their ethnicity by examining their identificational, cognitive, and social assimilation processes. Using data from the German Socio-economic Panel, we present trend analyses of different hostland- and homeland-related indicators for the past fifteen years. Results are presented separately for first- and second-generation migrants from Turkey, the EU, and the former Yugoslavia. While not all assimilation-related indicators change a great deal over time, they show at least a substantial difference between the first and the second generation. With regard to the homeland-related indicators, the results by no means suggest that Turkish migrants try to compensate for their comparatively disadvantaged social status by revitalizing ethnic cultural habits or homeland-oriented identifications.

Although the evidence for such a return [to ethnicity] has always been lacking, the popularity of the idea has never waned. (Alba, 1990:337)

It is a well-known fact that past migrants are more popular than current ones. European migrants who came to the U.S. around the turn of the century, as compared to post-1965 migrants, who are often considered to be less successful in assimilating, are a case in point (for a discussion *see* Alba and Nee, 1997; Perlmann and Waldinger, 1997). This pattern of perceptions of immigration can also be found in the so-called late immigration countries. In Germany, where one encounters substantial, permanent, and ongoing immigration of non-Germans since the period of labor recruitment beginning in the late fifties, it is a popular and little questioned assumption that migrants used to integrate more successfully than they have been doing since the early 1990s. This “phenomenon” attracts not only extensive media coverage (*see Der Spiegel*,

16/1997; *Financial Times Deutschland*, 8/12/2004; *Die Zeit*, 41/2004), but also considerable academic attention (see Kecskes, 2000). A large volume of articles and books mostly on Turkish migrants' integration alleges a growing social segregation of the foreign population in the early nineties (Leggewie, 2000:100), an increasing withdrawal of immigrants into their own ethnic group (Heitmeyer *et al.*, 1997:164f), and a growing ethnic self-confidence on the part of migrants and their children (Münz *et al.*, 1997:103), to mention just a few examples.

As heterogeneous as these statements are, these authors share the assumption that there has been a disruption in migrants' integration processes during the last decade, while at the same time ethnicity has become increasingly important for their identity, behavior, and social networks. While there is still some disagreement as to its causes and consequences, the mere fact that the adaptation processes of migrants living in Germany have today slowed down or even reversed seems beyond question for many authors (see Sauer, 2003:63; Schmid-Drüner, 2005:93; for a critical assessment see Salentin, 2004). The supporting evidence for this statement is often impressionistic in nature and ranges from the increasing visibility of ethnic institutions, such as mosques, social associations, and ethnic neighborhoods, to the use of headscarves among second-generation migrants, ongoing language problems among students, or close intra-ethnic contacts.

These observations raise many doubts with regard to conceptual clarity and empirical evidence. First of all, it needs to be specified which groups are affected by the alleged disruption in migrants' adaptation processes – which may occur in the generational succession or within a generation during a given period of time and may be due to group composition, period, cohort, or age effects. Secondly, it is often unclear the nature – and reliability – of the empirical evidence on which the assumption that migrants are turning away from integration is based. As students of immigration and integration issues know too well, data for this kind of empirical research are scarce, especially with regard to migrants' adaptation in areas other than their educational or labor market integration (for a summary see Diehl and Haug, 2003). This statement is true even for research topics that require only cross-sectional data. A thorough investigation of whether or not migrants in Germany are turning away from integration would require panel data.

The aim of this article is to assess the extent to which the above-mentioned statements are empirically well-founded or merely reflect the uneasiness of a late immigration country's majority about minorities' permanent and visible settlement. We will scrutinize the assumption of a disruption of the

identificational, cognitive, and social assimilation processes¹ and of increasing importance of ethnic identifications, ethnic cultural habits, and ethnic social ties among labor migrants in Germany – one of Europe's numerically most important immigration countries. The analyses will focus on these dimensions of assimilation for two reasons: On the one hand, there is a lack of empirical research on immigrant adaptation in these fields that is caused partially by a lack of data and partially by the fact that it is often considered to be less important than migrants' structural assimilation (*i.e.*, into the educational system or labor market). On the other hand, even though currently neglected by empirical research on integration in Germany, migrants' ethnic identifications, ethnic cultural habits, and ethnic social ties are central to the debate about some migrants' deliberate rejection of integration into German society.

We will proceed in four steps. Firstly, we review the scholarly debate about an alleged disruption of first- and second-generation labor migrants' assimilation process in Germany. We critically explore what researchers understand by the idea and what kind of empirical evidence – if any – they present to support their arguments. Secondly, we take a look at the theoretical arguments and empirical findings on continuities and discontinuities of migrants' adaptation patterns from the U.S. literature that have so far been widely ignored in the German debate on this topic. Thirdly, we develop an analytical scheme for assessing this phenomenon empirically and describe the data and indicators we use in our analysis. Finally, we present trend analyses of different hostland- and homeland-related indicators as first empirical evidence by using data from the German Socio-economic Panel (SOEP). In doing so, we tackle the conceptual and empirical flaws of existing research on this topic. The article concludes with a discussion of our findings.

¹We use the term assimilation in Alba and Nee's sense "as the decline, and at its endpoint the disappearance, of an ethnic/racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it" (1997:863). In our differentiation of assimilation dimensions, we follow Esser, who presents a slightly different version of Gordon's (*cf.* Gordon, 1964:71) canonical account in differentiating between cognitive assimilation (language, behavioral skills and competences, knowledge of norms, gestures, cultural habits, situational identification), identificative assimilation (intention to return to the hostland, intention to naturalize, feelings of ethnic belonging, retention of ethnic customs, political behavior), social assimilation (formal and informal interethnic contacts, friendships, intermarriage, segregation, participation in hostland institutions), and structural assimilation (income, occupational prestige, vertical mobility, positional placement, desegregation) (Esser, 1980:221). We do thus not follow Gans' proposal to differentiate between acculturation (the adoption of the hostland's culture) and assimilation (the formation of interethnic ties, *see* Gans, 1999).

THE GERMAN DEBATE ON TURKISH MIGRANTS' REFUSAL TO INTEGRATE – A CRITICAL REVIEW

There is much debate as to whether or not the integration of migrants – especially Turkish migrants – into German society has decelerated, come to a standstill, or even reversed. Nevertheless, with regard to trends in migrants' structural assimilation there is a broad consensus among integration researchers. The Turkish-origin population is less well integrated into the educational system and the labor market and experiences slower improvements in their socio-economic advancement than nationals or other groups of labor migrants (Alba *et al.*, 1994; Szydlik, 1996; Bender and Seifert, 1998, 2003; Wagner *et al.*, 1998; Granato and Kalter, 2001; Kalter and Granato, 2002; Kristen, 2003, 2005; Kristen and Granato, 2004; Riphahn, 2005). 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 (*see* Kurthen, 1998 for occupational mobility). In addition, authors who have compared the integration processes of immigrants in different western European countries have stressed that their socioeconomic status is higher in Germany than for instance in the Netherlands or in France (Thränhardt, 2002; Tucci, 2004).

Findings are less clear when it comes to other dimensions of immigrant adaptation, namely their social, cognitive, and identificational assimilation. Again, there is convincing evidence that Turks are less accepted socially, have fewer contacts with Germans, and speak German less well than other ethnic groups (Mehrländer *et al.*, 1996; Haug, 2003, 2004, 2005). But there is a lack of both empirical evidence and consensus when it comes to *trends* in assimilation in these spheres, as the following review – and critique – of the discussion shows.

Several authors postulate a break-off in the integration process in the early 1990s with regard to cultural, identificational, social, and educational assimilation. Leggewie, for instance, claims that labor migrants' intentions to return to their homelands increase, that language skills stagnate, that migrants' interethnic relationships wither, and that their intentions to stay in Germany dwindle (2000:99f). He claims that at the same time, an "increasing share" of the immigrant population has a growing consciousness of their ethnic roots, religious beliefs, and intracultural social life. This is said to find its expression in a pervasive interest in political conflict and social processes in the home country, and the "widespread and intensive" use of – particularly Turkish – media (2000:103, own translation). As empirical evidence he uses the work of Münz *et al.* (1997).

Heitmeyer (1997) refers to a study by Seifert (1996) and states a decline in interethnic interactions as well. In addition, he claims that Germany's migrants increasingly retreat into their own ethnic groups, intensify and reactivate their Islamic beliefs, and even turn to fundamentalist-Islamic groups. He argues that even third-generation migrants show an increasing distance vis-à-vis the German political system, leading to ethnic-cultural particularism, and potentially to a so-called "parallel society" (Heitmeyer, 1997:42f; *see also Heitmeyer et al., 1997*).

So far, Münz *et al.* (1997 [1999]) and Seifert (1992, 1996) are the only ones who try to back up their arguments with their own analyses of panel data. In the first study mentioned, the authors claim to find evidence of increasing social segregation of the foreign population in Germany from the early to the mid-nineties. They state a "strong decline of interethnic friendships" and thus an increasing distance between the German and foreign population, in particular between first- and second-generation Turks and Germans (Münz *et al.*, 1997:102, own translation). In addition, they argue that migrants' identification with Germany and their intentions to stay in their hostland declined in the same period, and they see this as evidence of migrants' social exclusion, as well as their growing ethnic self-consciousness (Münz *et al.*, 1997:102f). In an earlier study, Seifert argues that the number of Turks who feel German declined, and he concludes that the increasing number of those who do not feel German points to an increasing ethnic orientation (1992:682).

Other authors state a similar phenomenon, but base their argument solely on cross-sectional data. Mehrländer, Ascheberg, and Ueltzhöffer use cross-sectional data from surveys that were conducted in 1980, 1985, and 1995, and argue that a small group of migrants lives without any contacts to Germans, and that this group's desire to have such contacts is lower today than it was 10 years ago (1996:312). The authors also diagnose a process of "disintegration," by which they mean that there is a growing tendency among a small portion of the foreign population to retreat into their own ethnic group, instead of integrating into German society (1996:317).

This brief overview shows that the thesis of an increasing tendency of migrants to retreat into and to identify with their own ethnic group at the expense of their identification with and integration into German society has in fact a narrow empirical basis. The most often-quoted study by Münz *et al.* raises several questions. Most importantly, one might doubt whether the substantial results of their empirical studies in fact show a trend, or are more or less accidental in the sense of being highly dependent on their selection of

only two observation points for each “cohort.” In the second edition of their findings, Münz *et al.* compare two different points in time and find different results, *i.e.*, an increase, instead of a decrease in interethnic contacts.² They comment that their older findings, which have formed the basis of statements with far-reaching political implications, show that the period of alienation seems to have been “overcome” (1999:114; *see also* Bender and Seifert, 2003), without considering the possibility that it never existed.

Furthermore, even if empirical findings showed that migrants’ language skills declined, that they have fewer German friends, and that they identify less with Germany than they used to, this does not imply the stability or strengthening of ethnic ties and identifications. Migrants can, for instance, feel excluded in their hostland without necessarily feeling more attracted to their (or their parents’) homeland or to the ethnic enclave, a condition that has often been referred to as marginalization (*see* Esser, 1980:225).

Other empirical studies raise questions as well.³ The finding that those migrants who do not have any social contacts with Germans are less interested today in having such contacts than previously could just be an artifact. Given a general increase in interethnic interaction – probably due to better opportunities – those migrants who are still without any contacts can in

²It is also unclear which groups the authors actually look at. They constructed two “longitudinal cohorts” and compare several indicators for these cohorts’ assimilation during two periods of time. While the authors claim to have carried out a longitudinal analysis, it is not obvious whether they have actually done so, given the fact that the cohort size *increased* between their observation points (Münz *et al.*, 1997:86). In the first edition of their book, they look at their first cohort in 1984 and 1989, and at their second cohort in 1990 and 1994; in the second edition, they compare the same first cohort with a second cohort in 1993 and 1997. They restrict their analyses to those second-generation migrants (born or attending school in Germany) who are younger than twenty-six (186) and present data separately for female, Turkish, and second-generation migrants (101).

³For labor migrants in Switzerland, Hoffmann-Nowotny *et al.* (2001) put forward the thesis of “re-ethnicization.” The authors state that structurally disadvantaged second-generation immigrants experience higher levels of anomie (the authors do not give any information about how they operationalize anomie in their analysis). Based on this, they claim to show that individual anomie leads to a re-ethnicization process, as a form of individual adaptation (Hoffmann-Nowotny *et al.*, 2001:384). This finding is backed by multivariate analyses of data for 1997 that yield positive and statistically significant effects of “anomie” on dependent variables such as perception of discrimination, motivation for segregation, and – partially – remigration intention (383). The authors equate these findings with a re-ethnicization process. However, the mere fact that structurally less assimilated migrants feel more often discriminated against and are less assimilated socially must not be misperceived as evidence of a re-ethnicization process.

fact be assumed to show negative selectivity with regard to their interest in interethnic contacts.

This brief review shows that convincing empirical evidence of – particularly Turkish-origin – migrants' alleged refusal to integrate and their increasing ethnic identification and social segregation is still lacking. This is partly due to the fact that data for research on this topic are scarce and partly caused by the methodological problems of existing studies. Before turning to our own analyses, we will present the relevant theoretical arguments about the adaptation patterns of today's second-generation immigrants from the American debate on this topic.

“REACTIVE ETHNICITY” OR “ASSIMILATION”? FINDINGS FROM THE US AND THEIR RELEVANCE FOR GERMANY

In an immigration country like the U.S., the 1950s and 1960s were the birth period of canonical studies on immigrant adaptation. Assimilation was considered to be the most likely endpoint of immigration and interethnic interaction (Park, 1950:150f). From early on, this belief has been challenged on a variety of grounds. It was first contested in the 1960s and 1970s, when research on migrants' integration focused on ethnic resurgence and the ongoing importance of ethnicity among European immigrants (Glazer and Moynihan, 1992 [1970]:xxxi). Ever since, critics have shared the assumption that a steady weakening of ethnic ties and identities is just one possible form of immigrants' adaptation processes. Concerning the situation in Germany, the arguments that have been made for the children of post-1965 migrants, the “new second generation” (Portes, 1996) and the debate about the validity of the classical model of assimilation are most instructive.

The “New Second Generation” in the U.S.

There is a lively debate among immigration scholars in the U.S. as to whether or not the “new second generation” follows a similar or a different, less successful path of adaptation than past migrants. Several authors argue that the concept of “segmented assimilation” (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1999) corresponds much better to today's realities of immigrant adaptation than classical assimilation theory. Starting point was the observation that the adaptation patterns of the more recently arrived non-European immigrants were not in accordance with assimilation theory since there were “persistent ethnic differences across generations” (Zhou, 1999:197). Critics of assimilation

theory state that a steady increase in acculturation, upward mobility, and inter-ethnic contact may still work for some groups, but that a growing acculturation to the American mainstream may lead to “downward assimilation” for others. Due to the growing heterogeneity of the immigrants themselves and of the receiving context, acculturation can no longer be considered to lead more or less automatically to upward mobility. Downward assimilation is most likely in a context that is characterized by an urban inner city culture and an “hourglass economy” marked by “many good jobs at the top, many bad jobs at the bottom, few decent jobs between” (Perlmann and Waldinger, 1997:910). Still a third path leads to maintenance of ethnic ties and solidarity that is accompanied by upward economic mobility (Zhou, 1999:196).

Segmented assimilation affects not only the structural adaptation of the second generation but the nature of their ethnic identifications and ties as well. Portes and Rumbaut argue that a widespread response of young European ethnics to their minority status was to reduce strains by means of assimilation but that “an alternative reaction may lead to the rise and reaffirmation of ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness” (2001:152). They call this mode of identity formation in a hostile context characterized by disadvantage and discrimination “reactive ethnicity” (2001:148, 187; *see also* Schnell, 1990:52). All in all, the proponents of the segmented assimilation model state that the integration patterns of the “new second generation” are much more diverse than those of the “old” European immigrants. Which path is chosen depends on individual factors such as education, language skills, and age of arrival on the one hand and structural factors such as family background and place of residence on the other hand (2001:201).

Other authors claim that while “assimilation” is still an appropriate concept for describing the adaptation processes of post-1965 immigrants, these are less straight than “straight line theory” might have suggested. In her “defense of the assimilation model,” Morawska argues that it needs to be historicized and “softened” in order to be useful today. She stresses that the smooth social and identificational assimilation as proposed by the classical model is contingent on rather specific historical circumstances such as the absence of ethnic networks and institutions, cultural barriers, and relationships of economic dominance, as well as by small group size (Morawska, 1994). Alba, prominent proponent of the assimilation model, acknowledges that for today’s immigrants, assimilation “in the form of a series of small shifts that take place over generations” is likely to be “a highly prevalent . . . pattern among the descendants of contemporary immigrants, though not as paramount as it has been” (1990:21).

The American debate shows that under today's circumstances characterized by ongoing immigration, the presence of ethnic networks and institutions, and a tight labor market, assimilation does not necessarily follow the smooth path that has been described for some groups in the past. It designates, as Brubaker put it, "a direction of change, not a particular degree of similarity" (2001:534). The speed of this change and the degree of similarity may differ depending on immigrants' individual and group characteristics and the circumstances of the surrounding society. Before turning to the question of whether Turkish migrants' cognitive, social, and identificational adaptation patterns are in accordance with the predications of (neo-)assimilation theory or in fact show a new – and distinct – pattern of "reactive identity formation," we need to take a closer look at the German context.

The Situation in Germany

It has been argued that political exclusion – most first- and second-generation immigrants in Germany do not enjoy voting rights due to their lack of citizenship – and economic disadvantage may promote ethnic awareness and solidarity among Turkish migrants (Kurthen, 1991:87). Yet, other factors known from the American context do not apply to the situation in Germany. Empirical evidence on residential segregation in Germany – that is found to trigger "reactive ethnicity" formation according to Portes and Rumbaut (2001:186f) – is weak due to a lack of data (Kalter and Granato, 2002:212). However, students of segregation have repeatedly stated that ghetto-like structures as in the American big cities have not emerged in Germany since suburbanization, and "white flight" and race issues did not play as important a role as they did in the U.S. (Häussermann and Siebel, 2001:37; for a comparison with France *see* Tucci, 2004:314). Besides, there is little evidence that Turkish migrants – who are the largest foreign group – have established an ethnic infrastructure that comes close to what has been called an "institutionally complete" (Breton, 1964) ethnic enclave (*see* Heckmann, 1999).

Furthermore, it has been argued for the U.S. that the high value that is placed on ethnic diversity and the disappearance of a well-defined "ethnic majority" has weakened the pressure to assimilate in the U.S. that has long been considered as a precondition for upward mobility (Gans, 1992a:186). Compared to the U.S., Germany is a late immigration country with pronounced ethnic stratification that is still very far from being a culturally plural but economically and politically equal society. Besides, migrants' possibilities to improve their status *as a group* rather than by "boundary crossing", *i.e.*, by

individual-level assimilation (Alba, 2005:23), are limited by political exclusion. Political rights and citizenship are of crucial importance when it comes to interest-group formation among migrants and to their struggle for rights and power in the host country (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996:Ch. 4). Important factors known to promote the salience of ethnic identifications and solidarity are therefore lacking in Germany.

Given this context, we assume that Turkish migrants' social and identificational assimilation lags behind that of groups such as migrants from the EU or the former Yugoslavia that are structurally more successfully assimilated and face less exclusion. But we do not expect to find any indications of substantial "reactive identity formation" since many factors known to stimulate this process are not present in Germany. Before turning to our own empirical analyses, we will now describe our concepts, data, and methodology.

CONCEPTS, DATA, AND METHODOLOGY

When assessing whether or not migrants' adaptation processes in Germany show any signs of discontinuity, break-off, or even reversal, we will tackle the conceptual and methodological shortcomings that have so far hampered attempts to answer this question. This means in detail that on the one hand, we will take the theoretically important and empirically relevant differentiation between the different dimensions of ethnicity into account. Not only have Alba's analyses of the role of ethnicity among European-Americans demonstrated that ongoing ethnic identifications are not necessarily consequential for people's behavior and social ties (Alba, 1990). Schnell's analyses, too, have shown that ethnic identifications, ethnic cultural habits, and social ties to the ethnic minority are separate and rather independent dimensions of ethnicity (1990:50f). The societal and political implications of a "refusal to integrate" depend heavily on the question of which – if any – dimensions of ethnicity are affected by this process. In order to keep our analytical framework simple, we follow Schnell's differentiation between Weber's perceptible differences in the *conduct of everyday life* on the one hand, and ethnic *classifications and identifications* on the other hand (1990:45; see also Weber, 1972:237ff).

In addition, we will differentiate between a possible slowdown or *decline in "assimilationist"* identifications and behavior, and an *increase in "ethnic"* identifications and behavior. As argued above, this is of crucial importance since alienation from the hostland does not imply increasing identification with the country of origin, but can result in marginalization as well.

TABLE 1
DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS

	Hostland-related	Homeland-related
Identifications and Attitudes	– identification as member of the hostland – intention to stay in the hostland permanently	– identification as a member of the homeland
Habits and Behavior	– German language skills, existence of German friends, relatives, and people met often	– homeland-related cultural habits (listening to music, consumption of newspapers, cooking) – attendance of religious events

We will look at migrants' adaptation processes in the field of their identificational, cognitive, and social assimilation by presenting *trend analyses for the last fifteen years*. We will present these analyses separately for first- and second-generation migrants so that our results give an insight not only into the development of the indicators under consideration over time, but also into the generational succession.

In our analyses, we will look at the development of four different sets of indicators (*see* Table 1). We differentiate between indicators for the development of hostland-related identifications and attitudes (*e.g.*, a decrease in the share of migrants who identify themselves as Germans), indicators for the development of hostland-related habits and behavior (*e.g.*, a decrease in the share of migrants who have German friends), indicators of the development of identifications and attitudes related to the country of origin (*e.g.*, an increase in the share of migrants who identify themselves as members of the homeland), and indicators of the development of habits and behavior related to the country of origin (*e.g.*, an increase in the share of migrants who observe ethnic cultural habits). We could accept and confirm the hypothesis of a refusal to integrate that is accompanied by a "reactive ethnicity" formation when the analyses show that there has been an increase (over time or from the first to the second generation) in ethnic cultural identifications and/or habits at the expense of identifications with and ties to German society.

Our data are based on the German Socio-economic Panel (SOEP) conducted annually by the German Institute for Economic Research (*Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaft* = DIW) since 1984 (*see* SOEP Group, 2001). The SOEP encompasses several subsamples, one of which (sample B) is a foreigner's sample. To be included in this sample, interviewees had to live in a household with an immigrant head of household, and had to be at least 16 years old at the time of the survey. In addition, the head of household had to belong to the

“guest worker” population who had migrated to Germany during the period of labor recruitment from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. For this reason, only those households having a Turkish, Spanish, Greek, “Yugoslav,” or Italian head were interviewed. The foreigner’s sample of the SOEP survey thus does not represent all foreigners in Germany. However, the number of labor migrants is higher than that of other nationalities. Other foreigners are included in other samples of the SOEP.

We include all those foreigners of the SOEP in our analyses who belong to the foreigner’s sample and who had the code of the nationalities mentioned above in at least one wave. People who changed their nationality due to naturalization are included in our analyses. After discussions with the fieldwork organization, those few cases were excluded who changed their nationality to a nationality other than German (*e.g.*, from Turkish to Spanish). Based on this, we differentiate between first- and second-generation migrants – second-generation migrants being those who were born in Germany or immigrated before the age of six⁴ – and three nationality groups: Turks, migrants from former Yugoslavia, and EU migrants. Due to small sample size, analyses of other subgroups would lead to unacceptably large sampling errors. A further differentiation by nationality is not possible due to small case numbers.

We will describe the indicators outlined above cross-sectionally. This means that we report the distribution for each year (1984 to 2001) in which the respective question was asked.⁵ Accordingly, it is not a longitudinal analysis, but a trend study based on the same persons. There is simply no alternative to this approach in Germany: There is only one longitudinal dataset for foreigners, namely the SOEP. All other studies on foreigners in Germany are not panel studies; many of them are quota-samples, which are inappropriate for research purposes, and nearly all studies restrict the sample to those foreigners who are able to take part in the interview in German. Furthermore, naturalized immigrants cannot be identified in these datasets. None of the other specially designed random-sample foreigners’ studies have been replicated, so there are no other datasets for trend studies. If the SOEP is used for a trend study, the

⁴In those very few cases in which information on immigration age was missing, people were either classified according to their country of school attendance, or (if this information was missing as well) were excluded from the analyses.

⁵Some indicators are only measured every other year or even less frequently. We will report the results for each year in which a question was asked (up to 2001). For several indicators, the wording of the questions and answer categories changes slightly over time (for details, *see* full questionnaires under <<http://panel.gsoep.de/soepinfo2001/soepinfo2001.html>>).

appropriate weighting (as separate cross-sections) is far from obvious.⁶ If unbiased estimates for nonremigrant foreigners are intended, a full-scale panel analysis would be more statistically adequate. Due to panel attrition, missing data, and selective out-migration, an adequate statistical analysis of this data requires broad non-response adjustments.⁷ This has never been attempted for this dataset and the technical descriptions of the required methodology demand a separate discussion.

The composition of the groups under consideration is not the same for each year due to panel attrition and children of families in the foreigner's sample who reached the minimum age to be included in the survey. Table 2 shows the years in which they joined the SOEP by generational status and nationality.

People who migrated to Germany since 1984 are not included in the analysis unless they joined a household that was already included in the sample of foreigners (*e.g.*, due to marriage). In the period under consideration, about 3,500 first-generation and about 1,000 second-generation migrants answered the questionnaire at least once. We will report only descriptive statistics for these persons.⁸

⁶The weights are more or less simply the reciprocal of the sampling fraction. This could hardly be defended on statistical grounds, since the sampling fractions for the foreigners sample is only defined for the first wave. Of course, every repeated interview attempt will suffer from nonresponse (for a full treatment of nonresponse specific to the conditions of fieldwork in Germany, *see* Schnell, 1997). The SOEP uses a propensity weight for longitudinal studies; it is assumed here that the sample universe is constant – which is empirically wrong, since we have remigration effects, especially in the first generation and long-term stays in their parents' homeland in case of the second generation. A logically consistent weighting scheme for foreigners has yet to be developed. Given this unfortunate situation, we treat all waves of the SOEP as independent, unweighted samples. Even this should result in estimates which are unbiased compared to those of quota-samples.

⁷To be more precise, multiple imputations via chained equations (*mice*) seem to be the proper method of analysis (*see* for example for an introduction Schafer, 1997; Buuren und Oudshoorn 1999; for associated software *see* <<http://www.multipleimputation.com>>).

⁸We expect nonlinear relationships between assimilation indicators and time. If assimilation is a continuous process, we would expect sigmoid-like functions (as in nearly all models of innovation diffusion). If assimilation is not a continuous process, any functional relationship between indicators and time would have been possible, and current sociological knowledge would not permit one to predict which one. If this was the case, regression diagnostics for the evaluation of model fit by a nonparametric scatterplot smoother would be required for any regression model, regardless of the type of model (linear, log-linear, nonlinear, or even nonparametric) and a huge number of cluttered graphics would be necessary. Instead of this, we present the graphics of a summary statistic, which requires fewer assumptions about distributions, independence of observations, functional form, and sampling processes. For a full treatment of data transformations, scatterplot smoothers, and regression diagnostics, *see* Schnell (1994) or Cook and Weisberg (1999). For an in-depth critique of the trivial use of regression models, *see* Schnell (1994) and Berg (2004).

TABLE 2
YEAR OF FIRST PARTICIPATION IN THE SOEP BY GENERATIONAL STATUS

Year of First Participation in the SOEP	Nationality							
	Turks		Former Yugoslavia		EU Migrants		Total	
	1st Generation	2nd Generation	1st Generation	2nd Generation	1st Generation	2nd Generation	1st Generation	2nd Generation
1984	982	34	531	19	1,317	158	2,830	211
1985	42	19	9	7	30	35	81	61
1986	37	18	6	9	30	28	73	55
1987	57	14	12	9	21	25	90	48
1988	35	29	8	13	10	31	53	73
1989	32	26	6	6	12	31	50	63
1990	26	34	11	16	12	25	49	75
1991	22	34	6	14	3	23	31	71
1992	25	24	13	14	15	21	53	59
1993	17	30	21	14	12	28	50	72
1994	13	18	11	13	4	17	28	48
1995	11	13	8	11	4	10	23	34
1996	13	20	4	6	7	11	24	37
1997	8	21	4	5	5	21	17	47
1998	5	20	1	4	1	11	7	35
1999	4	17	1	0	2	8	7	25
2000	5	11	1	0	2	16	8	27
2001	5	10	0	0	3	8	8	18
Total	1,339	392	653	160	1,490	507	3,482	1,059

Source: SOEP.

Figure I. Share of Migrants Who “Feel Totally German” by Generational Status (in Percent, 1984–2001)

HOSTLAND- AND HOMELAND-RELATED ATTITUDES AND HABITS OF FIRST- AND SECOND-GENERATION MIGRANTS IN GERMANY: EVIDENCE FROM THE MID-EIGHTIES TILL TODAY

As mentioned above, it has been explicitly and repeatedly stated in the literature that migrants' identification with Germany has decreased. As clearly as this claim is asserted, it is however just as clearly refuted by trend analyses based on SOEP data (*see* Figure I).

The percentage of migrants who consider themselves totally German – a rather conservative indicator of identificational assimilation – has never been as high as today, as long as one considers Turkish and EU migrants.⁹ In 2001,

⁹Self-identification was measured with a five-point scale from “I feel totally German” to “I don't feel at all German” (full questionnaires under <<http://panel.gsoep.de/soepinfo2001/soepinfo2001.html>>).

Figure II. Share of Migrants Who Claim to Speak German “Very Well” by Generational Status (in Percent, 1984–2001)

about thirty percent of second-generation migrants of Turkish origin and forty percent of second-generation migrants from the EU stated that they “feel totally German.” In both groups, this percentage is – respectively – twice to three times as high as for first-generation migrants. The graphs show increasing percentages in the period under consideration, too – especially for second-generation Turkish origin migrants in the last decade. A slightly different development can be observed for migrants from the former Yugoslavia. They feel “totally German” much more often than the other groups, but their identification with Germany experienced a decrease in the early nineties. This change might be explained by the war and a subsequent increase in ethnic identifications.

With regard to migrants’ cognitive assimilation in Germany measured by language skills, the “good news” is that the differences between the generations are substantial for all groups.¹⁰ Figure II shows the percentage of respondents who claim to speak German “very well.”

¹⁰German language skills were measured based on respondent’s self-assessment on a five-point scale from “very well” to “not at all.”

While the second generation knows German much better than the first generation, language skills overall stagnate – albeit on different levels – for the nationality groups under consideration. About 40% of second-generation Turks, about 65% of second-generation EU migrants, and about 80% of second-generation migrants from the former Yugoslavia claim to speak German very well. Second-generation migrants in our sample have similar language skills today than they had in the eighties and nineties. Thus, unlike their identification with Germany, these skills did not change a great deal over time. The crucial determinant of language skills seems to be generational status rather than duration of stay in Germany. Language skills of first-generation migrants stagnate altogether, and are thus almost independent of respondents' duration of stay. An important finding is that this pattern of stagnation is not typical for Turkish migrants, but is more or less the same for all three groups under consideration. This suggests that it is primarily due to the "general logic" of language acquisition, rather than an alleged interruption in the assimilation process of Turkish migrants caused by an increasing separation of the Turkish community: It may simply be due to the fact that learning complex skills like speaking a foreign language may be harder at higher ages. Since most first-generation migrants migrated at the same historical time and the same personal age, the effects of aging and historical epoch cannot be separated statistically without further constraining assumptions. As expected, Turkish migrants' cognitive assimilation progresses substantially slower in terms of the improvement of language skills from the first to the second generation.

This does not hold true for migrants' social assimilation measured by the nationality of three close friends or relatives. However, this type of assimilation shows a similar pattern in terms of no substantial variation over time for all groups except second-generation migrants from the former Yugoslavia (*see* Figure III).¹¹

The generational gap is rather wide with regard to this indicator, especially for Turkish migrants. The percentage of those Turkish migrants who have a German person among their three main acquaintances is twice as high for second-generation Turks as for first-generation Turks (about 60% and 30% respectively). The slight decrease after 1996 that can be seen in the plot is not statistically significant. First-generation EU migrants are more likely to have German friends or relatives than first-generation Turks. For EU migrants, the generational gap with regard to the number of friends is smaller (55% for

¹¹ Respondents were asked about the nationality of three friends, relatives, or other people they go out with or meet often.

Figure III. Share of Migrants Who Have at Least One German among Three People They Meet Often (in Percent, 1988–2001)

first-generation migrants to 75% for second-generation migrants). There is only one group that in fact reports fewer Germans as close friends or relatives today than a decade ago – albeit on a rather high level: Second-generation migrants from the former Yugoslavia. Ninety percent reported to have a close German friend or relative in 1988; this percentage declined to about 70% in 2001.

Another indicator suggested for an ethnicization process (*see* for instance Hoffmann-Nowotny *et al.*, 2001) is the development of migrants' intention to stay in the hostland permanently (*see* Figure IV).

According to our data, almost all groups under consideration show an increasing intention to stay in Germany over time.¹² This does not hold true

¹²Whether or not this statement is tautological depends on the definition of the target population. If it includes remigrants, this statement is nearly tautological because migrants who did not wish to stay have remigrated, therefore the percentage of persons who would not like to remigrate should increase with time. If the target population consists only of persons who have so far not remigrated, this statement is not tautological.

Figure IV. Share of Migrants Who Want to Stay in Germany Forever (in Percent, 1984–2001)

for second-generation migrants from the former Yugoslavia, whose intention to stay in Germany permanently decreased substantially from the early to the mid-nineties, but increased again since then. This process parallels their temporarily decreasing identification with Germany in this period. In 2001, about 80% of all second-generation Turks, 70% of all second-generation migrants from former Yugoslavia, and 75% of all second-generation migrants from the EU intended to stay in Germany permanently. The figures for the first generation are about 50% to 60% for all groups.

To sum up: Second-generation migrants feel German more often, speak German better, have more German friends, and are more likely to intend to stay in Germany than first-generation migrants. Additionally, their self-identification as Germans increases over time, insofar as second-generation Turkish and EU migrants feel more German today than a decade ago. This does not hold true for second-generation migrants from the former Yugoslavia. However, the fact that this group experienced a decrease in identification with Germany in the 90s suggests that this development has more to do with the situation in the

Figure V. Share of Migrants Who “Feel Totally as a Member of the Country of Origin” (in Percent, 1984–2001)

countries of origin than with the situation in Germany. Second-generation migrants from the former Yugoslavia are also an exception when it comes to migrants' intention to stay. For all groups, migrants' cognitive and social assimilation progresses in the generational succession, but shows little increase over time.

The trend analyses presented so far tell only part of the story, since they do not give any information about migrants' homeland-oriented attitudes and behavior. With regard to these indicators, the percentage of migrants who feel exclusively as a member of their country of origin develops in fact almost complementary to the generational differences and the temporal increase in the percentage of migrants who feel totally German (*see* Figure V).

The percentage of second-generation Turks who “feel totally Turkish” dropped from about 40% in 1989 to about 10% in 2001. For EU migrants, the respective figures are about 25% to 15%. Second-generation migrants of these nationality groups identify with their country of origin substantially less often than first-generation migrants, though this gap seems to narrow over time. The graph for second-generation Yugoslavs shows a less clear tendency,

their identification having been very low in the mid-eighties, and again today, with a slight increase in between. This temporary increase in identifications with their countries of origin, which might have been caused by the war in the former Yugoslavia, was obviously only experienced by second-generation migrants.¹³ The graph for the first generation resembles the steady decline displayed by first- and second-generation migrants from Turkey and the EU.

As outlined above, ethnic attitudes/identifications and ethnic habits/behavior are two independent dimensions of ethnicity. The SOEP provides three indicators of ethnic cultural habits: cooking of ethnic dishes, listening to music of the country of origin, and reading newspapers of the country of origin.¹⁴ Our trend analyses show the percentages of those migrants who read only newspapers from their country of origin, who always cook meals traditional to their country of origin, and who always listen to music from their country of origin (*see* Figures VI–VIII).¹⁵

Basically, the percentages of migrants from the former Yugoslavia and from EU countries who report on these points do not rise above 10%; only first-generation EU migrants come close to 20% in some years for cooking dishes and reading newspapers from the country of origin. With this exception, this holds true for all the years under observation, among first- and second-generation migrants, and for all three indicators under consideration. The remaining fluctuations are rather marginal. Concerning first-generation Turkish migrants, the graphs show that between 20% and 30% of this group only listen to Turkish music and exclusively read Turkish newspapers, and between 40% and 50% only cook Turkish dishes. This last-mentioned habit is the only one that is still performed by more than 10% of second-generation Turks.

Reading only Turkish newspapers is an indicator that might be considered to be the most important when it comes to assessing Turkish migrants'

¹³Since the number of cases in this subgroup of second-generation migrants from the former Yugoslavia is really small, this increase may also be simply due to a sampling error.

¹⁴Cultural habits were measured on a five-point scale, ranging from "reading only newspapers from country of origin/only cooking meals traditional to country of origin/only listening to music from country of origin" to "reading only German newspapers/never cooking traditional meals/never listening to music from country of origin."

¹⁵Due to the usual answer scale (integers from 1 to 5), the distribution of all indicators is far from a normal distribution, and could not be transformed to normal (for example, by a power transformation). So either a cumulative percentage (*e.g.*, the median) or a percentage of special categories provides useful statistics. Since the latter is easy to understand and the results produced are independent of the statistics used, we opted for this solution.

Figure VI. Share of Migrants Who Read Only Newspapers from Country of Origin (in Percent, 1988–2000)

often stated interest in homeland issues. Interestingly, this indicator clearly points in a different direction than the statements listed above (*e.g.*, the “widespread and intensive” use of Turkish media) would suggest: A very small percentage of Turkish second-generation migrants read only Turkish newspapers (less than 3% in 2000) and the percentage of first-generation migrants who do so declined steadily between 1988 (34%) and 2000 (18%). Of all homeland-related indicators, listening exclusively to music of the country of origin is the only one that could be interpreted as indicating a slightly increasing “ethnic orientation” for second-generation Turkish migrants (from 3% in 1988 to 9% in 2000).

Our last indicator – attendance of church or religious services – is problematic as one could argue that it is only indirectly related to the salience of ethnicity in attitudes and behavior. Since the proponents of the thesis of migrants’ refusal to integrate often refer to the allegedly increasing role of religion for Turkish migrants’ identity, we incorporate it in our analyses nonetheless (*see* Figure IX).

Figure VII. Share of Migrants Who Listen Only to Music from Country of Origin (in Percent, 1988–2000)

The trend shows an increasing secularization between the generations for all groups. Today, the percentages of those who report that they attend church or religious events “rarely” or “never” range from about 60% to 80% (for Turks and Yugoslavs respectively, with EU migrants lying in-between those groups) for first-generation migrants and from about 80% (Turks, EU migrants) to 90% (Yugoslavs) for second-generation migrants.¹⁶ In addition, an increasing secularization over time (about a 10% increase in those who never attend religious services between the mid-nineties to today) is observable for Turkish and Yugoslav second-generation migrants.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our empirical results refute the statements about Turkish migrants’ refusal to integrate in almost all aspects. Even though a thorough longitudinal analysis is

¹⁶Attendance of church or religious events was measured on a four-point scale from “every week” to “never.”

Figure VIII. Share of Migrants Who Only Cook Meals Traditional to Country of Origin (in Percent, 1988–2000)

needed to finally settle these issues, several conclusions can already be drawn: As is well known, Turkish migrants lag behind other groups in terms of their language skills. Even among the second generation, less than half of the respondents of Turkish origin have very good German-language skills according to their self-assessment. With regard to their social assimilation, the second generation has kept up so that the huge nationality gap for the first generation diminished substantially for the second generation. There is no evidence in support of the thesis that interethnic relationships have declined. While migrants' cognitive and social assimilation stagnates over time, the number of those second-generation migrants who feel totally German increased – not only from the first to the second generation, but also over time. Today, the differences between the groups under consideration are no longer substantial in terms of this indicator. The above-mentioned peculiarity that migrants from the former Yugoslavia have fewer contacts with Germans today and are less likely to feel German than they used to requires closer inspection with regard to its causes and further development.

Figure IX. Share of Migrants Who Attend Church or Religious Events “Rarely” or “Never” (in Percent, 1992–2001)

While the stagnation in all groups’ social and cognitive assimilation patterns over time may be considered as an ambivalent result, the findings are more straightforward when it comes to their *ethnic* identifications and habits. The results by no means suggest that Turkish migrants’ less-progressed structural assimilation is accompanied by a tendency to compensate for their comparatively disadvantaged social status by reaffirming ethnic cultural habits and homeland-oriented attitudes. Turkish migrants neither want to return to their country of origin more often than the other groups nor do they identify themselves as one of its members more frequently. Looking at the number of those who never or rarely attend religious services, second-generation Turks are as secular as EU migrants, and they follow homeland issues by reading newspapers from their country of origin as infrequently as other second-generation migrants. They still listen to Turkish music and cook Turkish dishes a little more often than EU-origin migrants and migrants from the former Yugoslavia. This, however, may have to do with the fact that a distinct Turkish music and cooking style

might exist more clearly for this group than for migrants from the EU or from the former Yugoslavia.

While not all assimilation-related indicators undergo considerable change over time, all indicators show a substantial difference between the first and the second generation. In this regard, they reaffirm the conclusions of other scholars of assimilation in Germany “that the basic mechanism of assimilation is generational change” (Kalter and Granato, 2002:213; *see also* Frick, 2004:28). The inclusion of homeland-related indicators in our analyses allows us to rebut the thesis of a growing ethnic self-confidence among second-generation labor migrants. All in all, the results suggest that assimilation theory provides a more appropriate framework for Germany than the concept of “reactive ethnicity” formation.

Nevertheless, the scope of our article has its limits: Our analyses are so far only descriptive in focus; the number of available indicators is restricted, and we did not check for panel attrition. The latter can be expected to affect the less well-assimilated migrants in particular since they are more likely to remigrate.

We do not presume to have rejected the as yet unquantified hypothesis that a small subgroup of Turkish migrants whose structural assimilation has failed or who have even “assimilated downwards” might have become more homeland-oriented or even more radical in their attitudes. This was neither the research question of this article nor do our analyses give any information on these questions. They only show trends for the groups under consideration here, and do not give an insight into the diversity of adaptation within each of these groups. The analyses presented here show that there is change, and that the direction of change points toward assimilation. They are the first step in analyzing identificational, social, and cognitive assimilation patterns over time, and further analyses are needed to validate the picture that we have begun to sketch. They will mainly have to prove that the developments outlined here are not due to group composition effects, and to start looking into explanations for the causal relationship between the different dimensions of assimilation. So far, however, existing empirical evidence gives little reason to doubt that “labor migrants” and their children are adapting to Germany – slowly in some areas, but certainly for the better.

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