

## **Instrumentalising the Influx of Refugees for Boundary-Change? The Turkish Community in the Pursuit of Social Acceptance in Germany**

Working Paper No. 91

**Baris Senay**  
Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex  
Email: [barissenay@gmx.de](mailto:barissenay@gmx.de)

January 2017

## **Abstract**

The large-scale influx of Syrian refugees has shaken Germany's societal order and bears the potential for previously marginalised minority groups to promote their own incorporation into the mainstream society. The purpose of this paper is thereby to explore the impact of Syrian immigration on Germany's Turkish minority. By using the boundary-making paradigm as an alternative lens on integration, two central dimensions are analysed: firstly, the relational dynamics between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees; and secondly, the ways in which Syrian immigration has impacted the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority. As a methodological approach, semi-structured interviews with Turkish organisations were conducted. This paper demonstrates that Syrian immigration has had opposing impacts on the integration of the Turkish minority. On the one hand, Syrian immigration has contributed to intensified ties between the Turkish minority and the German majority. On the other hand, it has led to a rising anti-immigrant sentiment with negative implications for the Turkish minority. The paper argues that the Turkish minority attempts to use this unique moment to promote its own incorporation by disassociating itself from Syrian refugees. Yet it concludes that ambiguity remains with regards to whether Syrian immigration has indeed favoured the integration of the Turkish minority. Notwithstanding, the study sheds light onto significant processes of inclusion and exclusion resulting from the influx of refugees.

## **Keywords**

*Syrian refugees, Germany, Turkish community, boundary-making, integration*

## **Introduction**

Germany currently hosts an estimated 1.5 million refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, including 1.1 million refugees who arrived in 2015 alone (Der Spiegel 2015; Die Welt 2016a). The influx of predominantly Syrian refugees has both sparked a controversial debate and given rise to considerable anti-immigrant sentiment. Yet interestingly, Germany's minority groups also show signs of resentment towards refugees (Die Welt 2016b). By adopting a negative position on the newly arriving refugees, previously marginalised minority groups align with the majority population and, by extension, promote a shared sense of belonging. The influx of refugees could thus result in a new societal order in Germany. As Wolfgang Kaschuba (cited in Die Welt 2016b), the director of the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research, maintains, the new migrants occupy the outermost position of the German social order, while those with an immigrant background who have already been in Germany for some or a long time move towards the centre. In other words, previously marginalised minority groups can use this 'unique moment' to promote their own integration within German society. Importantly, while the most common understanding of integration distinguishes between structural and socio-cultural integration (Erdal and Oepen 2013: 871), this thesis focuses on the latter, the socio-cultural dimension of integration.

Given that Germany's Turkish minority has been attempting to attain socio-cultural equality vis-à-vis the German majority for many decades (Gerdes et al. 2012), these social processes are highly relevant for Turkish migrants, too. The Turkish community constitutes not only Germany's largest minority group, but it has also been at the centre of many controversial integration debates (Ehrkamp 2005, 2006). Despite the heterogeneous character of the Turkish minority – with variation along

socio-cultural, economic and religious lines – integration debates have centred around stigmatised views on Turkish migrants. Now, Syrian immigration could alter such negative discourses. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the key research question of *how Syrian immigration to Germany has impacted the integration of the Turkish minority*. Central to this question are also the ways in which the Turkish minority relates to the newly arriving Syrian refugees and the ways in which Syrian immigration has impacted the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority.

This study employs the boundary-making paradigm as its conceptual framework. The boundary-making paradigm is an alternative lens on integration processes, whereby integration is conceptualised as the decline in the relevance of socio-cultural distinctions rather than immigrants' socio-cultural adaptation to the mainstream culture (Alba 2005: 23). Conceptualising integration in this way constitutes a sound analytical approach to address the central research question for two reasons. Firstly, the dual focus of this study is on the relational dynamics between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees as well as between the Turkish minority and the German majority. Secondly, socio-cultural changes of the Turkish minority or the German majority are insignificant for the purpose of this study. It is rather the perceived socio-cultural distance between the Turkish minority and the German majority and the ways in which the influx of Syrian refugees have changed this perception that are of interest. To explore this argument, the research uses a qualitative design; semi-structured interviews with Turkish organisations were conducted in July 2016 in Berlin and Cologne. As well as being key representatives of the Turkish minority, Turkish organisations are also embedded in Germany's institutional context and thus highly relevant actors within German society (Oner 2014: 77).

This paper is divided into four main sections. The first expands upon the analytic perspective of the boundary-making paradigm with regards to processes of incorporation and exclusion. The second reviews the integration challenges faced by Germany's Turkish minority. The emphasis here on the essentialised views on the Turkish minority, which neglect the diverse character of the Turkish community (see Vertovec 2009). The third section then presents the methodological approach of my research. This includes an overview of the interviewees and information about how the interviews were both conducted and subsequently analysed. The fourth section discusses the findings of the interviews and involves three dimensions: firstly, the relationship between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees; secondly, the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority; and thirdly, a wider discussion on boundary changes in the light of Syrian immigration to Germany.

## **The boundary-making paradigm**

Academic debates on migrants' incorporation show a renewed interest in the concept of boundary-making. The limitations of major standard paradigms in immigration research, including assimilation, integration and multiculturalism theories, have prompted many scholars to apply this alternative lens to the issue of immigrant incorporation and exclusion (Wimmer 2009: 244). An underlying caveat of these existing major paradigms is the conception of ethnicity as an unproblematic and self-evident unit of analysis. As Wimmer (2008: 971) elaborates, these traditional paradigms adopt a primordialist perspective on ethnicity, that is, the idea of ethnic membership being acquired through birth and thus being seen as a natural characteristic of the social world. The primordialist perspective is most visible in assimilation theory, which requires the dilution of immigrant cultures through a one-sided and unidirectional process of cultural adaptation (Wimmer 2013: 18). Yet such one-dimensional

approaches to processes of migrants' incorporation are widely regarded as obsolete (Erdal and Oeppen 2013).

Constructivist perspectives, by contrast, understand ethnicity as a product of social processes (Wimmer 2008: 971). In this light, ethnicity is fluid, changeable and produced in a particular social context as opposed to being a rigid and 'given' characteristic. The constructivist perspective thus no longer distinguishes ethnic groups along a dimension of cultural similarity or difference, but rather studies how ethnic distinctions were 'inscribed onto a landscape of continuous cultural transitions' (Wimmer 2013: 22). Moreover, ethnic identities are, according to the constructivist perspective, both of a relational nature and a result of marking and maintaining boundaries. This then calls into question how ethnic identities are formed in first place.

Regarding this, Jenkins' (1997) contribution provides us with a sound starting-point to reveal the exclusionary dynamics within ethnic identity formation processes. He distinguishes between ethnic categorisation and ethnic groups. While the former is, according to Jenkins, imposed by majority groups and strongly associated with discrimination and exclusion, the latter is a result of self-identification and a shared sense of belonging. Yet, as Wimmer (2008: 980) correctly highlights, 'imposed categories may over time be accepted as a category of self-identification and thus transformed into a group', and vice versa. Against this backdrop, ethnic identity formation is better conceptualised as a classificatory struggle that takes place between minority and majority groups (Zolberg and Woon 1999). Such an understanding lies at the heart of the boundary-making paradigm, which can thus help to illuminate processes of ethnic differentiation and exclusion.

### *Formation of boundaries and their impact on minority and majority groups*

The boundary-making paradigm conceives ethnic identity formation as a dialectical process between majority and minority groups (Zolberg and Woon 1999). Boundaries are produced in reference to specific cultural and social traits, whereby actors of boundary-making highlight cultural features that are considered to be most relevant or controversial (Wimmer 2009: 255). They are thus selectively drawn and do not represent objective cultural differences. Despite this constructivist nature, boundaries have a significant influence on the relationship between minority and majority groups on multiple dimensions. To borrow a distinction from Wimmer (2008: 975), a boundary involves both a categorical and a behavioural dimension. The categorical dimension refers to processes of ethnic classification and collective representation. By dividing the social world into social groups in this way, demarcated boundaries of *us vs. them* emerge. The behavioural dimension, on the other hand, prescribes social scripts of action that individuals use to relate to such categories. Or, in Alba's (2005: 22) words, boundaries operate as a 'distinction that individuals make in their everyday lives that shape their actions and mental orientations towards each other'. Yet significantly, boundaries are not always composed of clearly demarcated groups, which is why Alba's differentiation between *bright and blurred* boundaries is useful.

Bright boundaries imply that the delineation of us vs. them is unambiguously defined, 'so that individuals know at all times which side of the boundary they are' (Alba 2005: 22). In this case, minority members might perceive cultural distances to the majority group to be both substantial and difficult to overcome without abandoning old identities (Diehl et al. 2016: 241). Blurred boundaries, by contrast, imply ambiguity with regard to the question of who belongs to the boundary. The fuzziness of blurred boundaries is, in turn, often associated with a higher tolerance for diverse and multiple memberships (Zolberg and Woon 1999: 8). In other words, the cultural differences between

minority and majority groups are not mutually exclusive. The nature of a boundary can thus be indicative of processes of social closure and opening. Especially bright boundaries imply high degrees of social closure and are thus strongly associated with discrimination and exclusion (Alba 2005). In light of this, the value in intersecting the boundary-making paradigm and integration becomes apparent.

### *Boundary processes of incorporation and exclusion*

As Wimmer (2009: 257) argues, applying the boundary-making paradigm provides great analytical leverage to shed light onto processes of migrants' incorporation and exclusion. Zolberg and Woon (1999) have introduced a useful typology in relation to this. Specifically, they identify three boundary processes of incorporation: individual boundary crossing, boundary blurring and boundary shifting. The individual *boundary crossing* corresponds with a traditional understanding of assimilation and does not require any changes of the boundary itself. This form of incorporation takes place on an individual level and has, unless it occurs in large numbers and in a consistent direction, only minor implications for the societal structures (Alba 2005: 23). By contrast, boundary blurring and shifting imply higher degrees of social change and 'have the most wide-ranging effects on immigrant incorporation' (Zolberg and Woon 1999: 10). *Boundary blurring* involves a decline in social distance between minority and majority groups. In other words, the previously separate and mutually exclusive collective identities become increasingly blurred and socio-cultural distinctions attenuate in their saliency. The final process, *boundary shifting*, on the other hand, requires a fundamental reconstruction of a group's identity. This implies a significant relocation of the line differentiating between minority and majority groups. Boundary shifting thus constitutes a more comprehensive redefinition of the social situation and, crucially, can go in either direction of inclusion or exclusion.

Having discussed the constructed nature of ethnic boundaries, boundary processes of incorporation or exclusion can be affected by changes on both sides of the boundary (Alba 2005). Although Zolberg and Woon (1999: 9) maintain that the asymmetric power relationship enables majority groups to create exclusionary boundaries, this nonetheless allows minority groups to actively participate in the negotiation of boundaries. This form of agency is particularly well-considered in Wimmer's research on ethnic boundary-making. By building on Zolberg and Woon's framework, Wimmer (2009; 2013) presents a comprehensive five-fold typology that focuses on the strategies involved in the making of boundaries. His typology distinguishes between:

Those that seek to establish a new boundary by expanding the range of people included; those that aim at reducing the range of the included by contracting boundaries; those that seek to change the meaning of an existing boundary by challenging the hierarchical ordering of ethnic categories; those that attempt crossing a boundary by changing one's own categorical membership; those that aim to overcome ethnic boundaries by emphasizing other, crosscutting social cleavages through what I call strategies of boundary blurring (Wimmer 2013: 986)

Most significantly for the purpose of this paper, this suggests that examining ethnic boundaries can, next to unveiling processes of social closure, also reveal the strategies of minority groups involved in the making of boundaries and, by extension, in promoting their own socio-cultural integration.

It is important to note, however, that the transformation of boundaries does not necessitate

socio-cultural changes within minority or majority groups (Alba 2005: 23). Integration is, in light of the boundary-making paradigm, conceptualised as the decline in the relevance of ethnic distinctions rather than immigrants' socio-cultural adaptation to the mainstream culture. To further illustrate these claims, Alba (2005: 25) and Wimmer (2009: 256) draw on some well-known aspects of US immigration history. More specifically, American mainstream society has evolved through the incremental incorporation of formerly excluded ethnic and racial groups – most notably Southern European Catholics, Irish Catholics and Eastern European Jews (Wimmer 2009: 256). These groups, so they argue, 'had to do boundary work' to disassociate themselves from African Americans in order to gain full membership status. Also Europe's more recent immigration history has shown similar attempts of immigrants to redefine exclusionary boundaries. In particular, immigrants from the early post-war guest-worker period have tried to dissociate themselves from newly arriving refugees and immigrants, not only to avoid being identified with these groups, but also to appear closer to the majority group (Wimmer 2009: 257). Somewhat ironically, as Wimmer elaborates, established immigrants have thereby emphasised exactly those features of the newly arriving groups – such as their laziness, their religiosity, their lack of decency or their backwardness – that have previously been used to describe them in relation to the majority group. In consideration of this, not only the significance of the relationship between minority and majority groups, but also between minority groups becomes apparent when analysing processes of incorporation.

### *Applying the boundary-making paradigm*

In sum, the preceding debate has shown that the boundary-making perspective on ethnic identities and integration constitutes a sophisticated analytical lens to dismantle some of the exclusionary as well as inclusionary processes in a particular social context. Applying such a lens to the current migration dynamics in Germany enables us to shed light on this study's central research question: that is, how has the influx of Syrian refugees to Germany impacted the integration of the Turkish minority? In other words, whether actors of the Turkish community attempt to use this 'unique moment' to expand, blur or shift the boundaries, to narrow the social distance to the mainstream and, ultimately, to become a socio-culturally more accepted part of German society. By doing so, this study takes into account a major criticism of collective identities: what Brubaker (2006) coined a 'groupist' conception of ethnicity. A groupist view on ethnicity misleadingly implies that an ethnic category represents a homogeneous group with a widely shared agreement on who belongs to this category and what this category consists of. To avoid this, my analysis attempts to capture the heterogeneous character of the Turkish community and thus takes a disaggregated view on the boundary-making strategies. Before turning to the methodology and analysis section, the following outlines the immigration history of Turks to Germany with a focus on their long-lasting attempt to gain full socio-cultural equality vis-à-vis the German majority.

### **The (failed) integration of the Turkish minority in Germany**

Large-scale Turkish migration to Germany dates back to the beginning of the 1960s. Most notably, Germany signed a bilateral recruitment agreement with Turkey on 30 October 1961 as a response to shortages on the labour market (Reisenau and Gerdes 2012: 107). Although the recruitment of so-called Turkish *Gastarbeiter* (guest-workers) was initially set out as a temporary scheme, Turkish migrants became a permanent feature in German society. Also attempts to curb Turkish immigration

in the 1970s and 1980s failed and the Turkish minority continued to grow in subsequent years (Bagci 2012: 34). Today, Turkish migrants constitute Germany's largest minority group with over 2.8 million people and have thus naturally been at the centre of many immigration and integration debates.

Despite a long history of immigration, Germany insisted on not being a country of immigration for many decades (Ehrkamp 2006: 1678). This denial stance, as well as Germany's restrictive citizenship laws, have inhibited the integration of immigrants. Especially the ambivalent legal status of Turkish migrants has provoked both a strong homeland orientation and a decreased desire to adapt socio-culturally (Reisenauer and Gerdes 2012: 119). Only with the Social Democratic Party and Greens coalition government assuming power in 1998, did Germany begin to accept her status as a country of immigration (Ehrkamp 2006: 1678). This change subsequently led to citizenship reforms in 2000. In particular, Germany broke with her restrictive ethno-cultural tradition (*ius sanguinis*) of citizenship by embracing a more open civic-territorial (*ius solis*) basis (Koopmans et al. 2005). This reform made it considerably easier for Turkish migrants to obtain German citizenship, for two main reasons: firstly, it reduced the time required to acquire citizenship for first- or second-generation migrants; and secondly, it allowed foreign-born children to obtain citizenship automatically (Bagci 2012: 37). While these changes have contributed significantly to the legal incorporation of Turkish migrants, they have, in parallel, also fuelled a controversial debate about the recognition of their socio-cultural and religious differences.

A central obstacle to full socio-cultural acceptance is the persisting notion of an ethno-culturally homogenous German nation (Annicchiarico 2014). The citizenship reform has not altered the historically embedded idea of a homogeneous German identity. This is why assimilationist stances have long been dominant in Germany's integration debates (Koopmans et al. 2005). According to this stance, immigrants are required to relinquish their socio-cultural differences and adopt a 'German way' of living. Yet Turkish migrants have rejected such integration expectations and have, conversely, maintained their socio-cultural distinctiveness (Ehrkamp 2006). As a result of this, the Turkish minority is marked by their failed integration, as demonstrated by numerous studies that have ranked the Turkish community as the least integrated minority group in Germany (e.g. see study by Berlin Institute for Population and Development 2009).

Meanwhile, German policy-makers have conceded that integration is a two-way process which requires the accommodation of socio-cultural differences to some degree (Ehrkamp 2006: 1679). However, the extent to which this paradigm shift has benefited the Turkish community remains ambiguous. As Ehrkamp (2006: 1679) states, the heterogeneous character of the Turkish population – with variation along political, economic, religious and intergenerational lines – has been ignored and discourses have focused on a wide range of negative features including the unwillingness to integrate, the ghettoisation of neighbourhoods and, perhaps most disturbingly, the notion that the socio-cultural integration of Turkish migrants is simply impossible. In a nutshell, integration debates have remained highly charged with stigmatising notions of Turkish migrants.

Many critics have also highlighted that integration debates portray Turkish migrants as the non-German or non-European *other*. This is especially evident in the obsessive tendency of German policy-makers to use the undefinable term German *Leitkultur* – 'guiding culture' (Posener 2015; see also Hoffmann 2010). Although somehow linked to Occidental and Christian values, *Leitkultur* is, as Ehrkamp (2006: 1679) correctly points out, a fuzzy concept and best understood as oppositional to Oriental and Muslim traditions. Given that two-thirds of Turkish migrants in Germany are Muslims, this causes an inevitable tension between Turkish migrants' desire to integrate and to remain socio-

culturally different. Besides, integration debates in Germany, as well as in Europe more widely, are ‘increasingly framed around the presumed incompatibility of Islam and Western values’ (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2009: 218). Despite the common view that Turkish Muslims practice a secularised and moderate form of Islam, this alleged incompatibility has been detrimental for the integration efforts of many Turkish migrants (Humphreys 2009: 144). The complicated relationship between Germany’s Muslim and majority populations became particularly visible in 2010. In 2010, Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that the shift towards a multicultural society had utterly failed (The Guardian 2010). Although Merkel stressed that immigrants and Muslims are a fundamental part of Germany, she also accused them of being unwilling to adapt to German culture.

In any case, the Turkish minority has a long history of attempting to gain full socio-cultural equality vis-à-vis the German majority. While multiple dimensions have, as discussed above, inhibited this endeavour, a common caveat underpins all of them - the essentialised and stigmatised notions of Turkish migrants that feed into controversial integration debates. Notwithstanding, current dynamics in Germany bear the potential for a fundamental discursive shift. The high influx of Syrian refugees in Germany provides Turkish migrants with a unique opportunity to change such negative discourses in their favour. In other words, the Turkish community can redefine their socio-cultural position within German society by defining their societal status in relation to the newly arriving Syrian refugees.

## **Methodology**

A qualitative methodology was adopted to address this study’s central research question of how the influx of Syrian refugees to Germany has impacted the integration of the Turkish minority; six semi-structured interviews with representatives of different Turkish migrant organisations were conducted in July 2016. By enabling a flexible yet focused approach, semi-structured interviews provided the most adequate research method to meet the demands of my open and explorative research objective (Flick 2008). Meanwhile, the decision to focus on Turkish migrant organisations had multiple justifications. While migrant organisations have a number of important functions for minority groups, it was, above all, their role as *active* agents of integration that made them highly relevant for this study (Amelina and Faist 2008: 94). Despite restricted access to public definition processes, migrant organisations co-construct integration requests and discourses (Amelina and Faist 2008: 95). Hence, migrant organisations not only represent the interests of a collectively felt identity, they are also instrumental actors in the dialogue between minority and majority groups (Oner 2014: 77).

This is certainly true for Turkish organisations in Germany. There is a well-established relationship between Turkish organisations and German state authorities, whereby the latter consult the former as experts to co-design more adequate integration policies (Sezgin 2011). Next to representing the interests of migrants, Turkish organisations are also influential in transforming the migrant community itself (Oner 2014: 80). This is important for this study since the strategies applied by Turkish organisations will have a substantial impact on the relationship between the Turkish community and Syrian refugees. Moreover, Turkish migrants have developed the most fragmented ‘landscape’ of migrant organisations in Germany (Oner 2014: 79), which has, in turn, enabled a disaggregated view on the Turkish community.

## *The participants*

The interview sample was chosen selectively, so that the diversity of the Turkish community has been accounted for. The six organisations selected vary along political, religious and economic lines. Specifically, they include three religious, one economic, one left-leaning and one independent and non-party organisation. The three religious organisations can further be distinguished into two Muslim-Sunni – one is considered to be moderate and one more conservative – and one Alevi organisation. While five interviews were conducted personally either in Berlin or Cologne, the interview with DIDF (Federation of Democratic Workers) was conducted via email. This was because the chief executive officer of DIDF proposed an unfeasible interview date. All interviewees occupy senior positions, varying from press officer to chief executive officer, and are thus key representatives of the respective organisations. Each of the six organisations will now be introduced briefly.

The Turkish-Islamic Union of the Directorate for Religious Affairs (DITIB) is the largest Muslim umbrella organisation in Germany with 220,000 members (Amelina and Faist 2008: 95; DTIB 2016). As a key representative of the Turkish community, DITIB is, of course, heavily involved in the integration processes of Turkish migrants. By adopting a moderate form of Islam, DITIB encourages the structural integration of Turkish migrants, yet also aims to preserve the socio-cultural traditions of a Turkish identity (Amelina and Faist 2008: 96). There is also a longstanding cooperation between DITIB and German integration authorities, whereby DITIB is a regular attendant of two major integration events, the Integration summit and the German Islam Conference (DIK).

Next to DITIB, the Islamic Community Milli Görüs (IGMG) is the most important Turkish-Sunni organisation in Germany with 31,000 members (Amelina and Faist 2008: 98; IGMG 2016). The ideology of IGMG draws heavily from the Milli Görüs movement in Turkey, which strives for a radical change of Turkey's political order on the basis of Islam (Amelina and Faist 2008: 98). Underpinned by such beliefs, IGMG has been criticised for preventing immigrants from integrating into German society. Most notably, the German Verfassungsschutz (Intelligence Service) has regarded the IGMG as undemocratic and as a potential threat to liberal values (Küçüküçüseyin 2002: 18). While such concerns seem to have decreased somewhat lately (see Dernbach 2015), the IGMG, in contrast to DITIB, continues to represent a more conservative part of the Turkish Muslim population. However, both IGMG and DITIB are key representatives of the Turkish Muslim population in Germany and hence highly relevant participants for this study.

Given that the integration discourses largely focus on Turkish-Sunni Muslims, it seemed even more important to incorporate an Alevi organisation in this research to attain a balanced view on the Turkish minority. The Alevitic Community Germany (AABF) represents approximately 250,000 and thus half of all Alevis in Germany (Alevitic Community Germany 2016). As one of the largest migrant organisations, the AABF also participates in the Integration Summit and the DIK. Notwithstanding, the Alevi community is strongly associated with left-wing and social-democratic camps and, for this reason, rarely features as a problematic case in integration debates (Amelina and Faist 2008: 102).

The Federation of Democratic Workers' Association (DIDF) was chosen to represent the left-leaning and secular part of the Turkish community. DIDF gained prominence in Germany through its 'anti-imperialist' remarks and, as Amelina and Faist (2008: 103) put it, 'it is not surprising that the association cooperates with left-wing parties in Germany'. Moreover, the DIDF promotes the interests of the Turkish working class (Federation of Domestic Workers' Association 2016).

Meanwhile, the two most important Turkish economic organisations in Germany, the German-Turkish Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Müsiad Berlin e.V., refused to be interviewed. To compensate, the Turkish-German Business Association Berlin-Brandenburg (TDU) was interviewed instead. By promoting the economic activities of over 280 Turkish businesses in Berlin, the TDU plays a substantial role in the German capital city's economic sphere (TDU 2016). It cooperates with various economic and political German institutions and is considered to be an expert organisation for businesses of Turkish origin (Amelina and Faist 2008: 111). Besides its economic practices, the TDU is also relevant for this study due to its engagement in questions related to the socio-cultural integration of Turkish migrants.

The largest Turkish organisation that claims to be independent of religious or political ideologies, the Turkish Community in Germany (TGD), also declined my request for an interview. As an alternative to the TGD, the Turkish Union in Berlin-Brandenburg (TBB) was interviewed. The TBB is an umbrella organisation of 30 migrant associations and, similar to the TGD, declares itself to be a non-party, non-religious, independent and democratic organisation (TBB 2016). With a separate anti-discrimination unit, the TBB promotes the intercultural dialogue and strives for a multicultural society free of discrimination.

In sum, the list of interviewed Turkish organisations not only covers a wide range of political, religious, socio-cultural and economic interests, it also includes some of the most significant actors of the heterogeneous Turkish community in Germany.

### *Conducting the interviews*

Participants had free choice of language between German and Turkish; four interviews were led in German and two interviews in Turkish. The interviews were guided by three main topics: firstly, the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority; secondly, the relationship between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees; and thirdly, the impact of the influx of Syrian refugees on the Turkish minority. Although questions for each topic were prepared beforehand, the interviews were both led flexibly and adapted accordingly to the expertise of the interviewee. The five personal interviews were all audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. To avoid unnecessary translation, the transcripts were analysed in German or Turkish before translating specific segments into English to be written up.

### *Qualitative content analysis*

To examine the interview content, Mayring's (2002; 2014) qualitative content analysis was used; its systematic approach to textual analysis makes it a strong analysis tool. The development of a category and sub-category system lies at the heart of Mayring's qualitative content analysis. As Mayring (2014: 39) puts it, 'the category system constitutes the central instrument of analysis'. Categories can be formed either deductively or inductively. While deductive categories are formed on the basis of theoretical considerations, inductive categories are developed directly out of the textual material (Mayring 2014: 78). For this study, both procedures of category formation were used. More precisely, the three themes covered in the interviews were used as the starting-point for my analysis of the interview content. This deductive procedure was important to ensure that interview content relevant for the central research objective was incorporated into the analysis. However, the category and sub-category system was gradually transformed on the basis of the interview content itself. As a result of this inductive procedure, a new category and sub-category system was formed. This has enabled not

only a more comprehensive analysis and presentation of the interview content, but also its most accurate description without losing the focus of the research objective.

The following three sections discuss the findings of this analysis, beginning with the relationship between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees, then turning to the impacts of Syrian immigration on the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority, before synthesising the results into a wider debate on current processes of boundary-formation in Germany.

### **The Relationship between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees**

Given that integration is, in light of the boundary-making paradigm, a relational process, the relationship between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees has a substantial impact on the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority. In other words, the ways in which Turkish migrants relate to the immigration of Syrian refugees can affect their own integration. To further analyse this theme, the interview content was broken down into the binary of how the Turkish organisations have promoted a shared identity with Syrian refugees, on the one hand, and how they have dissociated the two communities, on the other hand. The former refers to a possible expansion of the minority boundary and includes aspects such as empathy for refugees, support for their integration and the motivation that lies behind this support. By contrast, the latter focuses on the salient differences that exist between the two communities with an emphasis on the socio-cultural distance between the Turkish minority as well as the German majority vis-à-vis Syrian refugees.

#### *Expanding the minority-boundary?*

Although to varying degrees, all organisations have shown signs of solidarity regarding the newly arriving refugees and the challenges they face in Germany. A recurring aspect in the interviews has been the need to sensitise the Turkish minority as well as the German majority to the circumstances of Syrian refugees:

A successful integration of refugees can only work if we recognise them as humans first. But it will fail if we regard them as mere statistics or as a group of people that is simply unable to help themselves. (Interview IGMG, 11.07.2016)

Most importantly, the German majority has to be informed accurately about Syrian refugees. They are not criminals or terrorists. They are well-educated people who are fleeing from war and terror. (Interview TDU, 15.07.2016)

Of course, some [Turkish migrants] claim that [Syrian refugees] will be better integrated, that they will take away their jobs and that they receive a lot of support while little is being done about their own situation. However, our role as a migrant organisation is to sensitise the Turkish community with regards to the refugee issue and to reassure that it will receive support as well. (Interview TBB, 18.07.2016)

By criticising the media and political debates, IGMG has promoted a humanitarian perspective in which the organisation has urged for a move away from seeing refugees as mere statistics. TDU, meanwhile, has suggested a more benign representation of Syrians with an emphasis

on their high levels of education. Given that Syrians are the best-educated refugee group in Germany, this appears to be a legitimate suggestion (e.g. Die Welt 2016c). However, while these organisations have targeted German media and authorities, TBB, by contrast, has warned against negative voices within the Turkish community. As TBB has argued, negative notions strain the relationship between established minority groups and newly arriving refugees. To avoid this, TBB informs the Turkish community about the problems faced by refugees and attempts ‘to alleviate fears about increasing competition on labour or real estate markets’ (Interview TBB, 18.07.2016). However, while all these positions differ somehow, a common notion underpins all of them. That is, the solidarity shown towards refugees.

Moreover, all organisations contribute to the integration of Syrian refugees in various ways. These include financial or social support (DITIB; IGMG), enabling access to employment (TDU; DIDF), or helping with discrimination and stigmatisation (TBB). Interestingly, an underlying theme with regard to the integration of refugees has been the demand to avoid the mistakes made in the integration of Turkish migrants:

[Integration] has to start at an early stage, irrespective of how long [Syrian refugees] will stay. We must not prolong or delay their integration [...] This has been neglected in the case of [Turkish] guest-workers from both sides. (Interview DITIB, 11.07.2016)

To avoid segregation, Syrians need to learn the [German] language quickly, whereby German authorities must provide adequate facilities to do so. This will also enable [Syrian refugees] to access the labour market (Interview DIDF, 26.07.2016)

Participation is key for a successful integration, and language is key for participation. Language is the most basic prerequisite to become a part of society and to identify with Germany. (Interview IGMG, 11.07.2016)

By understanding integration as a two-way process, the organisations call for a more appropriate approach by both German authorities and Syrian refugees than applied in the case of Turkish migrants. The suggested changes are thereby mainly twofold: firstly, Syrian refugees should acquire the German language rapidly in order to gain access into German society; and secondly, German authorities should apply an immediate and long-term integration framework.

Besides the need to start the incorporation of Syrians immediately, IGMG also pointed out that younger refugees will gain important know-how during the integration process:

A comprehensive integration of Syrians into the educational institutions is not only beneficial for those who, for whichever reasons, remain in Germany. If we provide access to schools and education, Syrians can, after returning to Syria, also use their acquired knowledge and skills to rebuild their country. (Interview IGMG, 11.07.2016)

According to IGMG, integration not only avoids an educational gap of younger refugees, but can also accelerate the reconstruction of Syria once they return. Of course, the extent to which the integration of Syrians will benefit Syria in the future remains unclear, yet the positions adopted by IGMG as well as by the other interviewees univocally indicate a strong interest in promoting the incorporation of Syrian refugees into German society.

The organisations' motivations to support the integration of refugees, however, are manifold. On the one hand, the AABF claims that it 'must try to help any person deprived of their basic human rights' (Interview AABF, 12.07.2016) and, on the other hand, the TDU fears that 'a failed integration will have negative impacts on Germany's economy' (Interview TDU, 15.07.2016). Besides these two rather far-apart positions, the migration history of the Turkish community was given as another motivation:

Because we have experienced so much of this [discrimination] ourselves, it seems very obvious to us that we need to help. Yet for people who have not had similar experiences, it is not obvious at all. (Interview DITIB, 11.07.2016)

The Turkish community has experienced this massively in the past, whereby people have claimed that Turkish migrants take away the jobs occupied by the German majority. At the time, also critical voices such as 'Turks out' were raised. Now, we can see a similar discourse with reference to Syrian refugees. (Interview IGMG, 11.07.2016)

In the above two quotes, we can see how the two Sunni-Muslim organisations, DITIB and IGMG, compare the discrimination faced by Syrian refugees today to that faced by Turkish migrants in the past. Here, the motivation to help Syrian refugees is, in contrast to the German majority, based on the experience of exposure to similar forms of stigmatisation. IGMG, furthermore, identifies similarities in the discourses on Syrian refugees and Turkish migrants. Previous discourses have misleadingly claimed that Turkish immigration will lead to the mass unemployment of ethnic Germans. Now, a comparable discourse is being rephrased in reference to the newly arriving Syrian refugees. Although German authorities have indeed articulated such concerns with regards to the influx of a highly-skilled Syrian labour force (e.g. Die Zeit 2016), the significance of these remarks lies elsewhere. Namely, it lies in the expansion of the minority boundary in which the Turkish community associates itself with Syrian refugees through relatable experiences of discrimination.

In turn, this expansion can be seen as the creation of boundaries that divide minority groups and the German majority. Yet it is important to note that this expansion of the minority boundary is not consistent. Despite the fact that all organisations have both empathised with the situation of Syrians and contributed to their integration, the motivations of some organisations to do so are not inherently tied into a strong association with refugees. Conversely, the interviewees have also shed light onto separating boundaries that exist between the Turkish community and Syrian refugees.

### *Dividing boundaries*

The interviewees have highlighted aspects that can, in the language of the boundary-making paradigm, be conceived of as salient and dividing boundaries between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees. In other words, the interviewees disassociate and distance the Turkish community from Syrian refugees. They have done so by referring to fundamental socio-cultural differences that exist between the two groups. This was especially the case with TDU, although DITIB, too, differentiates between the two communities. Importantly, the interviewees have not only distanced Syrian refugees from the Turkish community by showing signs of resentment towards Syrians, but also highlight major differences between Syrians and the German majority.

To begin with, TDU claimed that Syrian refugees have an easier start in Germany than first-generation Turkish migrants had in the past:

We did not have the same places to go at our start, no Turkish doctor, no Turkish lawyer; nor a Turkish supermarket. We had to learn the [German] language. Now it's completely different. A newly arriving refugee knows exactly where to find an Arab supermarket, an Arab lawyer or an Arab doctor. So he asks himself, why should I bother to integrate? (Interview TDU, 15.07.2016)

In addition to the reference to the more suitable circumstances in Germany nowadays at the time of arrival, TDU also displays a distrust regarding the willingness of Syrians to adapt to German society. The quote, moreover, touches upon the sensitive foreign language debate in Germany. This debate involves a lasting tension between German authorities' integration expectations and Turkish migrants' desire to preserve their language (Ehrkamp 2006). It is thus only natural that DITIB was appalled by proposals to introduce Arabic language as a school subject to facilitate better communication with Syrians (see Focus 2016):

The same has not been done for the Turkish language. Conversely, the Turkish language has always been labelled as a problematic language. [German authorities] provide information in Arabic language, which is great. Yet, the same should be done for the Turkish language as well. (Interview DITIB, 11.07.2016)

Although such proposals have been rejected by German authorities, this nonetheless indicates how an unequal treatment by integration authorities could inhibit the relationship between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees.

Moreover, it seems that this relationship is charged by even more controversial notions that prevail among Turkish migrants. Specifically, TDU has criticised Germany's Arab community for being lazy and exploiting the social welfare system:

Regarding integration, Arabs, irrespective of where they are, will always try to find an easy way to get their money without having to work. This has certainly been the case for the vast majority of the Arab community [in Germany].

The Syrian refugees that arrive [in Germany] need to be educated about German society, its laws and norms, but not from someone who lives off social benefits for more than 30 years (both quotes; Interview TDU, 15.07.2016)

These remarks recall Thilo Sarrazin's controversial book *Deutschland schafft sich ab (Germany abolishes itself)* in which Sarrazin describes the Arab, and also the Turkish community, as a tremendous financial burden for German society (see Der Spiegel 2010). This burden will, according to TDU, only be amplified with increasing Syrian immigration. However, given that Turkish migrants are the largest non-EU recipient group of Hartz IV (unemployment allowance), it seems even more surprising that members of the Turkish community would use this feature to distance themselves from Syrian refugees (Der Tagesspiegel 2016; Focus 2014). Yet to use Wimmer's words (2009: 257), established minority groups often attribute precisely those features to newly arriving migrants that have previously been used to describe themselves. This strategy is a powerful mechanism not only to

demarcate between us vs. them, but also to propagate the claim that such features do not apply to the Turkish community anymore.

Furthermore, the Turkish organisations have, as mentioned above, stressed some fundamental differences that exist between Syrian refugees and the German majority:

Of course, there will be difficulties. The [Syrian refugees] are not accustomed to German society and its conventions. They come from a completely different culture [...] They will also have problems with democratic principles and diversity. (Interview DITIB, 11.07.2016)

Before I hire a Syrian, he has to acquire the basic principles of German society [...] Learn which aspects he has to respect, understand the basic laws or that his employer can fire him when he is repeatedly late. He needs to know all of that first. (Interview TDU, 15.07.2016)

These quotes evoke the impression that there is a substantial distance between Syrian refugees and the German majority. This is reinforced by emphasising that the newly arriving refugees have yet to acquire the most basic customs of German society. By pointing at the ‘problematic’ characteristics of Syrian refugees, the Turkish community appears to be comparatively well integrated into German society. This notion is enhanced through the implicit suggestion that the Turkish community has already understood Germany’s societal principles. For example, the representative of TDU has adopted German principles for recruiting employees. Such an effect can be termed boundary-blurring, whereby the distinction between the Turkish minority and the German majority becomes increasingly more ambiguous (Alba 2005). This effect will, among others, be discussed in the following section.

### **The impact of Syrian immigration on the integration of the Turkish minority**

Most important for my research objective is the impact of Syrian immigration on the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority. Regarding this, two main yet opposing processes have been identified. Firstly, processes of boundary-blurring, whereby the perceived differences between the Turkish minority and the German majority become increasingly less relevant. This process is further characterised by the Turkish minority’s identification with German society, which has, in many ways, been enhanced by Syrian immigration. Interestingly, Syrian immigration has also intensified the need for cooperation between the Turkish minority and the German majority. Secondly, processes of social closure, whereby the influx of Syrian refugees has contributed to opposite and thus less incorporating effects. These processes have led to a greater distance between the Turkish minority and the German majority. Above all, they are marked by the rise of the far-right political party AFD (Alternative for Germany) and the controversial anti-refugees and anti-immigrant debates following the sexual assaults on 2015-16 New Year’s Eve night in Cologne.

#### *Boundary-blurring*

The immigration of Syrian refugees has altered the ways in which the Turkish minority relates to the German majority. Along with showing a strong association with the German majority, the interviewees also maintained that the Turkish minority is already comprehensively integrated into German society:

We [Turkish migrants] consider ourselves to be the natives, because the newly arriving refugees are the new migrants. As natives, we try to show them ways that enable their integration and participation in society. (Interview DITIB, 11.07.2016)

We are open to all sorts of support for refugees and are also willing to take responsibility for them, because this is our state, this is our country and because we earn our money here. If the [German] system breaks down, we will suffer, too. (Interview TDU, 15.07.2016)

It becomes evident here that the arrival of Syrian refugees has had an immediate impact on the identification of the Turkish minority vis-à-vis the German majority. Certainly, there are differences between DITIB's and TDU's ways of doing this, whereby the TDU applies a primarily financial and DITIB a socio-cultural lens on the issue. Notwithstanding, both organisations demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to German society. This is especially the case with DITIB, which now, in light of Syrian immigration, regards Turkish migrants to be a part of Germany's native population. Meanwhile, the TDU has flagged up another important dimension, that is, the responsibility of the Turkish minority to support German society in integrating refugees.

Furthermore, the organisations have disclaimed the negative discourses on the Turkish minority and have then presented a powerful counter-narrative:

We always strengthen this feeling [of being a part of German society] and stress that all these hostilities are only voiced from small parts of the German majority. Yet they themselves are merely marginal groups. (Interview DITIB, 11.07.2016)

We hold the view that the majority [of Turkish migrants] participates extensively in [German] society. We can see this in [German] politics, in [German] media and in pretty much any other societal sphere. (Interview TBB, 18.07.2016)

By referring to Turkish figures who have attained influential positions within German society, TBB asserts that the Turkish minority is already well integrated into German society. In fact, a number of academics support this notion by similarly referring to the socio-economically successful population – e.g. Cem Özdemir, the Federal Chairman of Alliance'90 / The Greens – within the Turkish minority (e.g. Ehrkamp 2006; Pecoud 2002). DITIB, meanwhile, reiterates that the Turkish community is an accepted part of German society. Although negative sentiments prevail, DITIB considers them to be insignificant and to be largely rejected by German society. In light of this all, the boundaries between the Turkish minority and the German majority become increasingly ambiguous.

Regarding counter-discourses, the interviewees also stressed that the Turkish community is more than just an accepted part of German society. The Turkish community has, according to the interviewees, a new and significant role with regard to the integration of Syrian refugees. For example, DITIB is involved in an interreligious project that supports refugees in Germany (see German Bishops' Conference 2016). Other migrant organisations, too, participate in similar joint projects, through which German authorities consult Turkish organisations as experts on the refugee issue:

We have got the expertise from which we can source relevant know-how. Now, this is appealing for many [German] institutions. For example, we can see this with regards to refugee projects. There is an increased interest in cooperating with us, which is precisely

because we can relate to their situation on the basis of our own experiences. (Interview TBB, 18.07.2016)

German politicians say that they need the Turkish community now, because it can provide a critical bridging function [for Syrian Muslims]. By looking at the Turkish community in this way, it transpires that this moment has huge potential for established migrants to redefine their societal position. So that debates not only problematise the Turkish community, but rather show how supportive this community can actually be for German society. (Interview DITIB, 11.07.2016)

Most interestingly, these quotes indicate that the long integration struggle of the Turkish community is now regarded as an important source of expertise. The Muslim background of the Turkish community, too, plays a role in this regard. In consideration of this, the Turkish community has the ability to recognise some of the fundamental cultural difficulties that Syrian refugees will face in Germany. By providing such a critical bridging function, the Turkish community appears to be a highly useful (and hence more than just an accepted) part of German society. Thus, the influx of Syrian refugees has led to a stronger cooperation between the Turkish minority and the German majority. This has further consequences for the integration of the Turkish minority. As DITIB's comment suggests, the influx of Syrian refugees brings the potential to enhance the supportive function of the Turkish minority and, ultimately, to change its reputation in German society. In this light, Syrian immigration has had a positive impact on the stigmatising discourses on Turkish migrants.

To summarise, the immigration of Syrian refugees has had two positive effects on the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority: firstly, it has increased the Turkish community's identification with the German majority, and secondly, it has intensified the need of German authorities to cooperate more strongly with the Turkish minority. Furthermore, the Turkish minority appears, especially in relation to the newly arriving Syrian refugees, to be a comprehensively integrated group in German society. Syrian immigration has thus reduced the distance between the Turkish minority and the German majority. Yet this does not mean that socio-cultural differences between the two have indeed attenuated, but rather that *perceived* differences have become less relevant. To conclude in the terminology of the boundary-making paradigm, members of the Turkish community have used this critical moment to blur the boundaries between the Turkish minority and the German majority, thereby promoting the community's greater socio-cultural acceptance within German society. Yet besides these positive developments, the influx of Syrian refugees has also generated controversial debates that have led to opposite effects regarding the integration of the Turkish minority.

### *Social closure*

The immigration of Syrian refugees has had some negative impacts on the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority. Specifically, the interviewees have noted that a number of actors use the 'refugee crisis' to promote a stronger anti-refugee and, by extension, anti-immigrant sentiment. Most notable in this regard are two events: the Cologne sexual assaults on New Year's Eve and the rise of the far-right and Eurosceptic political party Alternative für Deutschland

(Alternative for Germany, AFD). These events have had wide-ranging implications for discourses on refugees and minority communities alike.

To begin with the former, during the 2015-16 New Year's Eve night, hundreds of sexual assaults including groping, rapes and theft were reported in Cologne (The Guardian 2016a). While similar incidents were reported in other German cities, the assaults near Cologne's central train station were by far the highest in number and scale. According to news reports, more than 1000 young men were involved. The then city police chief Wolfgang Albers referred to the assaults as 'a new dimension of crime' and asserted that the men were of Arab and North African appearance (BBC 2016). Meanwhile, the Federal Ministry of the Interior confirmed that a number of Syrian refugees were also under investigation (Die Welt 2016d). Although not attempting to confirm or contest the accuracy of these assertions, the Cologne assaults have, in any case, triggered a highly controversial debate about refugees as well as about minority groups and Islamic culture more broadly. As The Independent's (2016) headline reads, 'Cologne sex assaults: Muslim rape myths fit a neo-Nazi agenda'. This has had wider negative implications for Germany's Muslim population and for its Turkish population.

[The Turkish minority] has always experienced discrimination. Yet as a result of the newly arriving refugees, the [immigration] debates have been intensified. One example is the New Year's Eve night in Cologne [...] But the really frustrating thing hereby is that the [German media and politicians] don't call them criminals. Instead, they call them Muslims. (Interview DITIB, 11.07.2016)

Of course, negative incidents associated with refugees such as the [sexual assaults] in Cologne, affect us too. This stirs up public opinion not only against refugees, but also against other minority groups. Although we pay our taxes and contribute here for many years, we, the integrated, also suffer from increasing racism and discrimination. (Interview TDU, 15.07.2016)

According to these interviewees, the Cologne assaults have exacerbated prevailing anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment. Most notably, the organisations have criticised the essentialised views applied by German media and politicians regarding the New Year's Eve events in Cologne. DITIB, on the one hand, has taken offence at the way in which the offenders have been generalised on the basis of their Muslim background. The TDU, on the other hand, was enraged about the negative repercussions for the Turkish minority following the misconduct of refugees, irrespective of whether falsely or legitimately perceived as such. Besides the detrimental impact on the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority, we can take from this that certain actors *instrumentalise* problems associated with refugees to favour their own interest. This has certainly been the case with the far-right political party AFD.

The rise of AFD is most indicative of current processes of social closure. As IGMG points out, the AFD has gained tremendous momentum amid concerns about refugees:

Far-right political parties have previously not been successful by strongly focusing on the themes of refugees and Islam. Prior to Syrian immigration [the AFD] has played a marginal role in Germany's political system. Now, they have entered a number of regional governments. (Interview IGMG, 11.07.2016)

By criticising Merkel's asylum policy, the AFD has indeed made remarkable gains at regional elections and has entered state parliament for the first time in three regions (The Guardian 2016b). Moreover, polls estimate that the AFD would take close to 10 per cent of the vote if a federal election were held today: this would mean twice as many votes compared to the 2013 elections (4.7 per cent) (Website, Federal Election 2017).

What is most important to note here, however, is that the success of the AFD is directly linked to the immigration of Syrian refugees. This success is arguably most detrimental for Germany's Muslim population, especially in light of the AFD's famous claim that 'Islam is not a part of Germany' (e.g. Handelsblatt 2016). Yet given that the rise of a far-right political party naturally impacts the vast majority of all migrants, other parts of the Turkish population, too, are affected by a stronger AFD. AABF has adopted a similar view:

The success of far-right parties endangers our socio-democratic system and impairs the lives of all migrants irrespective of whether they are Muslims, Alevis, Syrians, Kurds, Turks or Iraqis. (Interview AABF, 12.07.2016)

In conclusion, the influx of Syrian refugees has, in parallel to the above-discussed positive developments, also triggered processes of social closure. The resurgence of both negative discourses on minority communities and the rise of far-right political parties marks the continuation of boundaries that draw dividing lines between the Turkish minority and the German majority. In some ways, Syrian immigration has thus increased the saliency of such separating boundaries, whereby the socio-cultural distance between the Turkish minority and the German majority appears to be more significant now.

### **Boundary-change in Germany? A brief discussion**

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that Syrian immigration to Germany has had wide-ranging and diverse implications for the Turkish minority. It has explored both the relationship between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees as well as current changes in the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority. Importantly, there can be seen to be significant variation among the interviewees' positions in this respect. Although the two Sunni-Muslim organisations have shown signs of identification with the newly arriving refugees, the interviewees have, by and large, highlighted the salient socio-cultural differences of Syrian refugees vis-à-vis the Turkish minority and the German majority. Despite comparable experiences of discrimination and empathy for Syrian refugees, the Turkish minority has thus rather disassociated and distanced itself from Syrian refugees. Meanwhile, the impact of Syrian immigration on the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority has been more ambiguous.

Syrian immigration has not only triggered processes of social opening and incorporation, but has also led to processes of social closure and exclusion. On the one hand, it has resulted in intensified cooperation between the Turkish minority and the German majority. On the other hand, it has contributed to the rise of the far-right AFD and intensified discourses that problematise minority communities and Islamic culture. This binary epitomises the highly ambivalent relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority. What can be agreed on, however, is that the majority of interviewees promote a strong sense of belonging to German society. The Syrian immigration has thereby strengthened the identification of the Turkish minority vis-à-vis the German majority. This finding is indicative of the boundary-making strategies applied by the Turkish minority.

Despite the fact that Syrian immigration has led to processes of social closure, the interviewees' integration strategies can best be described as boundary-blurring. This strategy is characterised by two dimensions. Firstly, the interviewees have promoted the socio-cultural proximity of the Turkish minority and the German majority by distancing Syrian refugees. Secondly, the interviewees have shown strong ties to the German majority by emphasising their similarities as opposed to focusing on differences or obstacles to integration. Both dimensions indicate a decline in social distance between the Turkish minority and the German majority. As a result of this, previously mutually exclusive identities become increasingly blurred and socio-cultural distinctions attenuate in their saliency. Yet again, it is important to account for the variation among the interviewees. For example, the interviews with AABF and IGMG have failed to provide clear-cut evidence for strategies of boundary-blurring. This is not to say that these organisations would not support such incorporation strategies elsewhere – although IGMG has been criticised numerous times for opposing the integration of its members, while AABF, or Germany's Alevi community more widely for that matter, is generally less concerned with the issue of integration – but rather that both organisations have not tried to *instrumentalise* this particular moment, the influx of Syrian refugees, to favour the integration of the Turkish minority.

## Conclusion

This study has researched the impacts of Syrian immigration to Germany with regard to the integration of the Turkish minority, and multiple dimensions have been considered. In particular, it has analysed both the relationship between the Turkish minority and Syrian refugees and the ways in which Syrian immigration has affected the relationship between the Turkish minority and the German majority. My research has revealed that Syrian immigration has had opposing effects on the integration of the Turkish minority. On the one hand, it has demonstrated that parts of the Turkish minority use this 'unique moment', the immigration of Syrian refugees, to promote its incorporation into the German mainstream. In consideration of the greater cultural distance between the German majority and Syrian refugees, the cultural distance between the Turkish minority and the German majority is rendered less significant. On the other hand, Syrian immigration has also given rise to anti-immigrant sentiment and has re-intensified negative discourses on minority groups. Hence, social processes of opening and closure have both been the result of Syrian immigration, yet ambiguity with regards to which process predominates remains.

While this study has focused on the perspective of the Turkish minority, further research is needed to evaluate the perspective of the German majority on the same issue. Current changes in public opinion on the Turkish minority could be revealingly indicative of the ways in which Syrian immigration has affected the integration of the Turkish minority. Moreover, a large-scale quantitative survey with the same research objective is required to cement the findings of this study. This paper could operate as the starting-point of this survey, whereby the interview questionnaires could be informed by the findings presented here. In any case, the study has shown that the social processes resulting from Syrian immigration bear the potential for a significant redefinition of Germany's Turkish minority: a new definition that departs from stigmatised discourses and moves towards a greater inclusion of the Turkish minority.

## Acknowledgements

This paper is a revised version of my MA dissertation, submitted in August 2016, as part of the MA in Migration Studies at the University of Sussex. I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Paul Statham for the engaging discussions we had throughout the period of undertaking my dissertation, particularly for his reassuring words. I am grateful for every participant who took part in this study – their willingness to help made my research very enjoyable. I am most grateful to Kiera Eastman, for all her support and encouragement that kept me motivated. I would also like to thank my parents for their everlasting support, particularly for trusting me blindly with anything I do. I am grateful to all my friends, whose company I enjoyed after a long day at the library and to every inspiring person I met during my ‘Brighton experience’.

## Bibliography

- Alba, R. (2005) Bright vs. blurred boundaries: Second-generation assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(1): 20-49.
- Alevitic Community Germany (2016) Selbstdarstellung. [Online] Available at: [http://alevi.com/de/?page\\_id=90](http://alevi.com/de/?page_id=90) (Accessed 25 August 2016).
- Amelina, A. and Faist, T. (2008) Turkish migrant associations in Germany: between integration pressure and transnational linkages, *Revue Europeene des Migrations Internationales*, 24(2): 91-120.
- Annicchiarico, F. (2014) The Changing Face of Germany. [Online] Available at: <http://harvardpolitics.com/world/th-changing-face-germany/> (Accessed 28 August 2016)
- Bagci, O. (2012) *Acculturation Orientations of Turkish immigrants in Germany*. Tilburg: Tilburg School of Humanities.
- BBC (2016) Germany shocked by Cologne New Year gang assaults on woman. [Online] Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35231046> (Accessed 28 August 2016).
- Berlin Institute for Population and Development (2009) *Ungenutzte Potenziale. Zur Lage der Integration in Deutschland*. [Online] Available at: [http://www.berlin-institut.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Zuwanderung/Integration\\_RZ\\_online.pdf](http://www.berlin-institut.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Zuwanderung/Integration_RZ_online.pdf) (Accessed 28 August 2016).
- Brubaker, R. (2006) *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.
- Dernbach, A. (2015) “Milli Görüs” könnte aus der Beobachtung herausfallen. [Online] Available at: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/verfassungsschutz-milli-goerues-koennte-aus-der-beobachtung-herausfallen/11990882.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).
- Der Spiegel (2010) Was tun? [Online] Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-73388944.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Der Spiegel (2015) Neue Flüchtlingszahlen: Die Millionen-Prognose. [Online] Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/fluechtlingszahlen-die-unberechenbare-millionen-prognose-a-1056174.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Der Tagesspiegel (2016) Jeder Vierte Hartz-IV-Empfänger ist Ausländer. [Online] Available at: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/wirtschaft/hartz-iv-jeder-vierte-hartz-iv-empfaenger-ist-auslaender/13955964.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Diehl, C., Fischer-Neumann, M. and Mühlau, P. (2016) Between ethnic options and ethnic boundaries – Recent Polish and Turkish migrants' identification with Germany, *Ethnicities*, 16(2): 236-260.

Die Welt (2016a) 1,1 Millionen Flüchtlinge kamen in 2015 nach Deutschland. [Online] Available at: <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article150678614/1-1-Millionen-Fluechtlinge-kamen-2015-nach-Deutschland.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Die Welt (2016b) Es dauert Generationen, bis Deutschland Heimat ist. [Online] Available at: <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article149406127/Es-dauert-Generationen-bis-Deutschland-Heimat-ist.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Die Welt (2016c) Die Wahrheit über die Bildung syrischer Flüchtlinge. [Online] Available at: <http://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article154928441/Die-Wahrheit-ueber-die-Bildung-syrischer-Fluechtlinge.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Die Welt (2016d) "Die meisten waren frisch eingereiste Asylbewerber". [Online] Available at: <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article150735341/Die-meisten-waren-frisch-eingereiste-Asylbewerber.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Die Zeit (2016) Flüchtlinge konkurrieren jetzt gleichberechtigt um Jobs. [Online] Available at: <http://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2016-08/fluechtlinge-arbeitsaufnahme-integrationsgesetz-vorrangpruefung-bundesregierung> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Ehrkamp, P. (2005) Placing identities: Transnational practices and local attachments of Turkish immigrants in Germany, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(2): 345-364.

Ehrkamp, P. (2006) 'We Turks are no Germans': assimilation discourses and the dialectical construction of identities in Germany, *Environment and Planning*, 38: 1673-1692.

Erdal, M. B. and Oepen, C. (2013) Migrant balancing acts: understanding the interactions between integration and transnationalism, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(6): 867-884.

Federal Election 2017 (2016) Prognose für die Bundestagswahl 2017. [Online] Available at: <http://bundestagswahl-2017.com/prognose/> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Federation of Democratic Workers' Association (2016) Allgemein. [Online] Available at: <http://didf.de/category/allgemein/> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Flick, U. (2008) *Designing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Focus (2014) Woher die meisten Hartz-IV-Bezieher kommen – und wie viel sie wirklich kassieren. [Online] Available at: [http://www.focus.de/finanzen/news/grosser-vergleich-so-viel-hartz-iv-kassieren-auslaender-wirklich\\_id\\_3877990.html](http://www.focus.de/finanzen/news/grosser-vergleich-so-viel-hartz-iv-kassieren-auslaender-wirklich_id_3877990.html) (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Focus (2016) Arabisch als Schulfach für deutsche Kinder? Das sagen Lehrverband und Kulturminister. [Online] Available at: [http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/vorschlag-sorgt-fuer-aufsehen-arabisch-als-schulfach-fuer-deutsche-kinder-das-sagen-lehrerverband-und-kultusminister\\_id\\_5261935.html](http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/vorschlag-sorgt-fuer-aufsehen-arabisch-als-schulfach-fuer-deutsche-kinder-das-sagen-lehrerverband-und-kultusminister_id_5261935.html) (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Gerdes, J., Reisenauer, E. and Sert, D. (2012) Varying Transnational and Multicultural Activities in the Turkish-German Migration Context, in Pitkänen, P., Icduygu, A. and Sert, D. (eds.) *Migration and Transformation. Multi-Level Analysis of Migrant Transnationalism*. Dordrecht et al.: Springer, 103-157.

German Bishops' Conference (2016) Interreligiöses Projekt in der Flüchtlingshilfe gestartet. [Online] Available at: <http://www.dbk.de/presse/details/?presseid=3133&cHash=aa48c179e61cea7b18927fa60e23724c> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Handelsblatt (2016) “Der Islam gehört nicht zu Deutschland”. [Online] Available at: <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/afd-und-islam-der-islam-gehoert-nicht-zu-deutschland-/13628828.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Hofmann, H. (2010) Untoter Zombie. [Online] Available at: <http://www.theeuropean.de/hilmar-hoffmann/4789-das-phaenomen-leitkultur> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Humphrey, M. (2009) Securitisation and domestication of diaspora Muslims and Islam: Turkish immigrants in Germany and Australia, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 11(2): 136-154.

Islamic Community Milli Görüs (2016) Selbstdarstellung. [Online] Available at: <https://www.igmg.org/selbstdarstellung/> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Jenkins, R. (1997) *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. London: Sage.

Koopmans, R., Statham, P., Guigni, M. and Passy, F. (2005) *Contested Citizenship. Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press.

Korteweg, A. and Yurdakul, G. (2009) Islam, gender, and immigrant integration: boundary drawing in discourses on honour killing in the Netherlands and Germany, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 32(2): 218-238.

Küçük hüseyin, S. (2002) Türkische politische Organisationen in Deutschland. [Online] Available at: [http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_855-1522-1-30.pdf?070110192650](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_855-1522-1-30.pdf?070110192650) (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Mayring, P. (2002) *Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung. Eine Einleitung zu qualitativem Denken*. Weinheim: Beltz (5<sup>th</sup> edition).

Mayring, P. (2014) *Qualitative Content Analysis. Theoretical Foundation and Basic Procedures*. Klagenfurt: Beltz (Version June 2014).

Oner, S. (2014) Turkish community in Germany and the role of Turkish community organisations, *European Scientific Journal*, 10(29): 72-88.

Pecoud, A. (2002) ‘Weltoffenheit schafft Jobs’: Turkish entrepreneurship and multiculturalism in Berlin, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26(3): 494-507.

Posener, A. (2015) Warum wir über die Leitkultur reden müssen. [Online] Available at: <http://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article144801381/Warum-wir-ueber-die-Leitkultur-reden-muessen.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Reisenauer, G. and Gerdes, J. (2012) From return-oriented to integration related transnationalisation: Turkish migrants in Germany, *Revue Europeene des Migrations Internationales*, 28(1): 107-128.

Sezgin, Z. (2011) Turkish migrants’ organizations in Germany and their role in the flow of remittances to Turkey, *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 12: 231-251.

The Guardian (2010) Angela Merkel declares death of German multiculturalism. [Online] Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/17/angela-merkel-germany-multiculturalism-failures> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

The Guardian (2016a) Cologne inquiry into ‘coordinated’ New Year’s Eve sex attacks. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/05/germany-crisis-cologne-new-years-eve-sex-attacks> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

The Guardian (2016b) German elections: setback for Merkel’s CDU as anti-refugee AFD makes big gains. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/13/anti-refugee-party-makes-big-gains-in-german-state-elections> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

The Independent (2016) Cologne sex assaults: Muslim rape myths fit a neo-Nazi agenda. [Online] Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/cologne-sex-assaults-muslim-rape-myths-fit-a-neo-nazi-agenda-a6872566.html> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Turkish-German Business Association Berlin-Brandenburg (2016) Selbstdarstellung. [Online] Available at: <http://www.tdu-berlin.de> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Turkish Islamic Union of the Directorate for Religious Affairs (2016) Gründung und Struktur. [Online] Available at: <http://www.ditib.de/default1.php?id=5&sid=8&lang=de>

Turkish Union in Berlin-Brandenburg (2016) Wir über uns. [Online] Available at: <http://tbb-berlin.de/%C3%9Cber%20den%20TBB> (Accessed 28 August 2016).

Vertovec, S. (2009) *Transnationalism*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Wimmer, A. (2008) The making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries: a multilevel process theory,

*American Journal of Sociology*, 113(4): 970-1022.

Wimmer, A. (2009) Herder's heritage and the boundary-making approach: studying ethnicity in immigrant societies, *Sociological Theory*, 27(3): 244-270.

Wimmer, A. (2013) *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zolberg, A. R. and Woon, L. L. (1999) Why Islam is like Spanish: cultural incorporation in Europe and the United States, *Politics & Society*, 27(1): 5-38

