

Games of Belonging

Depiction of Athletes of Turkish Descent in German Football Broadcasts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the depiction of football players of Turkish descent on the very popular weekly German public TV football broadcasts *Sportschau* and *Aktuelles Sportstudio*. The purpose of this research was to expand on existing research relating to racial discourses in sports. Various scholars of the field deem an update and extension into the more current theories of cultural, subtle racism as necessary. This research takes this step in the context of the heavily under researched, but immensely popular German football broadcasts, with focus on the large minority of Turkish descent within the country. A combination of thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis of 170 televised football games of the top three German football leagues was employed to trace discourses employed and circulated by commentators surrounding players of Turkish descent in German televised football. The analysis gives insights into covert biases, and a dynamic discourse of exclusion and ‘othering’ through suppression and diversion of attention relating to positive impacts on the game stemming from players of Turkish origin. These particular biases can in part be explained by theories of whiteness, reflecting unbalanced power dynamics that reinforce common stereotypes held about this minority with Turkish roots. As predicted by previous research in the field, obvious stereotypes did not play a large role in the discussion of players of Turkish origin but diverging framings of belonging—depending on the contribution to the team—were observed frequently in the presentation of these players. Success and perceived value to the team seem to be both a determinant and result of belonging to this majority group. This thesis concludes that it is necessary to bring the suppressed discourse relating to racism and whiteness back into public sphere in Germany to fight the false believe of ‘culturally enlightened’ sports reporting. As much as the sport yields an arena division and negotiation of belonging, as will be highlighted in this thesis, it has the potential to provide a space for discussions of the underlying problems and bring about change. Further research is suggested to investigate audience perceptions of the broadcast, as well as research into the production of the programs. Investigating the increasingly visible Asian ethnic group in German football is also suggested.

KEYWORDS: *Football, Whiteness, Racism, Germany, Media*

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1. Introduction – Game preview

1.1. A special relationship

‘Salut-Jubel: Zum Kotzen’¹ (Homann, 2019). This was one of the many headlines following the ‘salute’ celebrations of players of the Turkish national football² team during the Euro 2020 qualification game versus France on the 14th October 2019 in Paris. The political signal showed support to the Turkish troops for the—by German and European leaders heavily condemned—military actions in Syria. The German media and public were outraged about the apparent contradicting values and political ideologies displayed by the Turkish national team, which included three players at home in the German Bundesliga, as well as various players with some history in Germany, some even born and raised in the country. Considering the large Turkish diaspora residing within Germany, the role-model function of these sporting stars for society, especially that part with Turkish roots, was being discussed and considered.

This is by no means the first and only incidence of clashing cultural and political values on the footballing stage in Germany. Pictures of German nationals Mesut Özil and Ilkay Gündogan—both of Turkish descent but born and raised in Germany and playing for the German national team—posing with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan for a campaign event in London in May 2018 raised questions in Germany about national identity, dual citizenship and what it means to be ‘German’. Especially the signature on the players shirts reading “for my president”, stirred outrage for presumed disloyalty (Kockelmann, 2019). Quickly, not only the allegiances of the two players themselves were questioned and condemned, but those of the whole Turkish diaspora within the country. The events were seen as a symbol and generalized as a sign of failed integration of a whole minority (Kockelmann, 2019). As a reaction to the exclusionary debate occurring in the German society, media and politics, those with dual citizenship or branded with hyphenated identities started sharing their negative experiences on social media platforms like Twitter with hashtags like #MeTwo (Verkuyten, Wiley, Deaux & Fleischmann, 2019). This highlights how prevalent, current and engrained the discriminative practices in German society are, and how much need for a discussion there is about this topic.

Similar debates arise whenever one of the many football players with Turkish roots earning their money within Germany, has the decision to make what country he wants to play for on a national level: Turkey or Germany. Through the symbolic meaning given to this choice in media and society at large and the great attention and relevance attributed to the sport in general there is no correct decision it seems.

¹ Salutation Celebration – Ready to throw-up

² Football in this research refers to the American soccer

This is known as 'loyalty pressure', commonly exerted on people and players with dual identities (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). It is especially relevant concerning individuals with a migration background who feel indebted to the migration history and cultural heritage of their family, but also strongly identify with the different political and socio-cultural environment in which they grew up in (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). In Germany, even fully integrated third-generation migrants of all socio-economic classes are prone to doubts about the degree of their integration and identification with the nation state. There is a subtle, but regular implicit and explicit request to provide further evidence of their loyalty. Footballers, due to their extensive visibility are emblematic of such constant re-negotiations of identity (Kockelmann, 2019; Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). This dynamic discourse of belonging visible through constant debate within the media is focus of this research.

With the close ties between Germany and Turkey, the minority of Turkish descent in Germany has been a focal point of societal, political and media attention from both sides for a long time. There are many debates about the integration of especially Muslim and Turkish migrants within the German society (Saz, 2011). The integration discourse within Germany carries a constant connotation of a fear of potential parallel societies, that might not stay loyal to the German constitution and its associated values. This fear has been especially emphasized, discussed and resurfaced through the rise of far-right populist groups in Germany (Kockelmann, 2019). From the other side, Turkish President Erdogan has repeatedly aimed to provoke Germany and its citizens in various aggressive ways. Apart from accusing German politicians of Nazi-practices ("Erdogan wirft", 2017), he also repeatedly urged German citizens with Turkish roots to resist assimilation (Gezer & Reimann, 2011; "The long arm", 2017). This of course has not improved the attitudes held by the German public towards this minority. Erdogan also actively funds mosques in Germany through the DITIB (Turkish-Islamic union for religious affairs) organization, adding suspicion of foreign government intervention, as well as indoctrination and fostering of parallel societies, to already existing distrust towards Muslim citizens (Kockelmann, 2019). With the vast reporting about sports and football and its deep interconnectedness within society, it would not be surprising, if these discourses infiltrate and get played out on the global mediatized stage that is modern football (Gehring, 2016; Schulze-Marmeling, 2018). Here, this research aims to provide insights, how and on what basis German football commentary depicts this minority.

1.2. Ethnicity, media and football

Various academics suggest that contemporary nations states have slowly turned into 'stress communities' (Sloterdijk, 1998) that are in longing for the rare and essential moments of emotional cohesion that, for example, football can provide. International football provides a space for the

confrontation of national identities that is highly symbolic and emotional (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). Football especially, with its dense and regular schedule of national and international events, provides a unique 'identity fair' (Sonntag, 2015). In a period of destabilization and loss of certainties, through globalization, digitization and increased multi-culturalism, in which nation states and individuals are longing for reassurance, football—thanks to its universality, its immense popularity and its permanent coverage by all types of media—is of great influence on the way in which national communities look at each other and themselves (Sonntag, 2015).

The three increasingly intertwined areas of life—sports, politics and society—and the underlying ideas and conflicts about belonging, ethnicity and integration that are visible within them (Gehring, 2016), are well exemplified in the emotional retirement letter of long time German national team player Mesut Özil from July 22nd, 2018. In his letter Özil puts forwards that he did not feel comfortable playing for the German national team anymore, due to unfair treatment and lack of respect by the media, the German Football Association (DFB) and the public. His letter followed a long public dispute between the player, the media and the DFB, resulting from the previously mentioned notorious photo of May 2018 with President Erdogan. In his letter, Özil states:

Whilst I grew up in Germany, my family background has its roots firmly based in Turkey. I have two hearts, one German and one Turkish. [...] [W]hat I can't accept, are German media outlets repeatedly blaming my dual-heritage and a simple picture [with Erdogan red.] for a bad World Cup on behalf of an entire squad. [...] In the eyes of Grindel [former president of the DFB] and his supporters, I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose. This is because despite paying taxes in Germany, donating facilities to German schools and winning the World Cup with Germany in 2014, I am still not accepted into society. I am treated as being 'different'. [...] Unfortunately, racism is no longer only a right-wing issue in the country. It has shifted into the middle of society. (Özil, 2018; own contribution between brackets; red.)

In the above statement, Özil accuses the media of being treated differently, due to his Turkish heritage. According to him, there seems to be underlying assumptions in the media and sports reporting about what it means to have Turkish roots, that translate into consequences in real life. Özil saw the whole affair as evidence for the widely shared dogma of singular national identity, exemplified through latent anti-Turkish racism in Germany (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). How subtle and unconscious these assumptions can be, is exemplified well when considering that Özil—who is now accusing the media of differential treatment on the base of ethnicity—has himself voiced such beliefs in the past. In a 2010 New York Times interview Özil breaks down his play and associates his

different capabilities to different parts of his ethno-cultural persona. He claimed his 'technique and feeling for the ball' came from his Turkish side, while the 'discipline, attitude and always-give-your-all' belonged to his German side (Cohen, 2010).

These unconsciously held beliefs, however, often do not stay within the players or individuals, but rather, as exemplified in Özil's statement, get amplified and reasserted through various forms of media. Various studies of media representation of in particular people of Turkish descent (e.g. Ruhrmann, 1999; Saz, 2011) have found negative depictions and biases. The minority was not seldomly portrayed as lazy, abusing German welfare and positioned as the root of various societal problems and unrests. Depictions suggested the minority to be worthy of lower overall status and appreciation (Witte & Mirabile, 2010). Increasingly, the Turkish origin minority's overwhelming association with Islam has become an important marker of their identity in media. This was frequently framed as an unovercomeable difference, connected to wider discourses of Islamic extremism, spreading fear of parallel societies and replacement of German Christian values and identity (De Genova, 2015; Ramm, 2010). With language as a tool to calibrate, define or even deprive individuals' belongings (Anderson, 1983), in particular the (sports) media—which is target of this particular investigation—has an important role. With its discussions of, for example, 'national playing styles' the media has been found to put in great semantic effort to group and (de)legitimize individuals on the sporting field (Sonntag, 2015). Here, ideas of differential 'character' and 'mentality'—as also suggested by Özil—are presented and reinforced, with emphasis on differences to the majority group. Dual citizenship does not seem to exist in a sporting world (Nuhrat, 2015). Dual citizenship might be legally possible, but questions of loyalty and belonging are never entirely settled and constantly negotiated (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). Sports, and football in particular seem to be a viable arena for the contestants, media and society, to fight for these belongings and identities, making it an important area of investigation for this thesis, both academically and socially. It is vital to identify what such negotiations are based on and who has the power to define.

The presence of these unconsciously held beliefs that attribute certain traits, capabilities and behaviors to people on the base of race, culture or ethnicity is exactly what this research aims to investigate. The various previously presented events, and the associated debates about belonging and presumed unovercomeable differences in culture, values and sometimes even biology don't come out of nowhere, but rather stem from an ecosystem of systematic, engraved subtle assumptions and stereotypes about ethnicity, belonging and differences (Niven, 2005). Despite the vast impact of these discourses and impact on people's lives, many scholars deem the field as heavily under-researched. Especially in Germany (Kneidinger, 2010; Niven, 2005; Sonntag, 2015).

The lack of research and knowledge about the discourses surrounding race and ethnicity in sports mediation needs to be addressed. Especially in Germany—having one of the most watched

football leagues in the world, combined with multicultural political attitudes, a large migrant history and a strong resurfacing right-wing populist movement—the lack of research is astounding. Primarily, the representation of people of Turkish descent—being the largest minority in Germany - on the very popular German public TV broadcasts is of interest. The research question guiding this study will be:

How are football players of Turkish descent of the first-, second and third Bundesliga depicted in German public broadcast football TV programs?

1.3. Academic relevance

In Germany—despite its large minority population and vast sporting history and culture—little research on the interplay between sports and ethnicity/racism has been conducted. Research into this field has been mainly anecdotal so far. As Andrew Billings (2012) puts it: “Perhaps one of the largest reasons race fails to reach the apex of many sports conversations is that the people who do choose to tackle the subject often do such a poor job of it” (p.199). Football works very well for expressing one’s identity and belonging (Kneidinger, 2010), but it works just as well to draw borders and create separation through the formation of ‘The Other’ (Dyer, 1997). Sports are a public forum for constant debate and struggle about the formations of belongings, identity and race (Gehring, 2016), and thereby deem worthy of investigation. Here, especially (sports) media are the gatekeepers with immense power and influence that need to be researched. Especially the presence of dual citizenship and the associated official markers of hyphenated identities create attack points and constant reminders of not fully belonging. This research can yield insights into underlying assumptions about what it means to be ‘German’, the formation, solidification and shaping of stereotypes and racialization within the German society (Kockelmann, 2019). Football provides a space for the confrontation of national identities that is highly symbolic and emotional. The sport has the capacity to reveal important truths about the multicultural societies, nation states like Germany have become (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020).

Multicultural societies and dual nationalities are by no means any longer the exception, but rather the norm in western European societies. The impact these societal changes have and the different battlefields these negotiations chose, are relevant to investigate. As sports like football are highly mediatized and play a vital role for the identification not only of individuals, but whole nation states, it provides an ideal ground for such research (Sonntag, 2015). Racism and discrimination will continue to be a major issue in the future and sports deem worthy of an important site for the fight of definitions and belonging. Western Europe currently finds itself in a very sensitive transition phase where simple patterns of belonging are happily accepted and remain unquestioned in an

increasingly complex world. With this however, unspoken expectations of assimilation will continue to be implicitly held towards individuals with multiple loyalties, like the minority of Turkish descent living in Germany (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). Due to historic events, this debate is more subtle in Germany, as compared to debates on racial and ethnic discrimination on the other side of the Atlantic. As sports has been closely linked to German identity, football provides the grounds for an academically relevant investigation on discourses relating to, amongst others, belonging, not only of those subject to discrimination. Since discourses of belonging are mainly reproduced by the majority group, this study can yield valuable insights into perceptions of the hegemonic group as well (Kockelmann, 2019). In the words of Albrecht Sonntag, a renowned scholar in the field of European studies:

The 'Vanity Fair of European Football' reveals itself as an ideal laboratory for the social scientist, where individuals and groups converge to redefine themselves and interact with each other, where, as Thackeray said, 'the strangest contrasts laughable and tearful' are laid out before the eyes of the researcher. (Sonntag, 2015, p.ix)

1.4. Social relevance

The impact and growing importance given to sports and in particular football by societies globally, make any investigation relating to the field worthy and relevant. This relevance was made apparent again, when the German Bundesliga attained special status as 'essential', allowing it to resume its operations in the midst of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Researching the representation and portrayal of minorities can give important insights to German football media professionals, as well as politicians about how football media acts in relation to discourses of in- and exclusion of the Turkish minority (Nuhurat, 2015).

Media discourses and public opinion, even in countries with a long-standing history of migration, have trouble to come to terms with dual loyalties, the likes are very present in Germany (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). However, these are no longer an exception in our interconnected, globalized societies. Globally, but also specifically in Germany the number of people who identify as being mixed race or are prescribed multiple identities steadily increases. The discussion of sport and race is similarly increasingly complex and changing. Germany is experiencing a changing, more populist political climate that has spread to various aspects of daily life and stirred up controversial debates about nationalism and what it means to be 'German' (Lees, 2018). Increasing importance needs to be given to how different ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds are presented and represented in media programs like football, especially on public channels (Billings, Butterworth, &

Turman, 2018). Studying media discourses is relevant for society as it gives insights into the ways how particular attitudes are shaped, reproduced and legitimized in the societies through the media. It is an arena of constant negotiation and struggle for meaning, where (sports) media outlets are seen as an important contributor. Dominant discourses within the media create so called 'subject positions', which position people in a certain way and thereby impact the sense of the self and the 'other' (Aarsand, 2014). Especially research into the discourses presented and reinforced on public broadcasters are relevant to investigate. These public institutions are not only funded through taxpayer money by the people, for the people; but also praise and mandate themselves as serving an integrative function, due to their vast reach, high credibility and easy accessibility (Schicha, 2003). An investigation of the ethnicity discourse within the German football media, especially focused on the discussion about players of Turkish descent, is an excellent site to explore notions of German citizenship, belonging and ideas about racial and ethnic identity that are topic of discussion in wider German society (Gehring, 2016).

Additionally, it can be observed that the discourse about ethnically biased reporting in sports is instable and vulnerable (Azzarito & Harrison; 2008). An example can be seen in the UK, where Sky Sports host David Jones recently had to apologize and was heavily criticized for shutting down a conversation about racism live on air in the name of his station³ (Bicknell, 2019). Race is being evaded in sports media reporting, creating the illusion that race and ethnicity are not important in sports, while the conversations and depictions are subtly tinged with racial undertones (Billings 2012). Similarly, various Bundesliga players, like Hertha BSC Berlin's captain Vedad Ibisevic have repeatedly accused the media, the spectators and parts of the German society of racism and use of outdated stereotypes towards foreigners ("Ibisevic hofft...", 2020). It is quite apparent that the media are not comfortable discussing race and the problem of racial and ethnical bias as well as stereotypes (Niven, 2005), not only in the UK or the US, but also in Germany. Here, the public broadcaster ZDF—part of this research—was recently accused of racism for stepping back from its broadcasting rights. Audiences were assumed to not identify with boxer Artem Harutyunyan (Müller-Michaelis, 2020). The name as an ethnical marker is also very present in the Turkish community, as can be seen in the presentation of the analyzed players in the Methodology section of this thesis. In various areas of sports—may it be the players, coaches or federations—and especially the reporting about it, we see stereotypical ideas and beliefs being upheld and reinforced by infiltrating discourses with varying degrees of elusiveness (Nuhurat, 2015; Sonntag, 2015). This shapes the way societies perceive themselves and others. The more we pay attention to sports broadcasts, where we see players like Özil threaten the dominating views about the boundaries of 'Germanness', the more

³ Video can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=67&v=PSLhosACE3E&feature=emb_logo

transparent the circulation and prevalence of exclusionary boundaries in everyday life will become (Nuhurat, 2015). Here, this analysis can provide societal value by increasing self-reflection amongst the football journalists. The study reveals commentators use stereotypes and 'other', which often remains unconscious as part of the hegemonic discourse. Sharing findings of this research with professionals and academics, increasing their knowledge is an important step to encourage change needed to fight these stereotypes.

According to communication accommodation theory, stereotypes by commentators in reporting, such as that about sports and football, are a deliberate tool to accommodate the audience, ensure their approval and reduce social distance (Bell, 1991; Mastro, Seate, Blecha & Gallegos, 2012). This of course adds to the importance of this research, as it predicts that sports media doesn't only shape society, but also adapts to the already existing conceptions of belonging, identity and ethnicity. This would extend the relevance of this research as it suggests that potential bias in sports reporting is not only an industry specific phenomenon, but rather mirrors the attitudes of society as a "cultural intermediary" (Desmarais & Bruce, 2010; Mastro, et al., 2012).

1.5. Thesis outline

In line with the previously stated research question, *How are football players of Turkish descent of the first-, second and third Bundesliga depicted in German public broadcast football TV programs?*, the following sections will provide an overview of the academic approaches of the field of ethnicity and (sports) media reporting, with a specific focus on Germany. This section will be followed by a discussion of the data collection and analysis this thesis employs, to then be able to discuss the results as well as summarize and extrapolate the main findings. Finally, these are contrasted against literature to suggest limitations and further research opportunities that could complement this study.

2. Theoretical framework – Tactical discussion

This section aims to lay the theoretical backbone of this thesis and define and discuss crucial concepts like ethnicity, race, whiteness, as well as trace the developments in conceptualizations in studies regarding racism. These will then be embedded in the specific research context: Germany. Further, an overview of academic knowledge about the role of media in this discourse, specifically on racial and ethnic discourse within sports and football reporting, will be provided. All this previous research and different theoretical approaches to the topic aim to aid in the discussion and contextualization of findings.

2.1. Cultural studies and discourses

The field of ethnicity as well as the analysis of media discourses has attracted scholarly interest from various different perspectives over the years, such as psychology, history, sociology and philosophy. The cultural studies approach, which this paper will take, sees sports media as a player in the “fight for definitions of the social world” (Jhally, 1989, p.73), which is crucial when discussing how media creates, assigns and circulates meaning and contributes to the discourse about race and ethnicity. Discourses, here, refer to the construction and discussion of knowledge relating to a certain topic (van Sterkenburg et al., 2012). It is a collection of ideas and concepts through which phenomena are given meaning. They relate to values, ways of thinking and fundamental approaches to problems (Sutton, 1999). These specific ways of thinking shape problems by embracing and highlighting aspects of a situation, while marginalizing others. Aggregated, and not reflected upon, this can lead to the development of dominant discourses in society, or groups of society, that dictate ways of classifying others and characterizing problems. These dominant discourses function to simplify our complex world and have serious material consequences, as they serve specific interest groups over others (Grillo, 1997; Sutton 1999). Discourses are accepted by a variety of people, often unintentional. Sometimes even those marginalized by it. As exemplified earlier, the media is an important gear in this process as it tends to prefer particular approaches to the discourses about, for example, race and ethnicity, thereby automatically excluding other ways of thinking (Azzarito & Harrison; 2008; Comisky, Bryant, & Zillmann, 1977).

2.2. Race, ethnicity and a discussion of terminology

Biologically, science has shown numerous times, race does not exist. There is no evidence for the commonly held belief that ‘racial’ categories or phenotypes biologically define distinct racial

groups. Despite this scientifically proven fact, people are still studied and treated as if they belong to biologically defined groups (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997), which tends to stem from the deeply rooted “culture of racism” (Lawrence, 2005, p.109) within our societies, that is engraved in us through socialization. This structural racism is present in media, politics and the everyday thinking of individuals (Räthzel, 2002). With ‘cultures of racism’ Lawrence (2005) suggests that race and an emphasis on differences is vitally important and present in all sectors of our societies, but especially ingrained and surfacing in sports. In the recent past, scholars such as Räthzel (2002), Sonntag and García (2020) or Wren (2001) have observed a shift in the discourses about everyday racism, however. The rather Black and White concept of “race” and skin color has given way to cultural racism, based on the perception of different and unassimilable cultures of distinct ethnic groups (Räthzel, 2002). This appearance of so-called cultural racism will be elaborated in more detail later on in this thesis. To encompass this shift in societal discourses about difference, ethnicity deserves particular attention when investigating discourses in sports reporting and will therefore be the main focus of this thesis.

In contrast to race, ethnicity aims to be more exact and provide a form of collective identification and classification that encompasses dimensions of cultural characteristics, socialization and expression (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997; MacClancy, 1996). It is part of people’s fluid identities, which depend on the context, how strongly they are played out, and to what extent it becomes important within one’s identity. It has been observed, however, that in our western, increasingly globalizing and multicultural societies, increased focus has been given to people’s ethnicities (Eriksen, 2010). It is often used as a dimension for systematic discrimination between insiders and outsiders based on institutionalized delineated categories (Eriksen, 2010).

The lines between ethnicity and race are blurry, and academia as well as society can’t seem to clearly distinguish between and separate the concepts. This research, like that of Van Sterkenburg et al. (2012), will base itself on the argument that the two concepts are interrelated and embedded in the everyday lives of countless individuals, whose ways of thinking, acting and talking reproduce and keep alive these social and cultural structures (Brubaker, Loveman, & Stamatov, 2004). This approach is further validated by the conflated, interchangeable way the terms are used in everyday discourses. Racial groups are often seen as having different cultural characteristics, while different ethnic (cultural) minority groups are commonly defined by non-White skin color. Wren (2001) also points out, that “Cultural racism as a discourse performs the same task as biological racism, as culture functions in the same way as nature, creating closed and bounded cultural groups” (p.114). Consedine and Consedine (2005) further justify the grouping of the terms by defining racism on the basis of culture as the right, power and authority of a particular (dominant) culture to define normality and what is seen as the ‘normal’ culture. In the following sections of this thesis the terms

race and ethnicity will be used as conflated concepts. The two terms will be used interchangeably but given the German aversion to the term 'race'—due to historic circumstances that will be elaborated in section 2.5. of this thesis—ethnicity will mainly be used.

As this thesis aims to examine the discourses relating race and ethnicity—in particular the interplay between German and Turkish ethnicity—in German televised football sports reporting with regards to language, subtext and representation, it is important to discuss, differentiate and disentangle the various terminologies used to describe media representation. Studies in this field often speak of bias, but some also speak of stereotypes or (implicit) racism. Just like the conflation of the underlying concepts of race and ethnicity, the discussion of their presence also tends to use terms like bias, racism or stereotypes interchangeably. Ideas and perceptions of ethnicity, culture and race are often discussed using the above-mentioned terms, without really reflecting on the different connotations they carry. Due to various pitfalls and 'wokeness'⁴ of our modern society, this discussion about ethnicity and race has become more nuanced and implicit. The 21st century discourses of ethnicity in sports and media, are not binary—i.e. Black and White—but rather touch upon and combine various diverse cultural aspects of the different personas. Especially in Germany, due to its history, such vocabulary on racial or ethnic sameness or difference is very carefully employed. This emphasizes the need to carefully examine and identify the language used to explain and unpack difference (Billings, 2012; Hawkins, 2013).

This research will mainly speak of biases. These are commonly seen as mild, compared to terms like stereotypes, prejudice or racism. The term 'bias' is not naturally tied to race and ethnicity therefore carrying subtler connotations (Billings, 2012). A bias does not necessarily need to be negative and can sometimes even be wanted. Sports broadcasts in particular are such an example, as biases here can engage and tie viewers and create more emotional entertainment. A bias is potentially unconscious, but nevertheless impacts how the target (group) of discussion is perceived. These subtle and small biases can potentially aggregate and translate into real world inequalities. Especially its often subtle nature creates environments that continuously perpetuate and reinforce beliefs that then become the hegemonic discourse (Witte & Mirabile, 2010). Research like this one can aid reflect upon these discourses.

Combining biases with flawed syllogism leads to the creation of stereotypes. The resulting conclusions are often faulty generalizations from singular observations omitting influencing variables like geography, history, economic options or social stigmas, or neglecting to update outdated beliefs (Jussim et al., 1995). It is often based on the formation of insiders and outsiders, 'us' and 'them'. Social identity theory suggest that specifically visible cues are used to position the 'them' as inferior

⁴ woke: informal term that refers to awareness of issues relating to social and racial justice. ("woke", n.d.)

(Stets & Burke, 2000). Due to the exploratory nature of this research on representation of footballers of Turkish descent and the lack of insights into a reference group (like the depiction of German or Spanish footballers on the programs), this analysis will mainly speak of biases and depictions that could potentially reinforce stereotypes. To really gain insights into the nature and aim of the employment of specific language towards the investigated group of Turkish players, one needs to also research audience perceptions and the program production. This research can only provide insights into the depiction without really being able to discuss how it is received and with what aim it is produced.

2.3. National identity and *Heimat*

Apart from ethnically and racially based segregation between groups, there are other levels of difference that are used to categorize others, one being that of national identity. Especially the dual-national identities German-Turkish and Turkish-German citizens face create room for negotiation and don't seem to fit with conservative ideas of belonging and nation states (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). It brings together ideas of one's own perceptions and experiences in a specific political and cultural context with the experiences, perceptions and hegemonic discourses employed by the other people around. A crucial characteristic of identity—but in this case also national identity is— that it does not only matter who people think they are themselves, but also what they are to others (Verkuyten, Wiley, Deaux, & Fleischmann, 2019). Based on conceptions of one's own identity, and the identity prescribed to others, ideas about belonging can be formed. This concept of belonging is especially important for immigrants or those with such roots. Everybody belongs to a variety of groups, which results in a number of social identities. These tend to be independent of each other but can also intersect and conflict. For immigrants, dimensions of religious, ethnic, supranational belongings are adding conflict potential, as well as the possibility of dual loyalties and uncertainties (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Verkuyten et al., 2019).

Here, Benedict Anderson's seminal work *Imagined Communities (1983)*, conceptualizing nation states and the reversion to nationalism, is helpful. The political scientist and historian depicts nations as a social construct, imagined by people who perceive themselves as part of a particular group. Despite most members of this group never knowing or hearing of each other, each imagines their communion through imagined shared interests, ideals and a mental image of their affinity. By default, these imagined communities create insiders and outsiders, and the media—through language, images and agenda setting—has vital influence on what these imagined communities look like and who belongs. Anderson suggests that particularly big media events like sports (i.e. football) can reinforce and shape these imagined communities. They report about other members of the imagined community, shape and reinforce what binds them together, and draws and reinforces lines

that define who belong (Anderson 1983 & 1992). Relating this to the specific topic sports reporting this thesis analyses, Allison (2000) adds that “national identity is the most marketable product in sport” (p.346). This role of the (sports) media will be elaborated in detail section 2.7. of this paper.

When discussing nation states and dimensions of inclusion and exclusion, one quickly arrives at the heavily emotional concept of *Heimat*. This is one of those untranslatable German concepts that loosely translates to ‘Home’ or ‘Homeland’, but carries far-reaching romanticized connotations of culture, nationalism, pride, behavioral expectations and regional identity (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020). It is a “space of belonging” (Morley, 2001, p.425). According to Morley (2001), this sacred space is threatened through the destabilizing forces of globalization, however. This struggle to cope with modernity is well captured by Marshall Berman (1983) and still applicable today:

[We] find ourselves in an environment that promises adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology; in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity; it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish.
(Berman, 1983, p.15)

Within this ‘maelstrom of disintegration’, societies seem to hinge themselves onto notions of national identity and rituals of exclusion to protect the ‘we group’ and solidify definitions of ‘the other’ (Morley, 2001). It is a process that happens on all levels of society, on an individual micro level, as well as a national, macro level through, for example, the (football) media (Morley, 1998). Here, differences and heterogeneity within society is less seen as a cause of celebration, but rather as a threat to social cohesion and one’s *Heimat*, resulting in notions of ‘ethnic absolutism’ (Morley, 1998; Sibley, 1988). In these times, boundary maintenance, between that of the strange (*Fremde*) and the world of the familiar (*Heimat*) is crucial (Morley & Robins, 2002). The majority groups, especially the more conservative parts of it, tend to see and perpetuate *Heimat* as something inevitably stable and unchanging. This causes them to react to threats of this notion—like globalization or multiculturalism—with fear, hostility and the formation of separating enclaves based on notions of culture, ethnicity and race (Morley, 1998; Rätzzel, 1994). Celeste Olalquiaga (1993) hypothesizes that, today, the “notion of *Heimat* endures solely as an icon of itself; home is now a nostalgic yearning, a burning desire for a romanticized sense of belonging, whose segregative appeal is apparent in the current resurgence of fanatic nationalisms” (p.17). This idealization and yearning

for the seemingly more stable past will be elaborated in terms of whiteness in more detail in section 2.5.

These static notions of *Heimat* are contradicting and increasingly challenged by multicultural notions like dual citizenship. Such clashes of ideals and contradictions become visible through, for example, the many citizens with migrant roots, which are also largely visible through their representatives in sports teams like those of the German Bundesliga. As Marc Augé (1995) puts it, "perhaps the reason why immigrants worry settled people so much is that they expose the relative nature of certainties inscribed in the soil" (p.119). Going back to the introductory example of Özil and the outcries associated to his photo with Turkish president Erdogan, it becomes clear that German media and a vast proportion of citizens still conceptualize *Heimat* as a singular concept (Sonntag & Garcia, 2020; Verkuytem et al., 2019). Özil's resignation from the national team can be prescribed precisely because he claimed he was denied the right to have a plural *Heimat*. By not fully adhering to the imagined norms and not fully committing to his German *Heimat* he was marked as an outsider, which surfaces through biases that can lead to subtle racist abuse and differential treatment. Exactly these notions are the target of this research.

2.4. Ethnicity in a German context

Having discussed what is meant by race and ethnicity and how one can conceptualize national identity, it is now time to become a little bit more concrete and place these concepts in the context of the analysis of this paper and discuss some German specific aspects and discourses regarding racism and ethnicity.

Commonly, racist rhetoric and stereotypes within societies stem from a colonial past (like France or The Netherlands), a rich immigrant history (USA), or religious divides (Turkey, Israel, India) (Powell, 2000; Wren, 2001). Germany has an immigrant history of approximately 30 million guest workers from mainly Southern and Eastern Europe as well as Turkey brought to Germany following the Second World War, between 1961 and 1973. These workers mainly came through an official guest-worker program, initiated to use the high unemployment in South-East Europe and counterbalance the labor shortage in the North-West (Schicha, 2003). Apart from Germany, countries like Sweden, Belgium, The Netherlands or Denmark had similar programs. Initially on short-term one- or two-year work permits, stay was soon granted for longer and whole families were permitted to immigrate, increasing the chance of staying and building a life in the new country. Migration slowly changed from temporary stay to unintended settlement. Since the beginning of this economic labor program, it was apparent that the arriving workers—especially those from Turkey—kept close ties to their old home through frequent visits, purchase of land and homes as well as the

sending of remittances (Icduygu, 2012). Guest workers and their families often lived in both countries, keen to stay in touch with their roots. It should be noted, that even after the family unification programs, migrants were mostly male, with only roughly 20% of migrants arriving in Germany being female (Icduygu, 2012). Such gender imbalances tend to increase prejudice and distrust in the arriving country (McLaren, 2003).

With the halt in labor recruitment in 1973, Turkish emigrants were left with two choices: leave Germany without a chance of being re-emitted or stay and move the family to Germany. This ultimatum reinforced the already strong tendency for permanent residence, as most chose the latter option. Guest workers transformed into immigrants (Bade & Weiner, 2001). The problem here was that the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) did not want to be considered an immigrant country, which suppressed political action and discussions to handle integration and mitigate frictions. Both, Immigrants and the majority group were mostly left to their own devices to assimilate to each other. When this process was finally to be put on the agenda in the early 1990's, the integration of former guest-workers and their successors quickly became secondary and much more complicated through the fall of the wall. The following unification processes within Germany and the integration of East and West Germany reshuffled political priorities and created new social frictions and confusions (Bade & Weiner, 2001). This political failure to integrate, along with Germany's historic past, has created generations of 'foreign inlanders' or 'domestic foreigners' (Bade, 1993). The Turkish diaspora within Germany, now already in its third generation, has grown to 2,769,000, which is 3.5% of the total German population (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2019).

Similar to the Dutch, now somewhat outdated ethnic classification into *allochtonen* and *autochtonen* (van Sterkenburg et al., 2012), the German government decided to coin the phrase *Migrationshintergrund*⁵ to classify German citizens with foreign ethnicity, creating the hyphenated identities like the German-Turks (Gehring, 2016). As of 2018, 25.5% of the German population were classified with a migration background (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2019). The term *Migrationshintergrund* has become a marker of 'Otherness' for those racialized in German society (Gehring, 2016). It has become a euphemism and linguistic framing tool of discrimination to categorize those who are considered different, seemingly without being racist (Gehring, 2016).

These terms construct essentialist social categories that focus on ethnic background as inherent in cultural behavior, which makes integration for members of these groups impossible. Further, in some cases naming stigmatized groups is no longer necessary, as the discourses about members of these groups are so strong that the mere mention of

⁵ German for migration background

particular cultural practices is enough to indicate who the unwanted members of society are. (Fuller, 2018, p.175)

In Turkey the German-Turks are often marked as *Almanci* or *Almanyali*, which further highlights how this minority of Turkish descent is caught between two cultures, not really being accepted in either (Icduygu, 2012). In their book, Bade and Weiner (2001) hint towards the problems this can create, as integration is not possible in a deeply divided society that bases identity and citizenship on ethnicity and excludes those who are considered not to be part of the dominant ethnic group. In Germany, such perceptions translate into real world consequences where non-White minorities like the Turkish, are subject to this subtle everyday racism. These result in marginalization, restricted economic prospects, access to the labor market, school dropout and biased representation in public, politics and media (Bröskamp, 1992; Müller, 2011; Tießberger, 2005).

2.5. Whiteness and *Leitkultur*

To further conceptualize and understand these divisions it is crucial to introduce the concept of whiteness. While commonly referred to as privileges associated to White-skin color, the concept extends much further (Gehring, 2016), as a tool to define 'the Other' (Tießberger, 2005). Whiteness, in terms of a discourse surrounding ethnicity and race, is the default standard and norm by which other people not distinctly belonging to majority group are measured. It is a discourse which privileges those having a white skin color above those who do not. "Other people are raced, we are just people" (Dyer, 1997, p.1). This standard provides privileges and advantages that are ingrained into society and everyday life that are practically unfelt and invisible to those that benefit from them (Abby, 2008; Dyer, 2005). They are the invisible norm. Rothenberg (2005) describes this White privilege as "the other side of racism" (p.1). This discourse can be so subtle, powerful and institutionalized that it is not only employed by those who benefit from it, but those marginalized by it as well (Rothenberg, 2005).

In this research's context, whiteness is seen as the opportunities and entitlements associated to belonging to the dominant group, the 'ethnically German', which is also considered White. In Germany, a discussion about whiteness is difficult, due to Germany's Nazi past and the associated definitions of race and skin color. Whiteness is immediately associated with White-supremacist ideology. Following WWII, the term 'race' was practically expelled from public discourse, as a form of distancing oneself from the embarrassments of the past in a 'raceless Europe' (Müller, 2011; Tießberger, 2005). It has been suggested that in order to tolerate the foreign amongst

one's own, a society needs the security from a positive collective identity. In Germany this strengthening of a collective identity is burdened by its past, making it historically hard to really integrate people of other ethnicities and cultures within one shared identity (Bade & Weiner, 2001).

The exclusion of racism from public discourse, however, does not make the realities of exclusion and inequalities go away. Rather, a new 'racism without race' (Gilroy, 1992) emerged. This is based on perceived insuperable cultural differences between groups, as well as increasingly religious barriers, creating hierarchies amongst ethnic groups within Germany (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Müller, 2011). This created a racism that is "insidious because it is for the most part less straightforward, outspoken and 'honest.'" (Anderson, 1996, p.359).

Here, connecting to the concept of whiteness, it is especially apparent that many predominantly White cultures (like the German)—through language, traditions and appearance—are promoted and believed to be superior to non-White cultures on the basis of societal beliefs and customs (Helms, 1993; Powell, 2000). Culture, being a system of knowledge about the world, implies cultural racism to be imposing the White 'theory of the world' on the behaviors of others (Keesing, 1974, Powell, 2000). In the US, McDonald (2005) observes a continued notion to revise sports cultures played and enjoyed by minorities, like Basketball. There is the dress code reform of the NBA, for example, that is believed to enforce and promote a White notion of professionalism, limiting forms of expression specifically associated with minorities like African Americans (Billings, et al. 2018). Similarly, such intents can be associated with the NFL's touch-down celebration reform. Events like the airbrushing of Allen Iverson's tattoos off *Hoop* magazine's cover page, can be seen as an advance to impose and portray a specific image of the game and professional athletes to market the NBA and its players to an audience with a cultural background divergent from that of Iverson (Emmons & Billings, 2015). In Germany, this cultural definition of identity is often seen as, amongst others, working hard, speaking the national language (and sometimes no other) and being of Christian heritage (Reijerse et al., 2013).

Paradoxically, this cultural racism emerged in part through an increasingly globalized, multicultural, integrated Europe, leading to homogenization processes that give birth to emphasis on cultural differences. As the identifier of nationhood becomes less important, national identity is increasingly defined through cultural homogeneity and excluding the 'other' on this basis is legitimized through the fear that the presence of the culturally different will eventually lead to conflict (Wren, 2001). Cultural racism and whiteness are closely linked to national identity, which refers to the idea of a territorially bound community with a common interest, molded into a cultural entity (Stolcke, 1995; Wren, 2001). On this basis, as sense of belonging is developed, which "by implication, also [creates] 'others' who do not share the 'common interest' and should be excluded" (Wren 2001, p.144). Increasingly, especially in Germany, we see a demarcation in terms of the

religious 'Other'. Here, the image of especially Turkish immigrants is increasingly Islamized, thereby reshaping older discourses, which focused on their ethnic and cultural otherness as foreigners (Ramm, 2010). Such Islamization means that the minority is increasingly seen in terms of their religious marker that connects them to stronger, established discourses that positions them (and Muslims in general) as a clear outsider, where Islam is a threat to Western Societies (Hafez, 2013; Uenal, 2016).

Especially the media play an important role in defining, shaping and reinforcing the discourse of national identity and creating the 'other' (Billings, 2012; Wren, 2001). Notably, for media, language is an important tool to conceptualize the world around us. This however tends to be invested with an 'unconscious grammar' imbued with excluding overtones (Wren, 2001). Unfortunately, racism is still often believed to be a problem of the individual, rather than the institutionalized inequality of power and privilege engraved in our societies (Powell, 2000). This perception is visible in the suppression of discourses about racism and exclusion in various areas of life, and the neglect and acceptance of hate infused and racist rhetoric on the political stage as well as a downplay of the situation. In Germany the fragility of the integration discourse became visible through the public debate about a *Leitkultur* in 2017. This 'guiding culture' proposed by then Minister of the Interior Thomas de Maizière referred to a distinct definition of German core values and cultural identity, that immigrants were encouraged to adopt to fully integrate into German society (Fuller, 2018). Especially the large group of immigrants with Turkish roots seemed to be positioned in need of guiding principles to fully integrate in Germany. Such debate was quickly revealed ideas of Whiteness and superior German culture. The debate was turned into a vehicle urging Germans to become self-confident about their cultural heritage again, as the only way to combat the perceived influx of immigrants and protect the German *Gemeinschaft* (collective) (De Genova, 2015). The debate stimulated nationalistic, racist and anti-Semitic tendencies within Germany (Pautz, 2005) and signals the idea of a distinct Germanness, that can and should also be imposed on others.

2.6. The role of media

The previous sections of this theoretical framework laid out various aspects of the discourses and contexts relating to racism, ethnicity, identity and in/exclusion. Frequently the role of the media in the distribution, solidifying and shaping of discourses relating to these concepts has been briefly hinted upon. This following section aims to connect the previously conceptualized concepts to media reporting in general and elaborate on its different functions and impacts.

Following this, the specific case of sports and football media will be addressed, as this is the main focus of this thesis and target of the investigation.

Primarily, various scholars point out that media, and especially television, do not merely report on the world around us, but rather play an active part in constructing it (Tudor, 1992). Media consumers thereby never consume a 'culturally naked' broadcast (McCarthy et al., 2003, p.217), but rather a media event, where meanings are created and influenced by a team of gatekeepers. Here especially biases, stereotypes and socialization on dimensions of ethnicity become influential in constructing, presenting and framing events and people. The media has a vital role in shaping and constructing cultural identities, legitimizing cultural belonging and teaching cultural imagination (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008). It does not only reflect social change, but also influences social realities (Happer & Philo, 2013). Therefore, mass media play a significant role in shaping the ideas and knowledge about other cultures and helping citizens gain an understanding of society and identify with it in their own scope of experience (Schicha, 2003). As Silverstone (2007) said: "We put the media on, like clothing, to hide our nakedness, to protect us from the elements and to enable us to leave home and explore the world" (p.5). The media is a mask in that it disguises reality and distorts and frames the world around us. This means that the media shapes not only what we see, but also how we see it. We have become dependent on the media to guide us through the conduct of our daily lives. It therefore has vital impact on the formation of civic, social and moral spaces. Silverstone (2007) remarks, that one of the key impacts that this has had on our society, is that we "have lost any sense of responsibility that individuals would be expected to have for the other" (p.11). As much as technology is praised for bringing people together and teaching us about the world around us, it also easily creates distance and detaches us. This creates biases and influences our emotions and perceptions. As discussed previously, the media is selective in what it presents, and chooses how it presents and what discourses to follow and strengthen. Knowingly or not, it thereby has crucial influence on how it shapes as well as portrays the 'we group', as well as 'the other' (Dyer, 1997; Silverstone, 2007). This theoretical interpretation of the role and impact of the media gives room to Mesut Özil's presumption of differential treatment and that the media negotiates his belonging.

Through technological developments and the increased digitization as well as mediatization of society, this gatekeeping role of the media has only grown. Difference is constantly on display and the media is engaged in constant negotiation of belonging and grouping with an emphasis on difference and sameness. There is an increased presence—at least perceived by many—of 'strangers' and 'others' in terms of culture, ethnicity or appearance on the media, resulting from a globalized news cycle, growing interconnectedness of economies, our daily lives and interests. This increased presence of other cultures goes hand in hand with an expanding role of the media to allocate belonging and forming 'we' groups and 'others'. There are visual as well as linguistic portrayals of

the media that shape and order the world around us into distinct groups of cultural belonging. They occur on a macro as well as on a micro level and focus on continuous inscriptions of difference with means of stereotypes and sometimes not so subtle forms of discriminations or dramatic characterization and bias narrative construction (Silverstone, 2007). “This is what the media do: the endless, endless, endless, playing with difference and sameness” (Silverstone, 2007, p.19). These might come in the form of presenting Afghani people as underdeveloped and religious fanatics, or African Americans as criminal and primal (Silverman, 2007; Towns, 2015). These framings do not go without effect. Disproportionate representation, especially on a continuous and subtle basis, can impact judgements and everyday actions. Through sheer repetition, power structures that privilege specific parts of society are presented as universally valid (Artz & Murphy, 2000; Condit, 1994). Such discussions also grow the fear of these believed to be unknown groups, in turn again increasing the need and demand for boundary work. This is the case not just in propagandist regimes, but such consistencies of representation and rhetoric are present also in the most democratic of global societies (Revers, 2014; Silverstone, 2007). This thesis aims to investigate the presence of exactly such subtle biases in Germany, especially in the popular realm of televised football.

Here, especially public broadcasters—which are the target of this analysis—have a special role. In Germany, they see themselves as ‘integration broadcast’, that serve the general public to represent all groups within a country (Schicha, 2003). However, as research has shown, this does not translate into reality. In their analysis of German media coverage, Schicha (2003) and Ruhrmann (1999) find evidence of discrimination and distortion of perceptions when reporting about minorities, creating an overall negative picture, with, for example, reports about ‘The Turkish Problem’. This is especially influential considering that television is by far the most important source for news and plays the central role in the organization of leisure time at home (Acar, 2015; Schicha, 2003).

2.7. Sports media, a special case

More specifically regarding the focus of this research, among others, both Billings (2012) and Niven (2005) provide insights into how sports media reporting not only picks up on a certain discourse on race and ethnicity, but also plays a role in influencing and shaping the discourse that should not be underestimated. This specific case of sports and football reporting will be elaborated on in this section.

Sports and media are part of popular culture, dominating the experiences of many people. Television sports coverage is continuously amongst the highest viewed shows in the yearly rankings in Germany and across the globe (Mondello, Mills, & Tainsky, 2017). Despite the common

presumption that new media would displace traditional media reporting on sports, this has proven not to be the case (Billings et al., 2018). Big sporting events like the FIFA World Cup in 2018 attracted over 3.2 billion viewers worldwide, with 86.1% of the European population having watched at least some of it (FIFA, 2018). In Germany, the subscriptions to pay TV broadcaster Sky that holds most rights for Bundesliga matches, has also steadily increased over the years, with 5.1 million subscriptions in 2017 (Seewald, 2019). Additionally, one of the most popular public broadcasting formats in the country is the Saturday evening *Sportschau*, showing summaries of the Friday and Saturday games of the top three German leagues. Over five million people watch this program every Saturday night (Möntmann-Hertz & Gaßner, 2017). This is the program the analysis of this thesis will be in part based on. It will be discussed in more detail in the methodology section (3.1.).

In the specific case of sports broadcasting, especially in football, a key significance is attributed to the commentator(s). These gatekeepers are crucial in providing a framework for viewers to contextualize and emotionally interpret the events taking place (Tudor, 1992). The function of the commentator is to clarify, verify and corroborate what we see. He speaks about what we see, which differentiates his role from that of a news anchor, who speaks about what we cannot see and do not know (Raunsbjerg & Sand, 1998). Commonly, the commentator has four functions. He speaks about:

- a) things viewers can see: "...Number Ten, Michael Laudrup enters the field..."
- b) things they may not necessarily be able to see: "...all three substitutes are now warming up..."
- c) things they may or may not know: "...Thirty-year-old Peter Schmeichel..."
- d) things they cannot know: "Michael Laudrup warmed up before the match, but is not in the starting line-up." (Raunsbjerg & Sand, 1998, p.168f).

Here it is important to note that commentators do not merely report, but they interpret and extend on what is happening on the field. Commentators are meant to be non-partisan, but they rarely are. As it is an entertainment broadcast, these gatekeepers are encouraged to be emotional and thereby channel sympathies and antipathies (Raunsbjerg & Sand, 1998; Tudor, 1992). It has been observed by various scholars and industry professionals themselves, that sports reporting is more and more turning away from journalism, transforming into an entertainment job. This of course has implications on the moral and ethical standards of the job, and how commentators perceive themselves and their role. Rather than sticking to facts and truths, an entertainer might be inclined to be more elaborate, hypothesize and become more subjective in their storytelling (Gleich, 1998; Kuiper & Lewis, 2013).

To reduce the distance to the audience, commentators often resort to creating a 'transcendental We' by applying a seemingly neutralized categorical system that is further reinforced through repetition and elaboration (Raunsbjerg & Sand, 1998; Tudor, 1992). Group membership like gender, race or ethnicity, may invoke certain expectations and knowledge in the reporter, but also in the audience watching the broadcast. Despite increasing diversity on the football fields across the globe, the sport still remains White male dominated. Especially in the management, regulatory and reporting positions, the field is quite homogeneous (Mastro et al., 2012). This shapes the discourse about—for example ethnicity—the status quo of what is seen as normal, the expectations towards the different actors and their contributions and appearance, as well as the representation of different cultures and genders and the reporting about them (Billings et al., 2018). As will be elaborated in more detail in section 2.8. of this thesis, some of the dominant biases found in sports reporting through previous academic research are the suppression of female athletes. These are frequently presented as less able, promoting patriarchal ideas, assigning them the role of the weaker sex (Eastmann & Billings, 2000). Additionally, biases along racial lines have frequently been observed in countries like the U.S., France or The Netherlands. These biases demote people of color, presenting them as intellectually and mentally inferior or attributing potential success to genetic differences that disadvantage White athletes (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008). Increasingly commentator biases have also signaled ideas of cultural racism through ideas of, for example, "Latino temperament" (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Unfortunately, these biases are frequently brushed aside or downplayed as specific 'extra footballing language' that comes with a natural patronizing tone and works in categories due to the need of contextualizing and narrating a fast-paced game like football (Tudor, 1992).

The infiltration of stereotypes into sports broadcast language is further reinforced by the special situation reporters are in. They are producing entertainment content and contextualization for an invisible audience without any immediate feedback. This encourages these gatekeepers to try and reduce this distance through the use of demographic and ethnic specific language to promote a bond with the audience and strengthen the 'we group' (Mastro et al. 2012). This can lead to vicious cycles of commentators having a specific stereotype infused image of the expectations of their audiences, that leads to the according discourse in their reporting. This then further reinforces these beliefs in their audience. Sports broadcasters thereby become cultural intermediaries (Desmarais & Bruce, 2010). This language, and its associated stereotypes, tend to be rooted in discourses about colonialism, slavery or migration and constitute to what Stuart Hall (1981) calls inferential racism. These unquestioned assumptions are widespread and largely invisible, even to those who formulate them, and therefore especially toxic and insidious. As suggested by various scholars (Artz & Murphy, 2000; Billings et al., 2018; Condit, 1994), constant stacking of such imagery can slowly and

unconsciously infiltrate the beliefs and perceptions of people, that can translate negative real-world consequences.

2.8. Issues and racial/ethnic stereotyping in sports reporting

Considering the popularity of the sport and the dedication people have to watching it, be it the full games or the highlight shows, the role of the media as an intermediary and gatekeeper in this particular field of reporting needs to be addressed. In Germany, sports broadcasts are mainly consumed by White males between 20 and 44 (Strauß, 2012). Apart from motivations such as relaxation, competitiveness or social motives, identity search and solidification have been identified by scholars as important ones as well (Gleich, 1998). In recent years it has been observed that perceived biases, along lines of race, ethnicity and gender in particular, have become far less tolerated in the world of sports. Various hosts and commentators have lost their jobs or come under severe public pressure following controversial comments, leading to the belief that we live in a 'racially-enlightened' or 'post-racial' world (Hylton, 2008). This is an illusion however, as the conversation has been mainly just suppressed and ignored, and the discussion of race and ethnicity has become more subtle and merely the blatantly racist comments have disappeared (Billings et al., 2018). This means that we do not expect to see commentators calling players the N-Word, but as Wilson (2014) observed it might have just been replaced with words like 'thug', that are less stigmatized but resonate similar cultural ideas.

Various studies have been conducted on several aspects of TV reporting and that of sports commentary in particular. Besides the focus on racial, ethnic and culturally poised reporting—which will be discussed later in this section—other biases such as gendered reporting have been identified by various academics in the past. Studies by Daddario (1994, 1997), Messner, Duncan and Jensen (1993), North (2012, 2016) and Eastman and Billings (1999, 2000) all showed that the discourse is heavily favorable towards males with sometimes degrading and sexist language, and heavy use of stereotypes, presenting sports as a 'private club for men' (Eastmann & Billings, 2000).

Differential treatments in sports media based on skin color have been observed across the globe (Rada, 1996). With regards to sports broadcasting in the US, Azzarito and Harrison (2008) found that reports on athletes with an African American heritage were more negative, and often included racist stereotypes about genetic superiority and intellectual deficits, as compared to their White counterparts. Grainger, Newman and Andrews (2006) as well as Mastro et al. (2012) also find unequitable coverage of athletes in sports broadcasts along racial lines. Black sportsmen were often portrayed as poor, criminal or sexually promiscuous, which became visible through commentators' linguistic cues. These tend to focus on natural ability and brute strength as opposed to the

intelligence or work ethic of their White counterparts. Blackstone (2012) notes that not only the sports content itself matters, but also who presents it and who gets to speak and analyze it, thereby being enabled to present their views and perceptions of the game and their world. In the US, but also in Germany reporters are quite homogeneous in their ethnic and cultural background, which can be seen as a form of whiteness. Carrington (2010) adds: "Only rarely has the Black athlete spoken, or been allowed to speak. It is normally spoken for" (p.2).

In his analysis of the Washington Post sports pages, Braddock (1978) found that White college basketball and football players received more coverage than black players. This coverage of Whites also tended to be more positive. Andrews (1996) and Simons (2003) conducted similar studies on US sports reporting and found disproportionate attention paid to unsportsmanlike behaviors of African American athletes. Similar racial attribution trends were documented in British television coverage of football games (McCarthy et al., 2003). Tudor (1992) conducted an analysis of British television coverage of the 1990 World cup, and also found significant evidence for cultural racism in the forms of 'Latino temperament' or 'developing nations' stereotypes about African nations, which contribute and reinforce everyday knowledge about "Us" and "Them". More recent studies by Mastro and Behm-Morawitz (2005) or White et al. (2017) found similar surfacing of cultural racism in sports media. One of the few investigations of German sports media reporting conducted by Parr (2012) of the 2010 World Cup reporting also presents evidence for 'othering' and unconscious, seemingly automatic employment of cultural stereotypes regarding character and behavior by commentators.

The power of football and sports media reporting about football can hardly be understated, as it enters the everyday life of people through new technologies like social media as well as advertising, continuously. Cultural ideas, like the persistent stereotype that *White Men Can't Jump* (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008), create and reinforce the naturalized boundary between Black and White, and influence dominant discourses of race/ethnicity. These subtly transmitted ideas about ethnicity and the associated qualities can translate into real world consequences that affect performance, physical/mental well-being and discourage aspirations (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008; Stone et al., 1999). This kind of reporting also keeps outdated, racist ideas alive, normalizes them, making it increasingly difficult to destabilize notions like the 'natural black athlete' (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008).

As was highlighted earlier, in mediated sports, which rely on descriptive narration, this can be especially present. Through the rising stakes and attention paid to sports and its reporting about it in an increasingly globalized, multicultural society (Acar, 2015), the evaluation of the discourses about ethnicity and race in this context are increasingly relevant. In countries like Germany, where ethnicity is only talked about and hidden behind euphemisms, sport provides distinctive

perspectives on the process of racialization that would otherwise be obscured (Gehring, 2016). This research is highly relevant given the size of the Turkish-German minority, in both Germany and German professional football, and the popularity of football within the country and specifically amongst the minorities. It is surprising, especially given the findings displayed in the abovementioned studies, that academia has barely focused on the ethnic discourse within sports and that sports media reporting in Germany has received little to no attention. This study aims to contribute and shed light onto this gap by contributing to academic knowledge on meanings given to race and ethnicity in and through popular culture. It also aims to encompass current conceptualizations of cultural racism. The focus on Germany—with its previously elaborated particular historic, political and immigrant context in combination with a vastly under researched but socially highly valued and important football league—positions this research as relevant and necessary.

3. Methodology – The line-up's

Keeping in mind the theory discussed previously, it is now time to address how this investigation will examine the depiction of athletes of Turkish descent on German public television programs.

3.1. Data collection

In this research, the aim is to investigate the discourses on German public television about players of Turkish descent. This group of players can be subdivided into three distinct groups of male football players of the top three German leagues: The Turkish, German-Turkish and Turkish-German. Turkish players are those with solely legal Turkish citizenship. German-Turkish players are considered those with primary German citizenship, but Turkish roots and/or ethnicity. These players also have a secondary Turkish citizenship. The third group constitutes of Turkish-German players, those with primary Turkish citizenship. These are individuals who are of full or partial Turkish ancestry, usually German born and therefore possess a secondary German citizenship.

The summary and highlight show *Sportschau*, airing every Saturday and Sunday evening on ARD were the prime source of data for this research. These particular programs summarize the Friday and Saturday as well as the Sunday games of the top three German football leagues, respectively. The Saturday program lasts roughly two hours and attracts on average five million viewers (ARD, 2020). This highlights the standing of sports in the German society and emphasizes the importance of this analysis. The first 25 minutes of the program are dedicated to the four to five most important matches of the 3. Liga. These highlights are quite brief and only feature the most important events during the game. The next 35 minutes are dedicated to the three to four Saturday games of the 2. Bundesliga more extensively. The rest of the program is dedicated to elaborate reporting and analysis of 1. Bundesliga's Friday and Saturday matches. The Sunday broadcast gets a separate, shorter 45-minute show as it only focuses on the few remaining 1st and 2nd Bundesliga games of that day. Additionally, the *Aktuelle Sportstudio*, airing at night on Saturdays on ZDF, was included in the research, as this encompasses more talk-show like aspects with players, coaches and managers, as well as the highlights and commentary of all Saturday and Friday games. This show is solely focused on the first Bundesliga, lasts 1,5 hours and attracts 2 million viewers on average (Bölz, 2013). The live version of all these programs were freely accessible online and on TV, making this research feasible. There were some issues with the data collection due to the COVID-19 induced halt of German football, that will be addressed at a later point of this section.

The shows were planned to be recorded onto a hard drive using TV-R for 10 weeks during late February, March, April and May, to collect roughly 35 hours of audio-visual material in total, with equal representation of all the programs. Previous research has shown that this amount of

material is estimated to yield saturation, which is achieved once findings start repeating themselves (Van Sterkenburg et al., 2012). Should this not be the case after the estimated time, further recordings and analyses of the programs are to be conducted. The time period was chosen as it consists of the longest stretch of continuous games played, without interruption by an international break.

Unfortunately, during this time the COVID-19 pandemic expanded globally and brought most sporting events, including all of the professional football played in Germany, to a halt. This sudden, unprecedented and unexpected abolition of sporting activity, and the reporting about it, resulted in a significant data collection problem. Fortunately, some data could be retrieved from the ARD archives. This allowed for the timeframe to be expanded retrospectively. The timeframe of the data now encompasses gameday 13 (November 2019) until gameday 26 (May 2020). This yielded 27 hours of recorded material. It is to be noted that this adaptation of the data collection created an uneven distribution between ARD and ZDF programs, as there was more access granted in the ARD archives. In total 14 broadcasts were analyzed, out of which 12 constituted the ARD's *Sportschau*.

A total of 14 highlight shows, covering 170 games of the top three German leagues were analyzed and depicted for representation of athletes to gain insights into the posed research question. Out of the 170 games, 50 involved athletes from the sample presented previously (the players of Turkish descent, see also **Appendix A**). These 50 games split favorable for the German topflight, with 28 games of the 1. Bundesliga, 10 of the 2. Bundesliga and 12 of the 3. Liga. This can be attributed to scheduling, player performance and focus of the broadcast on the higher leagues. The high presence of games of the 1. Bundesliga aids this research as it comes with more elaborate reporting as well as a higher social relevance given its massive (media) audiences.

The recorded shows were watched in its entirety and all parts relating to the target group of Turkish, Turkish-German and German-Turkish players (**Table 1**) were transcribed literally and collected in the analysis software program ATLAS.ti⁶. In addition to the significant sections relating to the target group, at least twenty seconds that precede and that follow the significant fragment in the broadcast were transcribed to give contextual information. The software used, helped as storage and coding space, and also increases transparency and improves the reliability of the research conducted (Silverman, 2011).

During the data collection all information sources of the televised football material, both visual and audio were used. As the commentary does not occur on its own, but rather as a narration, clarification, evaluation and discussion of the visual material (Raunsbjerg & Sand, 1998), it is crucial to consider all aspects of the broadcast in the analysis. The commentary works in synergy with the

⁶A description of the software can be found at: <https://atlasti.com/product/what-is-atlas-ti/>

visual material to make up the broadcast. The visual aspects of the broadcast were observed by the researcher and used for context and clarification, bringing the analysis closer to reality and making it more meaningful. This adds to the reliability and precision of this research. Comments can sometimes be ambiguous, unclear or vague. This is especially to be considered, as the type of ‘othering’ that has been described previously and is analyzed in this study may be subtle and hidden. Obvious visual focuses on differences, cultural belongings, or race/ethnicity (i.e. players praying before the game) were noted in the transcript and available for analysis. Including the visual images of the broadcasts can help uncover these subtle biases as well as clarify and contextualize the spoken word.

It needs to be noted however that the focus was on the verbal commentary (the audio), which has been transcribed. This is the main source of meaning making for the audience. The comments from all parts of the broadcast are encompassed in the analysis, this means that play-by-play commentators, presenters, studio guests, live interviews or video clips like game trailers or analysis clips contributed to the analysis and are encompassed in the term ‘commentator’ in this research. To guide the analysis and data collection process, an overview of all relevant players was created (**Table 1**, below). A total of 34 players with Turkish roots have been identified in the top three German football leagues. These 2 Turkish, 19 German-Turkish and 13 Turkish-German players were the unit of analysis for this research. Any comment, description or discussion about any of the players, or distinct visual presentation has been transcribed and coded.

Table 1 - Football players with Turkish roots in 1st and 2nd Bundesliga & 3. Liga⁷

Last Name	First Name	Team	Appearances (This season)	Position	Nationality
1. Bundesliga					
Malli	Yunus	Union Berlin	14	Midfield	Turkish/German
Öztunali	Levin	Mainz 05	26	Midfield	German/Turkish
Demirbay	Kerem	Bayer Leverkusen	24	Midfield	German/Turkish
Can	Emre	Borussia Dortmund	12	Midfield	German/Turkish
Kutucu	Ahmed	FC Schalke 04	24	Forward	Turkish/German
Kabak	Ozan	FC Schalke 04	25	Defense	Turkish
Serdar	Suat	FC Schalke 04	20	Midfield	German/Turkish
Ayhan	Kaan	Fortuna Düsseldorf	30	Defense	Turkish/German
Karaman	Kenan	Fortuna Düsseldorf	19	Midfield	Turkish/German

⁷ All data was retrieved from transfermarkt.de and last updated on 24.6.2020. Only players with at least one appearance in their respective league were considered.

Sahin	Nuri	Werder Bremen	16	Midfield	Turkish/German
Toprak	Ömer	Werder Bremen	10	Defense	Turkish/German
2. Bundesliga					
Zehir	Ersin	St.Pauli	14	Midfield	German/Turkish
Özcan	Sallih	Holstein Kiel	27	Midfield	German/Turkish
Camoglu	Burak	Kalsruher SC	13	Midfield	Turkish/German
Atik	Baris	Dynamo Dresden	33	Midfield	German/Turkish
Dursun	Serdar	Darmstadt 98	33	Forward	German/Turkish
Gül	Gökhan	Wehen Wiesbaden	9	Midfield	Turkish/German
Karazor	Atakan	VfB Stuttgart	22	Defense	German/Turkish
3. Liga					
Ciftci	Hikmet	1.FC Kaiserslautern	11	Midfield	Turkish/German
Gottwalt	Lukas	1.FC Kaiserslautern	11	Defense	German/Turkish
Bekiroglu	Efkan	1860 München	24	Midfield	German/Turkish
Sulu	Aytac	Carl Zeiss Jena	12	Defense	Turkish/German
Tuma	Davud	Chemnitz FC	21	Forward	German/Turkish
Yilamz	Meret	FC Bayern München II	15	Defense	Turkish/German
Öztürk	Tanju	FC Hansa Rostock	11	Defense	German/Turkish
Kaya	Fatih	FC Ingolstadt	32	Forward	German/Turkish
Odabas	Ali	FSV Zwickau	22	Defense	German/Turkish
Coskun	Can	FSV Zwickau	21	Midfield	Turkish/German
Gündüz	Selim	KFC Uerdingen	10	Midfield	German/Turkish
Engin	Ahmet	MSV Duisburg	20	Forward	German/Turkish
Ünlüci	Onur	SG Sonnenhof Großaspach	16	Midfield	German/Turkish
Erdogan	Okan	Preußen Münster	28	Defense	Turkish
Özcan	Seref	Preußen Münster	32	Forward	German/Turkish
Celik	Mete	Waldhof Mannheim	18	Defense	Turkish/German

In the table we can see that of the 34 players, a big portion (11) play in the first Bundesliga, which aids this analysis, as broadcast is more extensive about Germany's top division. It is also visible that the frequency of play varies significantly between players as some players like Malli or Toprak get their playing time but are mainly bench-, reserve players or carry an injury. Contrary to this, players like Ayhan or Öztunali play frequently and thus also have a higher chance to feature in the broadcast. Emre Can only transferred to the Bundesliga in the winter, resulting in his low

number of games played. The nationality in the table is mainly split between Turkish/Germans (13) and the German/Turkish players (19), with only two purely Turkish players (who only have a Turkish passport). Even though this research does not particularly distinguish between the different groups, but rather focuses on their overall representation and depiction, this information can be useful in explaining possible differences visible in the results section.

It is also worth mentioning that the distribution of positions that we see in the table is favorable for midfield and defensive positions among this sample. This might have an influence on the reporting about the players because attacking plays are more likely to be praised and reported upon than defensive actions (Kristiansen, Roberts, & Sisjord, 2011). During a play, unless significant defensive mistakes occur, the commentators tend to focus on the attacking team rather than the defending one, giving attacking players more time and attention, as well as skewing the types of attention they are likely to get. Again, positions of players are not the main focus of this study, it might merely aid as an explanation of possible variation in the reporting about different players in the results section. Lastly, the specific team these players play for might also impact the comments. The overall position in the ranking/table as well as expectations and playing style related to the specific team are likely to affect the discussion of the respective players. A player of Union Berlin, a team with little money, known for their work ethic and likely to fight for relegation, is likely to be viewed and evaluated differently than one playing for Borussia Dortmund, a title contender known for its fast-paced attacking football. This information is omitted from the above table, as it varies constantly and expectations for teams change throughout the season.

3.2. Data analysis

For this research, qualitative content analysis, more specifically, thematic analysis was employed supplemented with insights from critical discourse analysis. First, let us focus on thematic analysis. This methodology aims to identify, analyze and explore themes and patterns of a given text or narrative to yield interpretation in relation to previous literature and theories, while still allowing the room and flexibility to be driven and guided by the data (Boeije, 2010). The benefits of this methodology are far. Primarily, thematic analysis is very versatile and flexible, as it combines deductive and inductive approaches. This is especially useful for the analysis of sports broadcasts. As Braun and Clarke (2006) argue: "Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data." (p.78). The aim of such analysis is to segment the data, create order and then reassemble it, while turning the data into findings (Boeije, 2010).

For this research, thematic analysis is the most appropriate method to use, as the lack of existing research and predefined themes in the field and context require an open view and bottom-up, data driven approach, that is possible with this framework. The specific focus on televised football in Germany is relatively new, so one needs to have this bottom-up approach to explore themes; thematic analysis lends itself well to that type of study, which is exploratory in character. Themes are able to emerge from the data to guide the research, complemented by knowledge of existing literature. This existing knowledge, part of which has been presented earlier, stems from previous research experiences as well as similar academic studies done in different contexts.

The relatively small sample used in qualitative research allows for thorough in-depth analysis, which only allows for limited generalization, but rather the analysis of a specific problem in a specific context and a certain point in time. Qualitative research methods, and in particular thematic analysis, also allow for themes and categories to evolve from the data, past the researcher's individual experiences and thereby help to mitigate biases caused by, for example, the researchers background or past experiences (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). These will be addressed later in this section.

Braun and Clarke (2006) propose six phases through which thematic analysis should be performed, so that meaningful patterns can be established. The first phase is the familiarization with data through a first read of the text. This constitutes to viewing the broadcasts and transcribing the relevant sections, with additional context, in this research. Next, initial codes are generated, which categorize the findings into chunks. These codes can then be used to search for themes that group different codes together. Themes are conceptualized as overlapping 'chunks of text'. These themes then need to be reviewed with additional data, and clearly defined and named. Here it is also important to be on the lookout for counter evidence that does not necessarily support main themes or may even go against it. This aids a reliable and accurate analysis, stimulates critical reflection on the findings and adds validity to the research (Silverman, 2011). Lastly, a final report can be produced where all themes are explained, analyzed and contextualized with the help of quotations from the transcripts.

The search for themes and analysis of the data was based on the coding procedures in Boeije (2010): open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The first step of the analysis of the transcribed highlight-shows consisted of open coding, where the text is broken down, examined, conceptualized and categorized. This was done through thorough reading of segments of the script, determining meaningful content to answer the research question (depiction of players with Turkish roots), creating initial codes and then test these with another subsample of the script. With this analytical induction approach, expectations and provisional hypothesis could then be tested, before analyzing the whole text (Boeije, 2010; Silverman, 2011). Furthermore, the constant comparison

approach ensured that the codes and preliminary themes created were valid for the majority of the dataset, therefore establishing validity in the research (Silverman, 2011). Constant comparison here provides a basis for systematically comparing and understanding similarities between different data sources. As two different broadcasts are analyzed and commentators and presenters rotate each week, comparing themes of the different transcripts with each other is essential to ensure validity.

The open coding was followed by axial coding, where the dominant elements of the text are determined with regards to frequency, variety or divergence from existing literature, and then merged into wider themes. Examples of possible themes were 'neglect of player's contribution to goal' or 'emphasis on nationality following negative actions'. These thematic axes can then be used in the selective coding process, where the relationship between the dominant themes are examined to extrapolate deeper insights to answer the research question (Boeije, 2010).

While this data driven approach is fitting for such exploratory research, some sensitizing concepts to guide the scholar can be useful. These reflect expectations about the broadcast that are derived from experiences and research conducted about the German (immigrant) culture and treatment, society and sports media, as well as findings and suggestions from previous academic research in the field of biases and stereotypes in sports media discourses, some of which have been presented in the previous section. For this research, one of the concepts is conditional belonging. Media are a crucial gatekeeper in 'othering' and negotiating belonging. Due to the dual belonging and loyalties of these particular players—expressed through their dual-citizenship and hyphenated identities—media have even more incentives to discuss the players belonging and assign them to groups (Kockelmann, 2019; Silverstone, 2007). Another concept is that of Islamization. The minority with Turkish roots is increasingly discussed in terms of the prevalent, more global discourses relating to Muslims. These include ideas of fanaticism, patriarchy and underdevelopment (Lewicki, 2017). A third sensitizing concept relates to stereotypes towards the minority prevalent in German society. These include ideas of indolence, passiveness, laziness and dependence (Ramm, 2010).

3.3. Critical discourse analysis

In addition to the patterns discovered through the thematic analysis described above, insights from critical discourse analysis (CDA) aided gain understanding of the power relations and hierarchies created through the meaning making in the football commentary. These possibly relate to expressions of cultural racism as presented in the theoretical framework. Thematic analysis can be used to look for patterns, but to further analyze these patterns and investigate how they relate to possible processes of 'othering', critical discourse analysis was used. Critical discourse analysis emphasizes the constructive role of language (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Contrary, thematic analysis

mainly focuses on the semantic meanings; what is actually said (Braun & Clarke, 2006). CDA goes a step further and addresses the latent systems of meanings of the language; how it is used to persuade people to think in a particular way. This analytic framework helps linking and understanding the interconnectedness of language, power and ideology and bring this relationship to the surface (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). The idea behind CDA is that language not only shapes, but equally is shaped by society and the people who use it. Therefore, this analysis is not really focused on the language itself, but on the meanings associated with it and the social and cultural structures it represents and creates. Here, especially power relations and hierarchies are targeted, as these are assumed as discursive and are therefore negotiated and created through discourses and language. These can be analyzed. CDA is interested in why and how specific language is used and what purpose and interests it serves (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

This critical language study employs specific tools to get to the underlying meanings of language and bring forward the power dynamics within them. One could look, for example, at word connotations (Machin & Mayr, 2012): What are the specific associated meanings and associations to particular terms and phrases used in a text? Here, in a positive framing words like 'world class', 'diversity', 'dynamic' or 'forward-looking' could carry specific meanings that range beyond the word itself (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Overlexicalization, is another indicator CDA looks for to understand the underlying meaning and message of language. This refers to an abundance of particular words and their associated synonyms, which indicates a framing and persuasion into a certain direction (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Key words like 'crisis' are another indicator CDA looks at. Looking for absences in the text/commenting is another important aspect of CDA. Sometimes what is not said or addressed is more important than what is present, especially with accompanying visuals. Here one can potentially gain insights about invisible norms and structural opposites, which define and construct 'we' groups and 'others' (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

As this research investigates language and implicit meaning making related to sports reporting about the Turkish minority group within Germany, it is important to address and reflect upon the role of the researcher. As has been highlighted in the previous theory section of this paper, many ideas about belonging, identity and the meanings we ascribe to them are under constant negotiation and vary based on one's background, experiences and on the personal standing within these societal constructs. This of course means that the researcher's personal background, here being White, male and German, influences the perceptions and conclusions drawn from an investigation of the discourse. While the in-depth theoretical reflection presented above helps with obtaining an informed view, belonging to the White majority group in society might result in misunderstanding, omitting or falsely interpreting specific audio or visual cues or not being aware of

all the stereotypes. Reflecting on this position of the researcher and being aware of possible impacts on the data collection as well as analysis helps minimize this problem. At the same time, the employment of a variety of sources from different scholars of varying ethnic, cultural and academic backgrounds helps get a reliable and good overview of perspectives, experiences and approaches. Further research can also help by conducting similar research by a different researcher or a team of scholars with diverse, mixed backgrounds.

3.4. Saturation

The data collection halted once saturation was presumed to be achieved in most thematic areas of the audio-visual material gathered. In exploratory, inductive research like this one, saturation is more concerned with the (non-)emergence of new themes and codes, rather than fully saturating all the nuances and dimensions of these codes and themes (Saunders, et al., 2018). Saturation should not be seen as a point, but rather as “matter of degree” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.136), where diminishing returns to new data collection can be observed. It is about confidently being able to say that new data are unlikely to provide new insights, which specifically relate to new codes and themes. The collected data should provide a valid and reliable overview of the phenomenon studied, where results are generalizable to a certain degree (Boddy, 2016). This can be achieved through the observation of patterns across broadcasts (Silverman, 2011). As various external influences such as heterogeneity in commentators, game context and external happenings can influence the data and results of this research, it is important to observe themes across different shows and games, which signals relevance and mitigates individual, game specific themes. In this research, a first round of coding was conducted after half the broadcasts were transcribed, to yield first insights into possible themes and codes along the lines of Silverman’s (2011) constant comparison methodology. These codes were then compared to the analysis of the second half of the data, and only slight variations of the previously identified themes were observed. It also quickly became visible where the focus of the broadcasts was, and what the dominant traits and codes within the data were, based on the distribution of codes towards specific themes across broadcasts and the frequency of individual codes. Contradicting observations were also noted to aid the discussion of the results. This suggested that saturation was reached to a sufficient degree. The specific findings will be presented in the following results section.

3.5. A few last notes on foreseeable limitations

Even before the actual data collection began, a few limitations already presented itself. A large impact on this analysis was created through the current worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Its

impact on data collection has been elaborated previously already. Some players also moved to another club during the winter break. However, we are pleased with the entire data set, which was sufficient to reach saturation - as said already.

Apart from the data collection problems the crisis imposed on this research, there are some impacts on the data itself that were to be expected as well. While there might be primary influences on the gameplay in the form of schedule shifts, spectator exclusion or even the cancelation for some games, there are also secondary influences on the actual commenting and broadcasting of the game. As this virus is the prime political, societal and media focus at the moment, this without a doubt will influence sports reporting as well. The status quo reporting is likely to be altered to focus more on current events like so called 'Ghost-games' or possible sickness of players. This means that, on the one hand, the analyzed time frame might not be representative of the general sports reporting practices and, on the other hand, focus in the reporting might be shifted away from possible racially and ethnically influenced reporting to commentary that is heavily influenced by the unfoldings and developments of the current health crisis. However, this mainly affected the last few gamedays of the sample analyzed. Future research can shed more light on the 'representativeness' of this sample.

An always present limitation to research into sports is the possibility of injury or transfer, thus eliminating the players from appearing in the broadcast. This has unfortunately happened to a variety of players. One of them being Ozan Kabak, one of the few purely Turkish player in the sample. In the game of 1.FC Köln vs. FC Schalke 04 on 29.2.2020, he injured his Vertebra and did not play for a large proportion of the following games. Suat Serdar encountered a similar faith, incurring multiple injuries throughout the season. There is nothing that can be done to mitigate this possible sample reduction through player injury, apart from potentially increasing the sample in future research. For example a longer time period of investigation or including more leagues into the sample could aid here.

4. Results – Let's play

In this section the results of the investigation of the targeted German public broadcast football shows *Sportschau* und *Aktuelles Sportstudio* will be presented and discussed, along with some more general relevant findings to give perspective to the findings relating to the specific depiction of athletes with Turkish roots, which this research focuses on. Despite the different structural styles of the two programs analyzed, no significant differences between the programs in relation to the presentation of Turkish origin athletes were observed. Therefore, the following section will not differentiate between results from the two broadcasts but treat and present them as one. Future research could aim to specifically investigate differences between the broadcasts. All results will be presented and discussed within their respective theme and substantiated with the help of examples and quotes from the actual transcripts of the broadcasts. The findings of this research will additionally be compared and contrasted with the theories and results of previous studies conducted, as presented in the theoretical framework. This helps place the findings in a broader perspective and highlight their relevance, as well as context specific differences to aid answering the research question of this thesis:

How are football players of Turkish descent of the first-, second and third Bundesliga represented in German public broadcast football TV programs?

Before diving into the results, it should be noted that the quotations from the broadcasts provided are translated from German to English. Such translations are never exact. This needs to be kept in mind, as this research is essentially an analysis of language in the context of investigating and understanding the discourse about an ethnic minority in professional football reporting on German public broadcast. As will become clear in the following section, meaning is created, and power relations become visible only through subtle connotations, phrasings or specific words. This meaning might get lost in translation (Ordudari, 2007). Therefore, English translations will be presented for the sake of this report, but the original transcripts should be consulted in case of ambiguity and exact meaning.

4.1. The disappearance of obvious stereotypes

Firstly, like predicted in research by Billings (2012, 2018) or Hylton (2008), crude comments based racist stereotypes were practically not present in the analyzed sample. As predicted by the researchers, these seem to have disappeared in reaction to various public debates and social outcries relating to injustice and promotion of racist beliefs by TV commentators like Rush Limbaugh. Limbaugh who was heavily criticized for his racist remarks, suggesting Black athletes only succeed because the media wants them to do well. The increased attention and public focus on

racial reporting, as well as racist incidents in stadiums of the Bundesliga⁸ and other European football leagues⁹, seemed to have excluded the blatant very obvious racism from the reporting, through increased punishment and job loss in case of misspeaking. In the investigated timeframe, two incidents of racist abuse¹⁰ occurred in the Bundesliga, which also featured in the broadcast. Such incidents and discussions are likely to further increase the awareness and care of the broadcasters.

In relation to the discussion of the target group of this research—football players with Turkish roots—there was only one incident within the investigated timeframe that came close to the portrayal and promotion of an obvious stereotype. As the Turkish ethnicity is very closely linked to religion¹¹, the comment relating to VfB Stuttgart's Atakan Karazor's emotional reaction towards a presumably illegal goal scored against them in the game versus Regensburg can be understood as promoting a stereotype. The commentator claimed the player was "loosing/retracting his faith" (Stuttgart – Regensburg, 22.2.2020) as the player covered his face and complained to the referee. With such a comment the religious nature and the importance of religion for this ethnic group is highlighted and mocked. It especially connects the Muslim religion and Turkish ethnicity to emotional and histrionic behavior. As the Muslim religion and the integration of its followers is a dominant, heavily emotional topic within Germany¹², such connections may perpetuate misleading and dividing perceptions about this minority. It fits into the fragile discourse about Muslims in general (Ramm, 2010). In the worst case, a continuous reinforcement of a link between such behavior and this particular ethnic group, could potentially fuel ideas of religious fanaticism, commonly held against followers of the Muslim religion (Ramm, 2010). This discourse is also tangled up in ideas about extremism (Paul & Becker, 2017), which through such commenting get tied to the Turkish minority, potentially creating fear, distance and distrust amongst audiences. Such hypothetical consequences can be further investigated with a study on audience perceptions that could complement this research and highlight how viewers perceive and digest the broadcast.

⁸ For example, the monkey sounds towards Hertha BSC's Jordan Torunarigha in their game against FC Schalke 04 on 05.02.2020 (Uersfeld, 2020).

⁹ Italian football, for example, is well known for being instrumentalized by right-wing groups to promote their xenophobic agendas resulting in frequent incitants of racist abuse in stadiums (Kassimeris, 2011).

¹⁰ Schalke Boss Clemens Tönnies returned to the stadium after his racist comments towards Africans and the Racist abuse referenced in Footnote 8.

¹¹ 98% of the Turkish population is Muslim (Too, 2018)

¹² There was and still is a long debate in Germany posing the question whether Islam should, and can ever really become a part of German society, with prominent politicians speaking out for both sides ("Der Islam", 2018).

4.2. A Turkish taboo

A second very interesting observation of this analysis is, that despite many references to nationality, origin or cultural belonging in the broadcast as a whole, which will be discussed at the end of this results section (4.6.), players of Turkish origin were not part of this discussion. Only once was a player of the target group of this research referred to by his nationality, Yunus Malli of Union Berlin after his transfer from VfL Wolfsburg. This is an interesting finding as it could have been expected that a group so heavily under focus in other domains of media, would be similarly targeted and represented in the reporting about sports. An explanation for this could be the strong connotation the descriptors *Turk*, *German-Turk*, or *Turkish-German*, carry in German society (Klink & Wagner, 1999). Academics have described the rise of ‘Turkophobia’ (Lewicki, 2017; Saz, 2011) across the globe, associated with a fear of immigrants and Muslim religion, particularly funneled into hostility, intolerance and racism towards people of Turkish origin. Such connotations of the Turkish origin combined with the increased awareness of society and media towards the obvious use of racism and stereotypes might have caused such descriptors to have disappeared. It seems to be far more harmless to point out somebody is of French, Albanian or Swedish origin than of Turkish descent.

As an extension of the theme of the (absent) discussion of Turkish ethnicity in the commentary, the data also show that commentators attempted to make those with unclear belonging—i.e. implicit dual citizenship—as German as possible in case of a good action on the pitch. There were multiple incidents of German-Turkish players like Serdar Dursun of Darmstadt 98 or Ahmet Kutucu of Schalke 04 scoring a goal or being praised for their accomplishments and development with a focus on their German roots. These roots could be their place of birth within Germany, their childhood in a certain suburb, their long past in a German football youth academy or even an emphasis on their success and long history in Germany. For example, after scoring the equalizer against Hamburg, Dursun was presented as “Serdar Dursun, born in Hamburg” (Darmstadt – Hamburg, 21.12.2019). It seems that the impression of Mesut Özil, presented in his Tweet in the introduction of this paper, that the media tends to be selective in portraying belonging based on success is also evident here. If successful, the German side of the dual citizenship is emphasized, while in case of bad action the Turkish nationality might not be distinctly mentioned, due to reasons mentioned above, but the players tend to be pointed out by name, which along with the visuals speak for themselves as not belonging to the majority group. This observation will be presented later in more detail.

4.3. Biased acknowledgement of contribution

We are now entering the world of the more subtle biases of inferential racism (Hall, 1981). Belonging and exclusion on a national level, with explicit use of their legal hyphenated identity marker, seems to not be a primary topic of discussion for this ethnic group in the analyzed reporting. Subtle framings that present the investigated target group in a specific light and pass on distinct ideas about them, without explicit reference to their origin, are much more present. These not only relate to their skill and understanding of the game of football, but also about their general being, belonging and qualities. Despite an absence of explicit 'othering' based on ethnicity, a continuous framing combined with specific ethnic markers like names or appearance has similar effects (Silverstone, 2007).

As was discussed briefly in the previous section, players with Turkish roots were frequently depicted as German following positive contributions to their team. This appears to be part of a larger trend in the depiction of the analyzed players of Turkish descent. When the connection towards an athletes' Germanness could not clearly be established, a refrain from praise or acknowledgement of a vital contributions towards these positive outcomes was often observed. The dual citizenship of these players seems to give commentators the freedom and power to judge where these players belong. Belonging then seems to be dependent on the players' contribution to the game and whether a solid connection to his Germanness can be established.

To make this clearer, let us consider the case that a player of Turkish descent scored a goal. This occurred 15 times in the investigated timeframe. Out of those 15 goals 14 were partly attributed to opponents' mistakes by the commentators. The success was rarely attributed to the skill, vision or capabilities of the player of Turkish descent himself, but rather positioned as luck or a result of the opponent's mistake. This was present in various different ways. Either the opponent team was unorganized, the coach prescribed the wrong tactics to the opponent, the opposing player had bad positioning or acted unskilled, or the opponent goalkeeper made a clear mistake. For instance, when Öztunali scored the 1:0 against Augsburg, his goal was analyzed as: "As pretty as it is by Öztunali, this one mainly belongs to Koubek [the Augsburg Goalkeeper]. He has got to stop this one. Misjudges the ball a little and does not really jump for it either" (Augsburg – Mainz, 7.12.2019). Posing the question of offside, thereby framing the goal as illegal, was also present multiple times. Additionally, for six of those 15 goals there was barely any attention given to the goal itself, but rather vehement praise for the assist. This consideration is especially interesting when acknowledging that out of the six assists provided by players of Turkish origin, none received such acknowledgement or praise. Here it was always the goal itself that was focused on, scored by a non-Turkish player.

Overall, it seems that in the sample of broadcasts investigated, the players with Turkish roots received disproportionately less acknowledgement and praise for their various positive contributions. This is not to say that they did not receive any mention or praise at all during the broadcast, just significantly less. It is mainly the vital contributions—goals and assists which matter to win the game—that go vastly uncredited for this particular group. If praise was given, the connection to the players’ German heritage was often presented. Otherwise the contribution was sometimes explained by pointing to opponent mistakes or the great assistance, skills and vision of the teammates. Such framing of this specific group can have impacts on their perception by the audience even without mentioning their explicit heritage. The most direct impact of this is the image of reduced value and impact on the game itself, which could be consequential for the players’ career and playing chances, as hinted by various international scholars (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008; Stone, et al., 1999). These primary consequences, while being no less important, are very personal to the specific player. On a larger scale, such unequal attribution of success and contribution could potentially be extrapolated away from the game of football and used to aid and reinforce stereotypes that are already circulating within society such as laziness, lack of contribution to the common good or dependence and abuse of social welfare, all ideas associated with the Turkish minority (Nuhurat, 2015; Saz, 2011).

4.4. Players of Turkish descent as scapegoats

In contrast to the above-mentioned observation that Germanness of the target group was highlighted when describing accomplishments and positive actions, players of Turkish descent were frequently used as examples for poor performance of their entire team, areas of improvement, as well as a bad or unfair game. Even as their nationality is not referred to explicitly, one can see that the players under investigation of this research carry very distinct names that make it easy to identify them with their ethnic roots, along with their appearance. In the game played by FSV Mainz 05 in Augsburg, that was dominated by the host team, the commentator described Mainz’s poor performance as: “And it does not get better from the point of view of Mainz. Quite the opposite, Öztunali loses the ball against Vargas” (Augsburg – Mainz, 7.12.2019). When Werder Bremen was taken apart by Bayern Munich (6:1), the commentator described the processes as “Bremen is disintegrating, falling apart after the Break. No more resistance. Visible well here in the case of Sahin, who concedes possession” (Bayern Munich – Bremen, 14.12.2019). In these instances, the commentator connects the poor performance of the entire team with the actions of an individual, implicitly allowing for the idea that this individual—who frequently happens to look Turkish and have the associated name—is responsible and reflexive of the poor performance. To the commentator,

and thereby also potentially to the audience, Turkish players become the scapegoats (Tudor, 1992), similar to Özil's observation in his retirement letter.

These observations are further emphasized by the notion that there was not only an emphasis of poor actions for players with Turkish origin, but frequently a verification and reassurance of the foul or missed pass by the commentator. These occur during the replay, where the commentator has time to look at the action again and gets to make a judgement on it. Reassuring that there has indeed been a foul, or the foul has been worthy of the yellow card, was frequent amongst the players of Turkish origin. Not only are these bad actions affirmed to be indeed wrongdoings, they are also remembered and reintroduced to balance out good actions. The case of Levin Öztunali, midfielder of Mainz 05, in the previously mentioned game against Augsburg is a good example of this. Mainz as a team displayed a very poor performance in this game but managed to take the lead through a goal by Öztunali. The goal followed soon after the aforementioned mistake by Öztunali. The associated commentary on Öztunali's goal was: "Mainz takes the lead. The world stands on its head in Augsburg. Öztunali, just now had the mega-slip against Vargas, and now such a goal" (Augsburg – Mainz, 7.12.2019). This highlights how missteps and mistakes were often remembered and brought back to relativize and put in perspective good actions such as (here) scoring a goal.

Interestingly, this method can also be employed in a different way, to put into perspective and alleviate the wrongdoings of other players, particularly Germans. When German national team and TSG Hoffenheim player Sebastian Rudy saw his yellow card in the game against Fortuna Düsseldorf (30.11.2019), for example, the commentator saw himself urged to point out that Kaan Ayhan had also seen the yellow card before. This is relevant, considering that various other players saw a yellow card in that game, without it being mentioned, and Rudy's punishment occurred 12 minutes after that of Ayhan. Such comparison, justifying a player's wrongdoing by reminding that a player with Turkish ethnicity had done the same, also occurred in its opposite form. In the 3. Liga game of Magdeburg against Jena, the commentator reminded the audience after the goal of Aytac Sulu that the player of Turkish descent managed to "prevail equally good as Beck" (Magdeburg – Jena, 28.2.2020), the German striker of the opposing team that had scored the 1:0 previously. Again, putting in perspective the actions of these players, reassuring the audience that the German player is equally good, or praising the player by signaling he is equally good as a German.

Given the data, there is reason to believe that the actions on the field are framed, may it be consciously or unconsciously, to promote the success of White and especially German players, at the sacrifice of particularly players with Turkish roots. This occurs in part by diverting attention and association between positive contributions and Turkishness, while on the other hand highlighting them in terms of their Germanness when the action is positive. Additionally, it seems that this lack

of involvement in the discussion of positive contributions is complemented by a focus on negative impacts by players with Turkish roots. This is not to say that other players mistakes are not pointed out and evaluated, but they are less likely to be used as a general example, and the lack of complementation with positive impacts results in an overall negatively framed picture. These insight into the discourse and their encompassed ideas about whiteness and the associated power dynamics will be further discussed in the discussion section of this paper.

These ideas of whiteness and power inequality are further reinforced by acknowledging who gets to actually speak and evaluate the performances apart from the commentators. Here, along the lines of Carrington's (2010) observation of the Black athlete in America not having their own voice, it was observed that only two players from the sample actually got to speak for themselves. There was an Interview with Emre Can, who plays for the German national team and has therefore provided evidence of his belonging and loyalty to the majority group. Secondly, there is a post-match interview with Serdar Dursun, who as discussed previously, was framed in terms of his Germanness during the game against Hamburger SV. These observations further support the picture of promoting German success and presenting the associated actors, who speak German, as belonging to the 'imagined community' and acknowledging their success. The others remain relatively silent and are framed and 'othered' by the judgement of the commentator in line with the discourse poised by ideas of whiteness (Eastmann & Billings, 2000).

4.5. Specific qualities and stereotypes

Shifting the focus away from the inspection of what actions within the game were discussed and whom they were attributed to, with what effect; this section will examine how the players in the sample were discussed in general, in line with research by Van Sterkenburg et al. (2012). It is now not a matter of who contributed and receives credit for accomplishment and impact, but rather what traits and perceptions are assigned to the particular group in discussion, players with Turkish roots. This is more of an investigation of the potential differences in qualities and skills that Mesut Özil proposed in his New York Times interview, where he argued that particular aspects of his footballing person stem from his distinct roots (Cohen, 2010). It should be noted however, that this research does not aim to contrast representations of different ethnicities, but rather provide insights into the discourse about representation and depictions associated to only those with Turkish roots. Therefore, insights need to be evaluated carefully at face value, as a specific reference group for comparison is lacking, to put these findings into context. Some general ideas and observations found across the entire sample of the broadcasts—including other minority players as well—will be provided

at the end of this section, to place interpretations of the particular findings related to the specific group under investigation into a wider perspective.

It stands out that, in general, there is great focus on mental strengths and abilities in the narration of the analyzed football game highlights. This theme presented itself in over 50 cases and reveals some insights about the specific understandings and conceptualization of the game of football and ideas about what is needed to play and succeed within the sport, according to German commentators. In Germany it seems tactical discipline, positioning, awareness, teamwork, determination, work ethic and general game understanding are the emphasis and basis for most depictions and judgements of games and players. Such conceptualizations of how the sport is to be played and what is deemed as valuable and contributing, of course greatly impacts on the later evaluation of the actors on the playing field. As football is understood as a primarily technical, tactical and mental endeavor (Sonntag, 2015), such qualities are likely to receive the most attention as well, and judgments of good and bad, or helpful/desirable or not, are also influenced and biased based on these notions. Due to the importance of the sport, this can—depending on the framing and association with specific groups or ethnicities—also have consequences on a more general level of society (Kneidinger, 2010). Attributing specific qualities as desirable and looking for them within players, presents ideas about what and who is desirable and helpful, as specific characteristics are presented as favorable or unfavorable. Therefore, it is vital to investigate these representations.

In general, here, the discussion appears to be quite balanced and neutral. The majority of descriptive comments regarding the investigated group of players of Turkish descent was neutral and without judgement. It simply aimed at describing what was going on, who had the ball and mentioning player names. Here for example, the winning and losing of possession were mentioned equally often. When it comes to the more judgmental comments, asserting specific qualities to the players, these were quite balanced with regards to being positive and negative as well, but differed slightly in their purpose and target. This balance could partly be attributed to the equal number of wins and losses of the teams of the investigated players. As players of losing teams are more likely to be criticized, while winning team members are likely to receive praise. It improves the reliability of the results that the Turkish players were involved in 18 wins, 17 losses and 15 ties within this investigation. It decreases the chances that biased reporting and framing of players was due to game's specific circumstances such as losing or winning.

On the positive side, players were frequently described as energetic, physically strong, determined, skillful, having good vision and working well as a team. Leadership skills and value towards the team were also highlighted occasionally. The praise of the players' attributes seems versatile and balanced. There is no focus on a specific attribute—mentally, technically or physically—that stands out and can be seen as particularly 'Turkish'. Variation can be attributed to game

situations and the different positions the players take up on the field, as a defender is more likely to be discussed in terms of robustness and physicality, while a midfielder or striker is more likely evaluated on his skillfulness. It is interesting to see that these attributes also spread out across different dimensions. They are a mix of mental and physical attributes of the player as well as tactical and skill related items that are football specific. This hints towards an understanding of versatility in attributes of Turkish players. The players can not only be found in all positions across the field (except goalkeepers), but they seem to also be seen as multifaceted and diverse in their talents. There seems to be no conception of a 'Turkish-style', like proposed by Özil (Cohen, 2010), neither by coaches and teams, nor by commentators. The comments relating to negative attributes of players of Turkish descent mainly relate to lack of effort such as passiveness or laziness, as well as a deficiency in tactical understanding, inability, inexperience or presenting players as naïve, foolish or unfocused. "That is too casual by Kabak. Gjasula interferes. It is called Offside, but these things can easily go wrong" (Schalke 04 – Paderborn, 8.2.2020).

Hints towards not being good enough, or not showing the desired effort were also present. Here it is worthy to point out that it was not seldom the case that these characteristics were presented as a sarcastic comment or with exaggeration the likes of a "Horror missed pass" (1860 München – Chemnitz, 28.2.2020) or "Beautiful missed pass" (Freiburg – Mainz, 18.1.2020). Such handling of the judgement can be considered condescending and potentially reflect a difference in standards of expectations. It gives the impression that these (groups of) players might not know better or cannot be expected to fulfill the same standard of work and performance that other actors fulfill on the field. This observation is also in line with the previously discussed comparison to German success. These findings, again, can be seen as symptoms of the unequal power dynamics at play. The Turkish players, while seemingly receiving equal amount of positive and negative attributions, are presented in a way that positions them as lesser, and slightly out of place. Ideas of laziness and passiveness also play into the stereotypes highlighted in a previous section, relating to perceptions and beliefs of immigrants and specifically those of Turkish descent not contributing to society, but rather abusing the German state and welfare (Ramm, 2007).

4.6. General perspective

To put the previously explained observations into a greater context of the program, the following section will discuss some general observations that do not particularly relate to the specific sample of players of Turkish descent, but aid to place and understand the discourses they are involved in better, and contextualize their representation in the broadcast as a whole.

The first observation made, is that there is great variation in styles and focus amongst commentators. There are 13 different commentators of the Sportschau, some are very emotional and involved, while others are very structured and stick to uninvolved game narration. Some are more focused on praise and the good actions, while others are quite critical, focusing on mistakes. It was also interesting to see the different conceptualizations of responsibility. While most commentators focused mainly on the players on the field and their actions, others attributed success and failure mainly to the instructions and preparations of the coaches. While these individual styles of course influence the research, they are a characteristic of football commentary in general and therefore part of an accurate and real depiction of the discourses tied to the sport (Lavric, Pisek, Skinner, & Stadler, 2008). Specific reporters seem to have a great focus on ethnicity and nationality, frequently employing these markers as descriptors and justifiers of actions. In a narration of the game of Freiburg against Mainz, for instance, 19 mentions of nationality were observed. Especially the South Korean Freiburg player Kwon, was referred to by his nationality eight times. Such emphasis of belonging falls in line with Dyer's (1997) and Anderson's (1982) ideas relating to 'othering' by emphasizing differences and belonging. These are especially apparent when local players like Christian Günter or Janik Haberer are contrasted against these notions. Other commentators have no mentions of nationality or ethnicity, but rather refers to players as belonging to a certain football team. The analysis of specific commenting styles and their effects could be target of further research.

Apart from the particular differences in commentators discussed, there is a general emphasis on national belonging in the broadcast. This contrasts Sonntag and Garcia's (2020) conclusion that nationality does not matter anymore on the modern football field. Here it is especially interesting to see that particularly bad actions on the pitch are explained, judged and narrated with a reference to nationality/ethnicity. Mistakes, bad passes, poor misses, fouls, yellow and red cards as well as own goals, poor defensive actions or emotional and undisciplined reactions to referee decisions are the prime appearances of references to nationality. Especially players of Asian heritage appeared to be the focus of sarcastic and somewhat stereotypical comments. Comments portraying a foul by the South Korean Lee, of Karlsruhe SC as a "Bruce-Lee memorial kick" (Karlsruhe SC – Holstein Kiel, 1.2.2020) is one of such incidences. As will be elaborated in the last section of this thesis, the depiction of this ethnic group should be investigated in more detail in a separate research.

It also frequently appeared that efforts and contributions are contrasted to other players, which—while remaining implicit—are usually German. In the game of Hamburger SV against Hannover, for example, Backery Jatta's poor attempt is judged as "Great creation of the opportunity by Leibhold, but very poor strike by the Gambian" (Hannover – Hamburg, 15.2.2020). This signals

that the implicit negative framing of players of Turkish descent may in part also be present with other foreign nationalities. Bad actions get tied to the ethnicity of the player, distancing them from the majority group. These notions of 'Othering' and how they can partly be explained by whiteness will be discussed in the following discussion section.

The impact of such association of nationality with poor attempts is further enforced by justifying, defending and somewhat whitewashing mistakes by German players. While this was not the focus of this analysis, it quickly became a frequent observation that falls in line with other studies described previously (e.g. Braddock, 1978). Further research, and a targeted study on the depiction of German athletes is necessary to provide more valid and reliable insights here. For now, it helps contextualize and place the Turkish-specific findings within the bigger picture of broadcasts. To really be able to get the full picture and give meaning to the findings of this study, the specific depiction of German athletes needs to be investigated in future studies. Such results can then be contrasted with the ones of this research to really get an idea of the situation and potential biases. Observations of this research however hint that the German nationality is rarely referred to, and usually on a very local level or as a reference to point out a national team player. It is employed, on the one hand, as a praise for good actions, but intriguingly also to diminish the harm of poor actions. Red cards or bad fouls are given absolution by positioning it as a rarity and unusual for the player, disassociating the player and his nationality from the mistake. These observations, along with those discussed with a focus on the Turkish minority reinforce the idea of how whiteness operates in televised football and its influence on the reporting. The White German player seems to be protected, while other nationalities and ethnicities are contrasted against this idea of an intelligent, focused, hardworking and fair player.

5. Discussion and conclusion – The final whistle

To conclude this thesis, this following section aims to discuss the findings and give meaning to the core themes identified in the data. To do this the previously discussed results and findings will be summarized to yield answers to the research question of this thesis: *How are football players of Turkish descent of the first-, second and third Bundesliga depicted in German public broadcast football TV programs?* Following this will be a more in-depth discussion of the core findings. The thesis will lastly be summed up with a discussion of limitations and suggestions for further research.

5.1. Summary of findings

Overall, the research finds several themes within the data that depict, frame and give insights about ideas and perceptions of the minority of Turkish descent. Collectively, they give insights into covert biases which consist of, for instance, excluding and suppressing positive contributions to the game or to the team by this minority, while highlighting and focusing on negative instances. This is similar to the distortion of perceptions Ruhrmann (1999) and Schicha (2003) find in general media coverage of minorities in Germany, particularly that with Turkish roots. These specific representations hint towards a 'default standard' (Addy, 2008) or framework established and reinforced by the normative group, by which other cultures and ethnicities other than their own are measured and evaluated. As discussed in the theory section earlier, this kind of 'othering' can be explained in part as a form of whiteness, giving insights into the unbalanced power dynamics at play. The mostly unconscious but commonly accepted positioning and discussion of players appear to disadvantage the minority group, while at the same time seemingly promoting the majority group. Simultaneously, commonly held perceptions of indolence and a lack of contribution to the cause at hand (in this case the game of football) associated with this Turkish minority are being reinforced. Overt stereotypes did not play a large role in the discussion of these players in the broadcasts but diverging framings of belonging—depending on the contribution of players to the game—were observed frequently and played a large role in the representation of these players. Footballers with dual citizenship were often depicted as German following a positive contribution to the game like a goal, an accomplishment or exemplary behavior. They were, however, disproportionately often depicted as lazy and passive, as well as positioned as at fault for overall poor performances of their team when they did not perform well. This will be discussed in more detail later on.

Success and being acknowledged for a contribution seem to be in part a determinant of belonging to the majority group. The 'dual citizenship' of the investigated players seems to give commentators the freedom and power to judge where these players belong. Commentators seem to

'other' players based on their (non) Germanness, which is also dependent on positive impacts on the game. As scholars such as Billings (2012, 2018), MacDonald (2005) or Ehrhart (2014) have shown, loyalty and worthiness of belonging have to be proven and shown continuously, especially for those with potentially dual loyalties through their dual citizenship (Kockelmann, 2019; Sonntag & Garcia, 2020).

This othering was apparent through various positive actions by the investigated players of Turkish descent predominantly being questioned, neglected or attributed to other players. Goals by Turkish players were attributed to opponent mistakes or the skillful work of predominantly majority ethnic teammates, while assists of the players of Turkish descent were mostly neglected. Overall, success and contribution to the team were shifted away from these players of Turkish descent giving the impression that they heavily depend on their team, rarely contribute and if they do, it is suggested it has something to do with their Germanness or luck. This again can be traced back to stereotypical beliefs widely spread in German society, suggesting that this minority is dependent on the social security and welfare structures within the country (Bade & Weiner, 2001; Kockelmann, 2019; Saz, 2011).

On the flipside of this misattribution, is an emphasis of negative impacts like fouls and mistakes. Not only are these unfavorable actions highlighted, remembered and emphasized, but frequently also used as an example for poor performances of an entire team. This does not only frame a negative picture of these players with Turkish roots—especially considering their lack of positive acknowledgement—but also presents a subtle attribution of blame. A scapegoat of a sort. Again, one can draw parallels to the treatment and portrayal of this minority in large parts of media, society and politics within Germany in general. It is not unheard of to blame immigrants of especially Turkish descent of various social, political, economic and cultural problems, framing them as an unwanted intrusion (Ramm, 2010; Fuller, 2018).

Explicit references to Turkish ethnicity were not present in this discussion, just like in the whole broadcast. The fragility of the integration discourse of immigrants in Germany, in particular relating to Turkish ethnicity, seems to have transformed any plain and overt discussion of this minority into a taboo topic. The so called 'Turkophobia' (Saz, 2011) additionally appears to add fear to commentators referencing the minority explicitly and receiving backlash for employing pre-conceptions and stereotypes about Turkish rooted citizens in Germany. The silencing and 'othering' of the group occurs both in the literal sense by rarely letting them speak for themselves, and in the disregard for them by the commentator in a broadcast. This silencing becomes especially apparent in a broadcast otherwise packed with discussions of nationality and ethnicity of other players. Not addressing this specific group promotes the idea that there are commonly held beliefs about this minority in society that can be filled in by the audience themselves. This practice leaves many

interpretations up to the audience that is by and large part of the White majority group (Strauß, 2012) that is likely to be socialized and comfortable in its unconscious position of power over the minority group (Wren, 2001). Considering the other depictions of this minority group of Turkish descent, which were elaborated previously—nudging towards negative perceptions and the frequent visual cues focused on negative actions such as fouls or emotional behaviors—the audience is not encouraged to be reflective and inclusive towards this group (Nuhurat, 2015; Strauß, 2012). Here the biased framing observed in the broadcasts seems to reinforce ideas of laziness and dependence on others amongst this group, as well as a lack of contribution to, and hindering of their respective teams. The actual impact of this kind of coverage on viewers should be focus of future research. This can complement findings presented in this thesis, put them in perspective and give insights into the previously hypothesized impacts and perceptions of audiences through the here observed depictions of players with Turkish roots.

5.2. A dynamic discourse

Overall, the depiction of players of Turkish descent in the selected TV broadcasts, within the analyzed timeframe, can be seen as exemplary for the dynamic negotiation and attribution of belonging and identity occurring throughout Germany (Fuller, 2018). Evidence for ‘othering’ of players of Turkish descent has been found in the broadcasts, portraying the Turkish side of players—without explicitly mentioning it—as negative and highlighting Germanness for positive actions when possible. Such ‘othering’ fits into the wider discourse relating this minority with Turkish roots in Germany, frequently presenting them as indolent and relying on German society, while creating social problems (Ramm, 2010). As explained earlier, the concept of whiteness can help explain this ‘othering’. Players’ capabilities are discussed in terms of a variety of mental, physical and technical qualities that seem balanced and adequate. However, when it comes to the discussion of contributions to the team, the picture changes. For instance, one can observe subtle biases in terms of framing players with Turkish roots that reinforce negative stereotypes and potentially reinforce ideas of unwanted intrusion, which are common in the German society (Ramm, 2010; Saz, 2011).

Additionally, a dynamic discourse of belonging and Germanness can be observed. Along the lines of a *Leitkultur*, there seem to be underlying conceptions of what it takes to be German and therefore be accepted and appreciated not only in the game of football but also in society. Acceptance seems not based on success or contribution, but rather based on *perceived* success, work ethic and contribution, which the commentators and the broadcast can influence through their audio-visual depiction of the sport. These players of Turkish descent seem to be ‘othered’ and perceived with a negative bias. This discourse shows clear signs of boundary work, that can be in

part explained by and are situated within discourses of whiteness and Germanness. These consider being German and White normative and minorities—in particular a large minority such as the one with Turkish roots—as deviant and ‘the other’. Therefore, attention and acknowledgement are diverted away from those who are perceived as not to fit these values and not having a clear connection (and therefore loyalty) to Germany. The analysis suggests, this credit is instead attributed to actors who are more distanced to the discourse of belonging—and therefore less controversial in debate of belonging—or those who clearly belong to Germany. Here especially visual cues like appearance or audible hints like names are frequently used, which are easily decodable indicators for the audience. This is the basis of the evaluation and the foundation of the discussion of the players in the football TV coverage. It results in two groups of players with Turkish roots: Firstly, those who contribute and are clearly associated to Germany. These are evaluated in terms of their Germanness, which generally puts them in a positive light. Secondly, there are those who are silenced, judged and depicted predominantly negatively. This occurs through a focus on negative impacts this particular group of players have on the team, through for example their passiveness or loss of the ball, or their poor impact on the game by being signaled as responsible for a poor team performance or not being skilled enough. The simultaneous neglect of their positive contributions and value to the team and the match in this discussion, reinforces and strengthens this overall negative image. Interestingly, apart from the one somewhat stereotypical comment towards Atakan Karazor, discourses relating to the minorities religious belonging don’t seem to be of large significance in the minority’s depiction in these football broadcasts. This is contrary to the increased attention payed to the religious marker in other media and parts of society in Germany (De Genova, 2015).

5.3. Discussion of findings

The essence of highlight shows is to be concise and only focus on relevant events of the game. Therefore, the type and amount of information is greatly dependent on what happens on the field and the involvement of the investigated target group of players of Turkish descent. Considering the highly condensed but limited stream of information, nuances and connotations become increasingly important. This results in most of the gathered insights relating to subtle framings, and the focus on the use of particular language that convey ideas and insights into particular discourses through linguistic tools such as exaggeration or sarcasm and the direction or diverging of attention. On an aggregate level, these insights provide valuable ideas and understandings of the discourses relating to integration, identity, and othering that can partly be explained by concepts of whiteness and Germanness within German televised football.

As the previously discussed results highlight, blatant, vulgar racist remarks seem to have disappeared from football commenting. In line with findings by other scholars (e.g. Billings, 2012), no defaming or insulting on a racial or ethnic basis was found, presenting the illusion of a 'racially enlightened' era of sports reporting (Hylton, 2008). Similar to the suppression of racialized discourses in Germany observed by Müller (2011) and Tißberger (2005), this was to be expected but by no means presents the whole story. The investigated programs revealed substantial evidence to suggest that stereotypes, ethnicity and belonging are still a large part of sports reporting in Germany - specifically relating to discussions of football players of Turkish descent. This is just discussed and presented on a more covert, subtle level. Similar to Billings et al. (2018), ideas of success and failure are expressed through differing language employed for players of different ethnicities, giving insights into an already established symbolic order (Desmarais & Bruce, 2010). Within Germany, there is ongoing negotiation about who should belong to the German society and who is different, which seems largely based on performance as well as implicit predefined definitions of character, attitude and qualities. Such negotiations have been observed on various levels of society. In the investigated broadcast, there appears to be an underlying discourse that 'others' non-White minorities such as the Turkish-ethnic group. This is evident, for instance, in the large efforts made to attribute positive impacts of the minority players to others or outside factors. This subtle 'othering' found in the investigated hegemonic discourses surrounding players of Turkish origin, can partly be explained with whiteness, a discourse which consists of stereotypical portrayals related to (especially) non-White minority groups. It shapes the discourses and biases what is perceived as good and bad, desired or unwanted as well as who belongs and who is different.

5.4. Theoretical contribution

The theoretical contribution of this this research is to show how players of Turkish descent are represented and how a process of othering takes place in and through televised football in Germany. In the investigated broadcasts, this othering indicates that a discourse of whiteness seems to operate in football. This research conceptualizes whiteness as a discourse that privileges one group over another. Through the framing and the language employed, as explained earlier, the hegemonic discourse diverges attention and positive depictions away from the minority (Helms, 1993; Powell, 2000). The Turkish ethnic group is contrasted against underlying, mostly unconscious ideals that are associated with White Germanness, and distanced as the 'other'. The predominantly White-male commentators, along with the rest of the staff at the broadcasters have complete control over the depictions of the actions and athletes on the field. Players with Turkish roots did not get to speak for themselves, unless they have previously been clearly distinguished as German.

This reinforces the impression of a raceless broadcast, while opposing views to this German rooted conceptualization of belonging are silenced and an explicit discussion of the representation of the Turkish minority in football is suppressed. If the players of the Turkish minority contribute in a good manner and a connection to their Germanness can be established, they are seen as belonging, otherwise they are relatively often separated or ignored. It is in line with Mesut Özil's accusations towards the media that were discussed earlier in the thesis. Similar to his observations, players of Turkish origin are promoted as German in case of success—and demoted and made responsible for poor team performances when things don't go so well.

The analysis provided insights into the heavily under researched area of sports reporting within Germany. This 'othering' present in the hegemonic discourse found within the commentary—which may be used by Whites and non-Whites alike—seems to provide the foundation of all discussion and judgement on the program and seems to be implicated with discourses of whiteness. This becomes visible through subtle inequalities and biases in the framing and positioning of players of Turkish descent (Mastro et al., 2012). The focus on discourses of ethnicity and culture rather than the racial Black/White discourse that has often been used in content analyses in other contexts such as the US, also contributes to updating the academic knowledge to 21st century sports reporting and cultural racism.

5.5. Conclusion

Based on this research, sport reporters in Germany are clearly not at the frontline of disconfirming stereotypes. The misconception of post-racial sports reporting through the—also in this research observed—perception of absent obvious stereotypes is a 'false security'. It is ironic that many see sports as a paradigm of an ideally integrated society (Anderson, 1996). It results in the suppression of a discussion relating to the problems of racial bias in coverage that go beyond obvious stereotypes in sports reporting (Billings, 2012). The discourse relating to race and ethnicity and to manifestations of belonging is still vastly dynamic and under constant negotiation and reassessment of who belongs and who doesn't. The findings indicate that the hegemonic discourse in televised football seems to 'other' players of Turkish descent, that can partly be explained with whiteness. Those of Turkish origin are constructed relatively often in negative terms of their contributions to the team. As language "offers a means of storing stereotypic beliefs at a collective, consensual level" (Stangor & Schaller, 1996, p.11), the presence, reaffirming and application of this reporting spreads, reassures and manifests such racialized/ethnicized beliefs in society. The circulation of these beliefs reasserts the standard which provides privileges and advantages to the

majority group, that are practically unfelt and invisible to those that benefit from them (Abby, 2008; Dyer, 2005).

If progress can be made by addressing the situation and encouraging a reflection of the discourse about race and ethnicity in sports—particularly concerning the Turkish minority in Germany, but also others—then the actual problem of racism in sports may someday be addressed, rather than just suppressed and made increasingly fragile (Anderson, 1996). As Blaut (1992) puts it: “[E]ven if all of the roots are torn out, the vine will not wither: it will grow other roots, a new theory of racism, unless racism is attacked, not as theory but as practice” (p.298). Even though racism may be something that can’t be completely eradicated in sports or society, recognition of the problem and commitment to ethical solutions can yield progress. The problem nowadays often still is that while football is idealized as a microcosm of society, racial problems have been, and continue to be swept aside as nothing unique and the problem of the individual (Shropshire, 1996). The famous ‘few bad apples’ (Wingard, 2017). Addressing the problem in sports can be a start to improve the problem of racism in society at large (Anderson, 1996). Here, this research provided an important step towards a critical reflection on the discourses relevant in the immensely popular sports reporting in Germany, especially focusing on the country’s largest minority attracting most attention from society, politics and media. Sport commentators, who are the primarily analyzed gatekeepers to provide insights into media depictions of athletes with Turkish roots for this research, are instrumental in directing viewers toward specific understandings of the on-field action. These however have been frequently observed to ‘other’ by frame the action on the field according to a subtle, potentially unconscious worldview tangled up in ideas of whiteness and negotiations of belonging and Germanness that sometimes even rely on unreflexive use of stereotypes as a way to dramatize and connect with audiences (Desmarais & Bruce, 2008).

This thesis concludes that it is necessary in German to bring the suppressed discourse relating to racism and whiteness back into public sphere, as the shift towards subtle cultural racism needs to be acknowledged rather than seen as a victory over racism as a whole. When even the ‘integration’ institutions, that public broadcasters claim to be, are infiltrated with this institutionalized bias, it is time to address the problem and really reflect on preconceptions and ideas about this ethnic group and open our eyes to this new world of cultural racism. It is exactly the institutionalized distribution of ‘othering’ that seems tangled up in a discourse of whiteness that makes it so toxic. Racism is a pandemic, just like the current corona virus, that is toxic and largely invisible. It can only be fought on a collective level through an active reflection on the origins of power imbalance and stereotypes and continuous awareness of the problems. The current global discussions of anti-racism originating from movements like Black Lives Matter, provide momentum and societal and political will to bring about change and reflect on biases and inequalities, also in

Germany. Football is vastly emotional, enjoys a high standing by the German public and is frequently positioned as a microcosm of society. As much as the sport yields an arena of definition and division, highlighted in this thesis, it has the potential to provide a space for the otherwise suppressed discussions of the problems and bring about change that can reach beyond the sport itself.

5.6. Limitations and further research

One limitation to this research was the sudden outbreak and rapid spread of the Corona virus COVID-19, as has already been mentioned in the methodology section of this paper. The unequal representation of the two different formats resulting from the mitigation of the problem need to be addressed. As the formats differ in their set up and focus, the *Aktuelle Sportstudio* being more talk-show style with studio guests, interviews and discussion rounds, other vital insights about the general, more informal discourse relating to player representation, perception and discussion fall short. This unequal availability of data resulted in the analysis of this research focusing very specifically on highlight show commenting, as this is the core structure of the ARD's *Sportschau*. While this is the more popular of the two programs, it only shows half of the picture of public broadcast depiction of athletes with Turkish descent. As the *Sportschau* also dedicates almost half their airtime on the 2nd and 3rd tier of German football, these took up a larger proportion of the analysis and therefore impacted the results. While the diversity of games and players involved in the analysis was increased through this wider scope—which can be seen as aiding reliability of the results—the depth of the research which the 1. Bundesliga focused ZDF broadcast would have provided fell short.

Additionally, the findings of this research should be backed up with research into audience perceptions to grasp the understanding of those targeted and under influence of this narrative on the other side of the screen, the audience. This could yield a better understanding of the impact the biases presented in this research have on the consumers, as well as potential preferences for segregating, non-objective reporting as proposed by Desmarais and Bruce (2010) or Mastro, et al. (2012). Commentators are instrumental in directing viewers toward specific understandings of the on-field action. These however seem to be infiltrated by institutionalized biases as presented in this research and various other scholars (e.g. Desmarais & Bruce, 2008). Analyzing how these are perceived, noticed or even demanded (Raunsbjerg & Sand, 1998) in society is crucial to contextualize findings of this research and to then be able to bring about change and combat the roots of such biases at all fronts.

Furthermore, research into the production of the program, with the help of interviews or surveys could provide insights into the sources of the previously presented biases and provide insights to mitigate and prevent them. The homogeneity of the White-male dominated field of

sports journalism has been identified by many scholars (Mastro et al., 2012) as a crucial field of investigation in need of reflexivity. Addy (2008) suggests that before we can start to address cultural racism “it may be useful to examine some of the more specific ways in which cultural racism and White privilege manifest [...] and take anti-racist action at individual, institutional, and cultural levels” (Addy, 2008, p.20). Not knowing enough about audience perception and program production is a limit the conclusions drawn by this research and their reliability. As highlighted previously, these could contrast and complement the findings presented here and include new perspectives and help get a 360° overview of things.

Also, further research could target the live broadcast of Bundesliga games provided by pay TV broadcasters Sky, DAZN, Eurosport or Amazon. The highlight-shows investigated in this research are produced with less pressure of immediacy, compared to live matches. According to the ARD, for the production of the programs all scenes in the matches are coded live, but the cutting of the footage and recording of the audio happens post-match with time to write a script (Sportschau, 2020). As the matches have already happened, comments and discussion are likely to be more reflexive and less emotional. There is time for reporters to watch the footage, reflect on what they want to say and then record it as many times over as they want. The live games provide grounds for more honest insights into the discourses, language and power dynamics as discussion and evaluation of the players occurs ‘on the spot’. Discussion is more spontaneous and potentially a more real reflection of preconceptions. More data and a more detailed discussion of singular players might also be available due to the 90-minute length of a full game, compared to the 15-minute game recaps. Such research is especially relevant as global viewership and license prices for the Bundesliga have been exploding over the last years and various new providers have entered the streaming market (Koutroumanides et al., 2019).

A limitation, and at the same time a suggestion for further research is also the sampling criteria used in this research. Here, criteria to be included in the sample were drawn purely on citizenship of players and being an active player of any of the football teams of Germany’s top three football leagues. In reality, though, lines of prejudice, bias and stereotypes are not purely based on the legal boundaries of citizenship. Especially since this particular minority Turkish descent is already in its third generation, a significant proportion are legally considered only German. This, however, does not exclude them from being perceived as a foreigner non-the-less due to markers of their heritage such as looks, name as well as cultural and religious practices. Further research should aim to include or even specifically focus on this group to gain insights into their treatment and (media) discourses concerning their belonging, Germanness and ethnicity. Players like Schalke 04’s Levent Mercan who has Turkish roots, but only German citizenship would be an example of such player.

Lastly, this research observed that apart from players with Turkish roots, players of Asian descent received specific attention by sports journalists. Comments portraying a foul by the South Korean Lee of Karlsruhe SC as a “Bruce-Lee memorial kick” (Karlsruhe SC – Holstein Kiel, 1.2.2020), mentioned already in the Results section, is only one of such examples. The Asian ethnic group carries similar markers of difference like name, or appearance as the Turkish minority analyzed in this research. Such obvious visual and audible differences increase the likelihood of bias and prejudice. It has also been observed that football clubs inside and beyond Germany are increasingly aiming to expand to the emerging market and vast viewership in Asia with the help of not only sponsors but also publicity trips and tournaments in the continent. Increased recruitment efforts of players of Asian descent have also been observed, aimed to attract this prospect audience in China, South Korea or Japan (Connel, 2018; Zhang & Pitts, 2018). Therefore, these players are likely to increasingly play a role in German football.

This increased striving for opening and inclusion of the emerging Asian markets by teams is contrasted by political tensions and fears of globalization and cultural loss within society (Shambough, 2018). Teams and fans are drifting apart on this issue, as the former are driven by economic incentives, while a portion of spectators observe a sell-out and loss of their culture. Asian investors have also heavily invested in the vastly profitable world of professional football, which furthered these perceptions (Connell, 2018). The global shift of power and influence from the West towards the East—observed and heavily discussed in politics and media—as well as a rising distrust towards the Asian community through the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a renewed outbreak of prejudice and racism targeted at people with markers of Asian heritage. The subtle nature of biases and prejudices disguised in sports discourses in Germany—as has been presented in this research—make Germany a particularly interesting case study. Other major leagues (like the Premier League) where financial influences from China have been more visible, could also be a relevant target of such research. These can yield helpful insights for both academia and society to fight racism and understand and reflect on positions of power and exclusion.

6. References – Post-game analysis

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7. Appendix – Game statistics

Appendix A - List of all relevant games analyzed

Game	League	Score	Player 1	Player 2	Player 3
30.11.2019 - Gameday 13					
Dresden - Kiel	2. Bundesliga	1:2	Sallih Özcan (K)*	Baris Arik (D)	
Schalke - Union	1. Bundesliga	2:1	Suat Serdar (S)	Ozan Kabak (S)	
Hoffenheim - Düsseldorf	1. Bundesliga	1:1	Kaan Ayhan (D)		
Großaspach - Magdeburg	3. Liga	1:2	Onur Ünlüçifci (G)		
7.12.2019 - Gameday 14					
Kiel - Osnabrück	2. Bundesliga	2:4	Sallih Özcan (K)		
Augsburg - Mainz	1. Bundesliga	2:1	Levin Öztunali (M)		
Uerdingen - Rostock	3. Liga	4:1	Selim Gündüz (U)	Tanju Öztürk (R)	
14.12.2019 - Gameday 15					
Bayern II - Kaiserslautern	3. Liga	1:3	Meret Yilmaz (B)		
Mainz - Dortmund	1. Bundesliga	0:4	Levin Öztunali (M)		
Bayern - Bremen	1. Bundesliga	6:1	Ömer Toprak (B)	Nuri Sahin (B)	
21.12.2019 - Gameday 17					
Vi. Köln - Rostock	3. Liga	1:5	Tanju Öztürk (R)		
Darmstadt - Hamburg	2. Bundesliga	2:2	Serdar Dursun (D)		
Mainz - Leverkusen	1. Bundesliga	0:1	Levin Öztunali (M)	Kerem Demirbay (L)	
Schalke - Freiburg	1. Bundesliga	2:2	Suat Serdar (S)	Ozan Kabak (S)	Ahmet Kutucu (S)
18.1.2020 - Gameday 18					

Schalke - Gladbach	1. Bundesliga	2:0	Suat Serdar (S)	Ozan Kabak (S)	Ahmet Kutucu (S)
Freiburg - Mainz	1. Bundesliga	1:2	Levin Öztunali (M)		
Düsseldorf - Bremen	1. Bundesliga	0:1	Ömer Toprak (B)	Nuri Sahin (B)	
25.1.2020 - Gameday 19					
Duisburg - Ingolstadt	3. Liga	1:1	Fathi Kaya (I)	Ahmet Engin (D)	
Magdeburg - Zwickau	3. Liga	1:2	Ali Odabas (Z)	Can Coskun (Z)	
Union - Augsburg	1. Bundesliga	2:0	Yunus Malli (U)		
1.2.2020 - Gameday 20					
St.Pauli - Stuttgart	2. Bundesliga	1:1	Atakan Karazor (S)	Ersin Zehir (P)	
Düsseldorf - Frankfurt	1. Bundesliga	1:1	Kaan Ayhan (D)		
Augsburg - Bremen	1. Bundesliga	2:1	Ömer Toprak (B)		
Hoffenheim - Leverkusen	1. Bundesliga	2:1	Kerem Demirbay (L)		
Dortmund - Union	1. Bundesliga	5:0	Yunus Malli (U)	Emre Can (D)	
Mainz - Bayern	1. Bundesliga	1:3	Levin Öztunali (M)		
8.2.2020 - Gameday 21					
Duisburg - Braunschweig	3. Liga	1:1	Ahmet Engin (D)		
1860 München - Mannheim	3. Liga	1:1	Efkan Bekiroglu (Mü)	Mete Celik (M)	
Kaiserslautern - Münster	3. Liga	1:1	Hikmet Ciftci (K)	Lukas Gottwald (K)	Seref Özcan (M)
Hamburg - Karlsruhe	2. Bundesliga	2:0	Burak Camoglu (K)		

Hertha - Mainz	1. Bundesliga	1:3	Levin Öztunali (M)		
Schalke - Paderborn	1. Bundesliga	1:1	Suat Serdar (S)	Ozan Kabak (S)	Ahmet Kutucu (S)
Bremen - Union	1. Bundesliga	0:2	Ömer Toprak (B)	Yunus Malli (U)	Nuri Sahin (B)

15.2.2020 - Gameday 22

Magdeburg - Chemnitz	3. Liga	1:1	Davud Tuma (C)		
Dortmund - Frankfurt	1. Bundesliga	4:0	Emre Can (D)		
Union - Leverkusen	1. Bundesliga	2:3	Yunus Malli (U)		
Leipzig - Bremen	1. Bundesliga	3:0	Ömer Toprak (B)	Nuri Sahin (B)	

22.2.2020 - Gameday 23

Stuttgart - Regensburg	2. Bundesliga	2:0	Atakan Karazor (S)		
Kiel - Heidenheim	2. Bundesliga	0:1	Sallih Özcan (K)		
Freiburg - Düsseldorf	1. Bundesliga	0:2	Kenan Karaman (D)	Kaan Ayhan (D)	

28.2.2020 - Gameday 24

1860 München - Chemnitz	3. Liga	4:3	Efkan Bekiroglu (Mü)	Davud Tuma (C)	
Magdeburg - Jena	3. Liga	6:2	Aytac Sulu (J)		
Darmstadt - Heidenheim	2. Bundesliga	2:0	Serdar Dursun (D)		
Düsseldorf - Hertha	1. Bundesliga	3:3	Kenan Karaman (D)	Kaan Ayhan (D)	
Mainz - Paderborn	1. Bundesliga	2:0	Levin Öztunali (M)		
Dortmund - Freiburg	1. Bundesliga	1:0	Emre Can (D)		

7.3.2020 - Gameday 25

Darmstadt - Bochum	2. Bundesliga	0:0	Serdar Dursun (D)	
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16.5.2020 - Gameday 26

Dortmund - Schalke	1. Bundesliga	4:0	Emre Can (D)	Suat Serdar (S)
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Düsseldorf - Paderborn	1. Bundesliga	0:0	Kaan Ayhan (D)	Kenan Karaman (D)
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Regensburg - Kiel	2. Bundesliga	2:2	Sallih Özcan (K)	
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* Letter in the brackets shows team belonging of the specific player in the game.