

## Summary

What does it mean to be called an “immigrant” or a “Turkish immigrant”? Although they are usually nothing less than an expression of difference which reflects the given balance of power in our everyday society and tend to therefore ultimately result in discrimination, terms like these are frequently used in various discussions and fields, especially when such expressions are used outside of an obvious relevant context. The same also applies to expressions and terms used to address assumed or attributed ethnicity, which occurs frequently in blanket descriptions; for example, when people refer to “Turkish or Arabic children”, without referring to “English or Spanish children”. It is also obvious when talking about the well-known football player Mesut Özil and mentioning his Turkish ancestry, while not mentioning that his team mate in the German national soccer team, Sami Khedira, is of Tunisian descent.

The use of an ethnic ascription results in the creation of a subject, which in turn facilitates the addition of characteristics to further describe this subject. In observing ethnicity, this appears to be fundamental in associating it with a lower social class, therefore triggering negative connotations towards the addressee. As this labelling emphasises supposed differences and therefore creates a disparity that meets with subjugation, devaluation of certain foreign languages or jargon while also restricting representation, calling someone an “immigrant” or even a “Turkish immigrant” is a practice used in social distinction and differentiation.

Starting out from these considerations, this study explores two concepts of ethnicity. They show that ethnicity is essential for the creation of boundaries, and that belonging to a certain ethnic group is determined not only by self-ascriptions but also by third-party ascriptions. Following this argumentation the second concept suggests that “groups” are only individual ideas and therefore not real, which thus enables different constructions of ethnic identity. Accordingly, multiple and hybrid ethnic identities can *inter alia* be the result of individual constructions, even though these “new” forms of ethnicity are not socially accepted.

To understand how ethnic identity emerges on the individual level, this study analyses stories of language acquisition told by “Turkish immigrants”. Several studies back the hypothesis that speaking any language is strongly connected to ethnicity: second language acquisition and identity are mutually dependent on each other. Studies in multilingual areas as Quebec and Wales

show that ethnic identity is more associated with language than with nationality or “culture”. Language also serves as criteria of exclusion: only those who speak a language “properly” are allowed to make use of the associated ethnic identity.

By means of narratives, this study reproduces languages acquisition processes and shows individual cognitive perspectives on ethnic identity and the accompanying social processes. Four different ways have been found to illustrate how ethnic identity emerges: 1. as a primary and enduring dimension, 2. as a multiple dimension, 3. as an unmarked dimension, and 4. as a self-determined dimension. This leads to the following conclusion: ethnic identity emerges through individual experience (which is often greatly influenced by discrimination). It can change with time, and multiple ethnic identities and hybridity are also possible. This result disagrees with common concepts of ascription as well as the commonplace usage of certain terms and it questions certain practices and orders of difference.