Renouncing German Citizenship

Analysis of citizenship value assessment under the conditions of

the Option Model in Germany

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Submitted to the Central European University

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

Budapest, Hungary

2015

Abstract

In 2000, Germany introduced the so-called "Option Model", which forced 2nd generation migrant newborns who automatically became dual citizens at birth, to choose which citizenship they want to keep after turning 18 years old. The Option Model was largely abolished in a new citizenship law reform in September 2014. In this thesis, I want to find out what the system did to the people affected by it in the years that it was in practice. How did this forced choice influence identification among young adults with Germany and/or the country of their parents?

The political narrative behind the Option Model is that maintaining a second citizenship is 'the last barrier' between second generation migrants and full identification with and loyalty towards Germany. I want to contest this narrative by arguing that in fact, the Option Model formed a hindrance to identification with Germany for at least a large part of those affected by it. Even though these youngsters mostly identified with Germany as their home, they at the same time developed an attitude of rebellion towards the German state. This attitude largely disappeared after dual citizenship became allowed in the 2014 law revision.

Acknowledgements

The first person to thank for not only this thesis, but also this study and my entire experience living two years abroad, is my mother. She gave me the support that I needed to keep going, even on the moments when I would have rather gone home. Without her, none of this would have been possible.

I would also like to thank God, for staying close to me during these two difficult years, in which I was often in an environment where my faith was questioned or even ridiculed.

In taking the (for me rather difficult) decision to come to Budapest in the first place, I received support from several people. I would like to thank Suzanne, who supported my decision from the beginning until the end. Also, I want to thank Friso and Maarten, for the endless talks we had that summer trip in 2013, where you convinced me in the last moments that it was a good idea to take the step and go to Hungary. Last but not least, I also want to thank program coordinator Daniel Rapp, who had to answer a lot of my questions and ensure me dozens of times that everything would be fine, before I finally decided to accept the offer.

During the process of writing this thesis, I felt a lot of support from my supervisor Szabolcs Pogonyi. He was enthusiastic about my topic from the beginning, but he also had more confidence in me than I had myself. Some CEU-teachers tend to use the strange and ineffective 'motivational technique' of constantly telling you that you are behind schedule. Thankfully I can say that Szabolcs used the opposite technique on me. Whenever I panicked about combining the thesis with all the other work activities I had planned for the month of May, he told me I would be fine and had nothing to worry about.

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During the research process, I was supported by Anuscheh Farahat, a German citizenship scholar who took the time to discuss my research with me several times. I would like to thank her, and all the people who helped me find interviewees, including again Friso and Maarten, but also Henrice, my brother Luuk, and my friend and colleague Dennis, who often seemed more motivated to finish my thesis than I was myself. Last of all, I want to thank everyone who participated in my research, for opening up to me and sharing their (sometimes very personal) stories. I am grateful for the trust and hope I did you all justice in this thesis.

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Introduction

In 2000, Germany introduced a stripped down form of *ius soli* into its citizenship law. A child of foreign parents could acquire German citizenship under certain conditions[1]. However, dual citizenship remained prohibited. This implied a paradox, as kids from Iranian or Turkish parents born on German territory would automatically become dual citizens at birth. The 2000 citizenship law revision therefore introduced a solution: the so-called "Option Model", which forced 2nd generation migrant newborns who automatically became dual citizens at birth, to choose which citizenship they want to keep after turning 18 years old.

The Option Model was largely abolished in a new citizenship law reform in September 2014. In this thesis, I want to find out what the system did to the people affected by it in the years that it was in practice. How did this forced choice influence identification among young adults with Germany and/or the country of their parents?

The political narrative behind the Option Model is that maintaining a second citizenship is 'the last barrier' between second generation migrants and full identification with and loyalty towards Germany[2]. I want to contest this narrative in this thesis by arguing that in fact, the Option Model formed a hindrance to identification with Germany for at least a large part of those affected by it. Even though these youngsters mostly identified with Germany as their home, they at the same time developed an attitude of rebellion towards the German state. This attitude largely disappeared after dual citizenship became allowed in the 2014 law revision.

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[1] (Hailbronner, 2012)
[2] (Naumann, 2013)

This topic has not yet been researched in the way I do it – with the focus on qualitative interviews with the people involved, also deliberately including the ones that do not choose for German citizenship (a minority). I hope to add both to the scholarly literature on identitarian aspects of dual citizenship (Yossi Harpaz i.a. researched this topic but in completely different context, and therefore also with different outcomes[3]), and to the literature on forced identification with a host country. Ricky van Oers researched the ways in which citizenship tests influenced identification with the host country[4] – I ask a similar question only focusing on a different policy domain, namely that of dual citizenship & the Option Model.

I will start out this thesis with two chapters of literature review, both with a different purpose. In chapter one, I will try to make every reader aware of the most important facts that will be necessary to understand the following chapters of this thesis. It will contain a historical background of Germany becoming an immigration country, focusing mostly on the Turkish labor migration, and there will also be a section on the recent developments in German citizenship law.

The more argumentative part of my literature review will be in chapter two, where I will deal with the more conceptual and methodological issues of the thesis. In this chapter, I will go into the relevant typologies of (dual) citizenship value assessment, and deal with the question why Turkish citizenship is historically seen as of mostly identitarian value.

What follows is a methodology chapter (chapter 3) in which I will try to take you alongside my personal 'travel of thought' throughout the process of writing this thesis. I use this chapter to explain how this research developed over time, as this influenced some of the choices I made.

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[3] (Harpaz, 2015) & (Harpaz, 2013)
[4] (van Oers, 2014)

Chapter 4 then deals with the first round of interviews with people who chose the non-German citizenship. I will provide details about the conversations and will use that to argue that those that chose Turkish citizenship did it as a sign of protest against the system. In other words: they do identify with 'Germany as their world', and this identification was seen as completely self-evident. But they do not identify with the German state.

In 2011, the German government presented a statistical report conducted by the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), with preliminary statistics on the Option Model. The study, according to government statements, showed its great success: with almost 90% of the people choosing German citizenship, the vast majority of the people "showed their loyalty towards Germany"[5]. In chapter 5 I want to contest the assumption that everyone subjected to the Option Model made a deliberate choice. I will do this by looking a little bit deeper into the BAMF-study, and combine my own critique with that of Falk Lämmermann[6], who wrote a long in-depth analysis of the statistics.

In the sixth chapter, I present my findings taken from the second round of interviews taken after the law changed. According to the original argumentation put forward by the German state, acceptance of dual citizenship supposedly would lead to alienation from Germany, a lower level of identification and as a result, a group of citizens that have dual loyalties and can therefore not fulfill their citizenship duties. I tested this assumption by trying to note changes in the identification of interviewees with Germany after dual citizenship became in fact allowed.

I round up this research with a summary of my main conclusions. Here, I will show that the choice to renounce German citizenship did not mean that these people identified more with

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[5] (Weinmann, Becher, & Babka von Gostomski, 2011)
[6] (Lämmermann, 2011)

Turkey than with Germany. Identification with Germany as 'their country, their world' already existed. Also, forcing a citizenship choice upon young adults led to a huge protest-attitude towards the German state, and therefore was a much bigger hindrance to the development of 'German citizens' than letting them keep the Turkish citizenship. Now that it is allowed, these people can in fact 'fulfill their citizenship duties' by voting with very 'traditional' motives.

CHAPTER 1: Citizenship & Migration from Turkey to Germany

Introduction

The first part of this thesis exists out of two different chapters, both outlining a part of the existing literature on the subject, but also both with a different purpose. The more argumentative part of my literature review will be in chapter two, where I will deal with the more conceptual and methodological issues of the thesis.

In this first chapter, however, I will first describe the historical background of Germany becoming an immigration country, focusing mostly on the Turkish labor migration starting roughly in the 1960's. I will discuss these events alongside from the recent developments in German citizenship law. Altogether, this first chapter's main aim is to make every reader aware of the most important facts that will be necessary to understand the following chapters of this thesis. It is not a complete and extensive account of the topics mentioned in the title of the chapter – only a short summary with highlights relevant to the rest of my research.

Turkish migration to Germany

Although Germany until 2005 described itself as a non-immigration country, this definition became less and less realistic over the past few decades[7]. From the 1960's on, large amounts of guest workers started to migrate to Germany, due to bilateral agreements Germany signed with i.a. Italy, Turkey, Greece, Morocco and Portugal. Initially, the German government expected to benefit a lot from the new labor migrants. This attitude has changed over the years, when the economic situation changed and labor migrants did not remigrate, as was expected by the German government[8].

The Turkish government supported migration towards Germany. In the late 1950's the Turkish labor market was under severe pressure. Stimulating migration was first of all an easy way to release some of that pressure and lower unemployment rates[9]. The remittances that diaspora members send home to their families can be considered a second economic argument[10]. Turkey has been suffering from huge trade deficits ever since the industrialization process, and soon after the first generation of labor migrants had settled in Germany, policy makers became aware of the positive side effects that remittances could have on Turkey's trade balance.

The initial motives for Turkish migrants to move to Germany were also economic. Migrants believed that they could not only earn more money in Germany, but that this would also provide them with a better status in their homeland Turkey, should they get the chance to return there[11]. After they arrived and settled in Germany, the situation of the labor migrants obviously changed. For this settled group, the new main goal became to improve 'the situation of their environment',

[7] (Joppke, 1999)
[8] (Sayari, 1986)
[9] (Sayari, 1986)
[10] (Martin, 1991)
[11] (Sayari, 1986)

as Ayhan Kaya describes it. By this, Kaya means improving their own socioeconomic status, and perhaps those of their relatives back in Turkey[12].

This general motivation can be split up into a couple of things that have proven to be relevant to the Turkish diaspora in Germany. The first of those issues is dual citizenship. Members of the diaspora have always expressed their desire to maintain citizenship in both countries, and this has gotten them into conflict with the governments of both countries[13].

When the Turkish government had provided the labor migrants with many opportunities to work abroad, they initially believed they would return to Turkey[14]. When it became clear that this was not going to happen, the Turkish government for a short period of time tried to withhold Turkish citizenship from diaspora members. This brief struggle over dual citizenship was won by the diaspora: in 1995, the Turkish government allowed dual citizenship for its citizens living abroad.

Germany has traditionally been a country that issues citizenship rights on the principle of *jus sanguinis*. According to Rogers Brubaker, this principle stems from the German 'understanding of nationhood as an essentially ethnocultural fact, prior to and independent of the state'. The fact that German citizenship initially was subnational (people had German nationality but for example Prussian or Bavarian citizenship), therefore has a direct connection to the restrictive citizenship laws nowadays[15].

Christian Joppke on the other hand, points towards the influence of the Nazi-past and a sense of guilt among German politicians on the asylum legislation. In the book *Challenge to the Nation-State,* Joppke analyzes the introduction of the controversial Article 16, which guaranteed the right

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[12] (Kaya & Kentel, 2005) – chapter 4, page 40-59
[13] (Kaya & Kentel, 2005) – chapter 1, page 09-19
[14] (Østergaard-Nielsen, International Migration and Sending Countries, 2003) – page 81-83
[15] (Brubaker, 1992)

of asylum for everyone persecuted on political grounds, and the right of process for all asylum seekers. According to Joppke, this article led to a demographic time bomb, because large groups of people came to Germany and the legal procedures of their applications generally lasted for years[16]. Further on in the book, Joppke together with Virginie Guiraudon argue that the eventual abolishment of Article 16 formed the basis for the relatively high level of rights that non-citizens enjoy in Germany nowadays[17].

This shift in Germany's attitudes towards migrants forms the basis of Randall Hansen's article *Citizenship and Integration in Europe.* In this article, Hansen points out that Germany originally tried to simply 'keep migrants out of the nation' by increasing civic and social rights for non-citizens. Despite the sense of guilt and the relatively loose asylum legislation, the status of being German was preserved for the ethnic ingroup. This, however, led to a new demographic time bomb: the percentage of non-citizen residents in Germany was rising and the German nation itself was decreasing[18].

Therefore, a new strategy emerged. Hansen calls this strategy 'integration *through* citizenship'. One important pillar in this new strategy was the assumption that for migrants, accepting German citizenship over their previous one meant that their integration was completed. Therefore dual citizenship was not allowed, as it symbolized a sign of a failed integration process[19].

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[16] (Joppke, 1998)
[17] (Guiraudon, 1998)
[18] (Hansen, 2003)
[19] (Hansen, 2003)

Since 2000, Germany revised its citizenship law, which i.a. lead to the introduction of a stripped down form of *ius soli*. A child of foreign parents 'acquires German citizenship […] on the condition that one parent has legally had her habitual residence in Germany for eight years and that he or she has been in the possession of a residence permit, an Aufenthaltsberechtigung or an unlimited Aufenthaltserlaubnis for three years.'[20] However, completely in accordance with Hansen's analysis, dual citizenship remained prohibited. This implied a paradox, as kids from Iranian or Turkish parents born on German territory would automatically become dual citizens at birth.

The 2000 citizenship law revision therefore introduced a solution: the so-called "Option Model", which allows 2nd generation migrant newborns to automatically receive German citizenship, regardless of what other citizenship they may be assigned, and allow them to retain both citizenships. At the age of 21, however, they must have made up their minds, otherwise their German citizenship will be revoked at the age of 23.

Ever since its introduction, the Option Model has been criticized, especially by the left wing in German politics. Dual citizenship in general has always been a discussion point dividing the two large parties SPD and CDU. Traditionally, the arguments in this discussion go like this:

CDU wants people to declare their loyalty to the German state. The basic idea behind this is that dual citizenship creates dual loyalties. Therefore, giving up their other citizenship will help these people integrate into the German society[21].

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[20] (Hailbronner, 2012)
[21] (Naumann, 2013)

SPD on the other hand thinks that this system is hindering integration. In their opinion it mostly targets those migrants who are already integrated: people who speak German fluently, who were born and raised in Germany, attended German schools. Choosing between Germany and Turkey was never an issue in their lives, but now this issue is forced upon on them[22].

In the federal elections of 2013, CDU became the largest party, but lost its traditional coalition partner FDP (who did not pass the threshold of 5%). Therefore, CDU and SPD ended up forming a coalition together. As a result of this cooperation, the Option Model was 'partially lifted' in September 2014. Most of the young people originally affected by the model, now do not have to make this decision anymore.

In the article '*One decade of ius soli*', Falk Lämmermann points out that since the original Option Model law was introduced in the year 2000, the first group of kids affected by the model would only turn 18 in 2018. As we now know, the model was already abolished by then. However, this does not mean that the model was never actually in place. Almost 50.000 kids became dual citizens under the so-called 40b StAG law, a transitional arrangement that allowed parents to obtain German citizenship on the basis of *ius soli* for their kids born after January 1st 1990[23].

This means that certain young Turks born in between 1990 and 1995 have in fact been under the influence of the Option Model. They received a letter when they turned 18, stating that they had to choose between their two citizenships. Some of them replied to this letter, some of them did not. Some them managed to keep both of their citizenships until the model was abolished – others lost one. It is this group of people that I focus on in this thesis.

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[22] (Naumann, 2013)
[23] (Lämmermann, 2011)

CHAPTER 2: Value Assessment of Dual Citizenship

Part 1: Different aspects of citizenship

In the first part of this chapter, I will sketch the theoretical framework behind a typology that will be central to my thesis. This typology is meant to display the different aspects and values that citizenship can have for the individual. It can be seen as a simply dichotomy between identitarian aspects of citizenship on the one hand, and instrumental aspects on the other.

In order to clearly explain where my terminology and definitions are coming from, as well as to give a brief overview of the scholarly debate over the different aspects of citizenship, I will outline some important theories below. In the end, I will show which definitions I will borrow in this thesis to build up a typology suitable for this research.

Perhaps the most well-known and influential typology answering to the question 'what does citizenship consist of?' comes from T. H. Marshall. In his book *Class, Citizenship and Social Development* he developed a historical typology in which he focused on the relationship between citizenship and class inequality. In this book, Marshall landed on three different kind of rights that citizenship could entail: civil rights, political rights and social rights[24].

By civil rights, Marshall meant rights such as the right to freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to hold property. The second kind of rights he described, political rights, mainly meant the right to vote and in some cases also the right to stand in elections – although these two did not always come at the same time. The third kind of right were social rights, which included welfare

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[24] (Marshall, 1965)

state provisions – in other words the right to be able to live according to certain minimal standards stemming from the society one lives in[25]. This last type is of course important in Marshall's work, as he emphasized the relationship between citizenship and class.

Marshall went on to develop a theory about the order in which these rights emerged. However, this theory is not relevant for our current purposes. More important for us is the fact that his starting point was a citizenship that entailed legal, instrumental rights for the individual. Identitarian aspects were not part of his theory[26].

Another good example of a theory with a specific focus on legal rights, is the book *Genealogies of Citizenship* by Margaret Somers. In this book, Somers basically combines Marshall's theory with Hannah Arendts concept of 'the right to have rights'. Citizenship is seen not as a bundle of rights itself, but as the right to have those rights. This means citizenship as a kind of human rights - not any more identitarian then to prove that someone is a human being[27].

This specific focus on the legal aspects of citizenship that Marshall and also Somers have, has often been criticized. Bryan Turner, for instance, argues that these civil, political and social rights can in reality not be separated from the actions they lead to[28]. Following up on Turner's critique, Engin Isin and Patricia Wood created a two-way typology in which they clustered the rights described by Marshall together as a 'bundle of rights and duties' – as they convincingly point out, some of the rights also lead to duties – and set them across from 'a set of practices' that can be either symbolic, cultural or economic[29].

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[25] (Marshall, 1965)
[26] (Marshall, 1965)
[27] (Somers, 2008)
[28] (Turner, 1997)
[29] (Isin & Wood, 1999) page 5

This typology is a first step in the direction of acknowledging identitarian aspects of citizenship. The two authors see their two categories not as exclusive but as highly related to each other, because "those who do not possess the […] rights to exercise such citizenship would be denied to become […] a member of the polity in the first place." Or, as they quote from Turner: "The sociological and politico-legal definitions of citizenship are […] constitutive."[30]

Most closely related to this concept of membership is the theory provided by Kymlicka and Norman in *Citizenship in culturally diverse societies.* They even award a third specific place in their typology to this membership status, which they call 'civic virtue'. This civic virtue is the link between 'status' (comparable to the bundle of rights and duties) and 'identity'[31]. Ricky van Oers adopts the same three-way typology, explaining this membership middle category as the moral obligation that citizens have to perform certain democratic duties, such as voting in elections[32].

One could also add Joseph Carens to this list – he speaks about a legal, a psychological and a political dimension of citizenship. The legal dimension basically covers the 'Marshallian'-side of the coin, whereas the psychological and political part both entail identitarian aspects[33].

Nils Witte used the terms 'legal membership' and 'symbolic membership' for his research on naturalization intentions of Turkish residents in Hamburg, Germany. The following quote gives a good impression of what he means by those terms: [when it comes to citizenship], "individual preferences […] are categorized into those covering aspects of symbolic membership and those covering aspects of legal membership. **The symbolic category refers to sense of belonging,**

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[30] (Turner, Postmodern Culture / Modern Citizens, 1994)
[31] (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000)
[32] (van Oers, 2014) – page 15-19
[33] (Carens, 2000)

peers, and relations with the majority group. The legal one covers genuine rights and expected material benefits or costs."[34] *(emphasis added).*

In the end, we see that many scholars have tried to capture the same features, and the same differences and distinctions between them, only with divergent terminology. These differences in terminology can partially be explained by the different purposes that authors had for splitting up the term 'citizenship'. One can be looking at citizenship from the state's perspective, and someone else from a perspective of minority rights. In this thesis, the main purpose is to focus on the different kinds of value that citizenship can have for the individual. I will generally use the definitions such as Witte described them. However, since his research purposes were obviously different than mine, I have to make slight adaptations.

Witte focused on naturalization, and the consequent boundary crossing, and therefore he used the identity – rights dichotomy in the context of membership. My research deals with a group of people who possess two citizenships but have to choose which one to keep – therefore the focus is on decision making and value assessment. I have chosen to use the terms identitarian value (roughly overlapping with Witte's "symbolic" category) and instrumental value (roughly overlapping with the "legal" one). In the paragraph above (about Witte), I highlighted the sentences that provide the definitions I will borrow to determine which aspects my categories refer to.

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[34] (Witte, 2014)

Part 2:   Identitarian value for Turkish Citizenship

In recent years, many scholars have worked with the struggle between identity and instrumental rights. An interesting note, however, is that Rogers Brubaker does not see the conflict between these two terms as strong as for example Witte does. According to Brubaker, there is not much of a conflict going on in modern times, as identitarian value seems to have won the fight over instrumental value hands down. "The politics of citizenship today is […] a *politics of identity*, not a *politics of interest* (in the restricted, materialist sense). […] The central question is not 'who gets what?' but rather 'who is what?'."[35]

In this second part of the chapter I will focus on a rather small but relevant doses of scholarly literature, which provides historical perspectives on value assessment of Turkish citizenship. I will start out with the broader historical theories that focus on how Turks generally perceive their citizenship status. Afterwards, I will draw closer to my own case study, by analyzing some of the sociological researches done on citizenship value assessment among Turkish migrants in Germany and other western European countries.

There is a general bias in the literature suggesting that the majority of Turkish citizens consider their citizenship status to be of mainly identitarian value. In the book *Citizenship in a Global World*, several authors describe past, present and future of Turkish citizenship legislation – and its consequences on the way it was perceived. Hasan Kahraman there states that in Turkey, "citizenship has never contained in itself the language of individual rights and freedoms. On the contrary, it has always functioned in the service of the *nation-building process* as a cultural and legal code for the historical and discursive construction of the *Turkish national identity*." Kahraman

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[35] (Brubaker, 1992) page 182

goes on to explain that throughout history, citizenship in Turkey always entailed more duties towards the state than rights and freedoms. Therefore, he argues, it is difficult for Turks to associate their citizenship with instrumental values still today[36].

Ahmet Içduygu subscribes to these conclusions in a later chapter. He agrees with Kahraman that in Turkey "The emphasis has been on duties rather than rights", and labels this understanding of citizenship as *civic-republican*, a term used by several authors in this book. Later on, Içduygu also states that while individual rights were non-existing, the notion of 'patriotism' and 'citizenship identity' have always been relevant in the Turkish case. Içduygu however does not link the two statements, nor explains why these perceptions exist[37].

For such an explanation we have to go to yet another chapter, written by Ayşe Kadioglu. She provides the most convincing explanation of the often mentioned civic-republican understanding of citizenship that is prevalent in Turkey. Through this explanation, she also provides an argument for the historical link between Turkish citizenship and identitarian values, additional to the one provided by Kahraman.

Kadioglu refers to Adrian Oldfield's book on civic-republicanism: *Citizenship and Community.* Oldfield writes here that a civic-republican understanding "addresses much more cogently the twin themes of citizenship and community." Citizenship in this understanding is much more than the legal rights that it entails – it is a practice, something you act upon. Not acting means not being a good citizen[38].

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[36] (Kahraman, 2005)
[37] (Içduygu, 2005) page 204-208
[38] (Oldfield, 1990)

"The Turkish notion of citizenship […] evolved in a manner that is more akin to the civic-republican tradition," Kadioglu argues, and "Accordingly, Turkish citizenship is based more on 'duties' than on 'rights'." Kadioglu claims that this forms the basis for the current value assessment of Turkish citizenship through the following line of argument: Possessing and practicing Turkish citizenship will make you part of the common good. It may not provide you with many personal rights, but following your duties will make you a 'good Turk'; in other words, it provides you with a positive self-understanding. Following from this, Kadioglu recognizes "predominance of an identity politics in Turkey" when it comes to citizenship[39].

Taking a more sociological approach, Ayhan Kaya and Ferhat Kentel draw the conclusion that Turks living in western European countries such as Germany and France do not really care about maintaining instrumental rights in Turkey. Property rights are at least still somewhat relevant, because many still own an apartment in Turkey. However, the Turkish government recently eased the legislation on this topic[40]. When it comes to Turkish politics, the vast majority of Kaya & Kentel's interviewee sample is not at all interested.

It must be noted that Kaya & Kentel pose these questions without taking citizenship into consideration. Their research focuses on migrants from Turkish origin currently living in Germany or France – regardless of whether they carry Turkish, German, French, or dual citizenships. Nils Witte, mentioned earlier, deals with the same issue in a different way. He does not really draw a hard conclusion on whether instrumental rights are or are not relevant to Turks in Germany; instead, he tests (and confirms) the hypothesis that those Turks who do claim to care about Turkish politics are less inclined to naturalize.

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[39] (Kadioglu, 2005)
[40] (Witte, 2014) – page 8

In this thesis, I would like to contribute to this literature by extending this type of research into a different focus group: second generation migrants subject to the former Option Model. A more detailed justification of my methodology will follow later in this chapter.

Part 3:   Dual citizenship & identity

The researches in the previous sub-chapter focused either on Turks living in Turkey[41] or on first generation Turkish migrants considering to naturalize[42]. In this thesis, Option Model youngsters who are born with dual citizenship play the central role. It is therefore important to also take a look at value assessment in the case of dual citizenship. This is what I will do in this third part of the chapter.

First, I briefly deal with Yossi Harpaz' theory on obtaining dual citizenship, and explain why his claim that the value of a second citizenship is purely instrumental, does not apply to my case study. After that, I will turn to a debate that is highly relevant to the case of the German-Turks. This is what I would call the debate of dual loyalty. Politicians often claim that allowing their citizens to hold on to another citizenship will undermine the cohesion of the state. I will outline pro and contra arguments for such claims, and explain how I am going to deal with this topic in my own research.

In an attempt to describe value assessment of the obtainment of a second citizenship (for example through ancestry), Yossi Harpaz combined data from the Citizenship Quality Index and the

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[41] (Kahraman, 2005) & (Kadioglu, 2005)
[42] (Witte, 2014)

Passport Index to create a "division of the world into three tiers of citizenship."[43] The argument

that follows from this typology is that especially for citizens living in second-tier-countries (like

Turkey), getting the opportunity to get a second citizenship from a first-tier-country (like

Germany) is usually of purely practical value. Most of these people do not even decide to directly

move there, but they want to obtain the citizenship as a back-up option. Even though they may

feel to be members of their original state, the second citizenship provides them with an escape

option, something to fall back on[44].

For first-tier-states, Harpaz argues, this does not work the same way. People from these countries

already enjoy many rights and can hardly add anything to that. For third-tier-country citizens there

is of course hypothetically a lot to gain. However, Harpaz points out that because of the many

travel restrictions they live under, people from these countries usually do not have the option to

obtain a second citizenship[45].

Harpaz has interesting qualitative and quantitative data to support his claims. Altogether, he ends

up arguing almost directly against claims like the one made by Brubaker. The idea that

identitarian value is the main point of dual citizenship, Harpaz states, is a western bias, based on

the fact that for first-tier-countries dual citizenship can hardly have but identitarian value. For

second-tier-countries, however, things are different. When they have the opportunity to obtain

German citizenship, it is probable that they would firstly associate this with instrumental value[46].

These conclusions make sense when you look at the collected data in the paper. However,

Harpaz' case study is significantly different from mine. He is talking about a group of people that

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43 (Harpaz, 2015)
44 (Harpaz, 2015)
45 (Harpaz, 2015)
46 (Harpaz, 2015)

originally have one citizenship, coinciding with their country of residence. These people attempt to acquire a second citizenship as a kind of opportunism, trying to achieve upward mobility.

In the case of the Option Model, however, the young people acquire dual citizenship directly at birth. As long as they live, they have always been dual citizens – but as soon as they turn eighteen, they receive the notion that they are not allowed to keep both. The element of a forced choice is a crucial and unique component that influences the value assessment of both citizenships.

An important legal issue for Harpaz in building up his typology was the question whether or not states allow their citizens to have dual citizenship. As noticed in chapter 1, this is an issue at stake in Germany as well, with the Option Model being a kind of compromise in this regard. In the previous chapter I briefly mentioned the political discourse of dual loyalty. In the following paragraphs, I will now expand on this by providing a brief overview of literature on dual citizenship as a possible threat to state cohesion.

For those readers who are interested in a broader discussion of minority rights versus state cohesion – the introduction of *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* is a recommendable source to start from[47]. In this introduction, the argument is sketched that minority rights will lead to the creation of a society within a society. The minority group might, through the special rights that they enjoy, start to create their own citizenry which becomes more loyal to this minority status than to the state as a whole.

Such internal processes led the British government to the introduction of citizenship tests, in which the importance of citizenship was defined up to the explanation of the difference between concepts like 'nationality' versus 'citizenship'[48]. However, minority threats to state cohesion does not only

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[47] (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000) – page 1-41
[48] (Gray & Griffin, 2014)

work as an internal process. In the case of kinstate minorities, states can also deliberately use dual citizenship as a tool from outside, to 'create' or strengthen minorities in bordering countries[49].

In a chapter later on in this same book, Tariq Modood expands on this discussion. He specifically mentions dual citizenship as an important example of minority rights that can touch upon civic virtues, and challenge the allegiance to the country of residence. However, Modood thinks that acknowledging these minority rights can also have problem-solving consequences, such as the formation of hybrid identities. This is where the article finds its most important conclusion, that "it is a misunderstanding of anti-essentialism to conclude that all collective agency rests on mythic and dishonest agency"[50].

Modood thus touches upon the possibility for migrants to formulate a hybrid identity: partially related to one culture, partially related to another. However, this implies the assumption that when a hybrid identity is formed, we should automatically see this as a 50%-50% situation, or at least a zero-sum-game.

This assumption is challenged by Ayhan Kaya. Kaya points out that for Turks living in Germany, the fact that they also feel Turkish does not 'decrease' their level of Germanness. Someone can be 100% Turkish and still be 100% German at the same time. Therefore, she argues, a single citizenship status would be a poor reflection of their identity, regardless of which citizenship they choose[51]. This contributes to Caren's claim that hybrid identity formation is a phenomenon that is simply happening in the modern world, and that is not created by (let alone dependent on) dual citizenship[52].

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[49] (Pogonyi, 2011)
[50] (Modood, 2000)
[51] (Kaya, 2005)
[52] (Carens, 2000) – page 164

These conclusions form a sort of hypothesis for my research. The interviewee sample that Kaya used had a general perspective, focusing on Turks living in Western Europe. I however will look specifically at the Option Model in Germany. This model creates a unique situation of a forced choice, which creates perfect circumstances to analyze value assessment of (dual) citizenship in this particular situation.

Germany's citizenship policies have obviously often been studied before. I have already dealt with several general overviews, but there are also plenty of examples of studies specifying on one specific policy – such as for example Brubaker & Kim's article on Germany's citizenship attitudes towards transborder minorities. Even the exact case of the German-Turks has been at the center of certain researches, such as Witte's article on naturalization and 1st generation migrants.

For reasons listed above, I will make the step towards 2nd generation migrants subject to the Option Model. Keeping the political discourse in mind, it is highly relevant to investigate how Optionspflichtigen* look towards Germany. Do they perceive themselves as Germans? To what extent do they identify with the German society, German politics, the German state? And how are these forms of identification influenced by the legislation on dual citizenship? Finding answers to these questions can help me evaluate assumptions made by the German state.

In order to do this, I will use the individual level of analysis. When Jaap Dronkers and Maarten Vink wrote their large overview of citizenship policies and the effect on naturalization rates, they stated that when it comes to citizenship and integration, the citizenship policies of a receiving country matter, but they are not the most important factor. Citizenship policies are in fact a much better predictor of the general attitude of a state towards the topic of integration[53], than towards

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[53] (Vink & Huddleston, 2015)

choices of the individual. Such choices are much more influenced by the cultural background of the migrant group, and even more by individual factors such as time of residence, level of education, et cetera[54].

In the conclusion of their article, Dronkers and Vink therefore pleaded for qualitative research and individual analyses as a starting point for more specific case studies. These qualitative research methods will therefore be central to my methodology. I chose to interview a small group of people who faced this (in multiple aspects) unique situation of having to choose between citizenships. They all have different stories and they all dealt with their choice differently, yet there are important patterns to identify in the following chapters.

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[54] (Dronkers & Vink, 2012)

Chapter 3: Methodology of the interview sessions

Introduction

In this chapter I will give some practical details about my methodology. However, I would like for this chapter to be more than just a list of facts about what I did and how I did it. Instead I will try to take you alongside my personal 'travel of thought' throughout the process of writing this thesis. This is not just for stylistic reasons – I also feel like I need to explain how this research developed over time, as this influenced some of the choices I made.

The First Phase

At first sight, it seemed to me like the Model does not pose such a difficult question for the young adults to whom it applies. Choosing German citizenship – and thus EU citizenship – seems like the rational choice. It entails both economic and political benefits that Turkish citizenship does not provide, especially when you take into account that most of these people want to stay in Germany for the rest of their lives. However, when working on the second chapter of this thesis, I came to realize that there can also be a kind of non-instrumental value to citizenship that cannot be expressed in jobs or money – citizenship as the symbol of an identity.

As I argued before in chapter one, it was this second identitarian value that dominated the discourse, both in German media and in German politics when the Option Model was discussed. From the many statements made to justify the system, it became clear to me that the German government wanted Turks to choose German citizenship as a sign of identifying with Germany.

This assumption implies that those who chose the non-German citizenship, do not identify with Germany.

I wanted to test this assumption by talking to Turks & Iranians who chose to keep their 'other' citizenship. It was a good opportunity for me to put this theme of value assessment to the test, and find out why people would make the irrational choice. Why would they choose for example Turkish citizenship over German citizenship, despite the economic arguments?

My choice for qualitative methods is based on the fact that I am looking for answers to very context-specific questions[55] of a highly personal nature (identity building)[56] and, more importantly, of a motivational character[57]. As mentioned before in chapter two, Jaap Dronkers and Maarten Vink[58] agree that this is the best way to deal with citizenship decision-making in very particular case studies - such as the Option Model.

I started setting up an initial research design. At that point I did not know that the law would change, and therefore I also had no idea of the opportunity I would get for expanding my research into a second phase. I was solely focusing on the questions raised above. In the section below I will provide the more technical details about what I did in what turned out to be only the first phase of this thesis research. After that, I will explain a little bit more about how the research then developed and how I went about things in the second phase.

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[55] (Berg, 2001) page 1-5
[56] (Flick, 2006) page 12-16 and 32-43
[57] (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) page 24-34
[58] (Dronkers & Vink, 2012)

Initial design & Interview criteria

The plan in advance was to interview 2nd generation migrants, who have been born and raised in Germany but at the same time were assigned dual citizenship at birth (German and, for example, Turkish). These migrants qualify as so-called *Optionspflichtig*. I wanted to interview those who made the 'irrational' decision, and ask them for their motives.

That meant I had to look for people who are in the period of their life when they will have to choose or have just chosen, and who claim to go for (or who have gone for) the non-German citizenship. I started the search for interviewees by the end of September 2013, and two months later I had found a sample of nine people through using snowballing technique.

Although I realized this method limits the representativeness of the sample[59], I decided to use it after all, since I was trying to locate a small and specific group of people. Snowballing technique is a technique well-suited for locating a group that is difficult to reach[60] and 'where some degree of trust is required to initiate contact'[61]. Therefore it was suitable for the situation I was in.

The people that met my criteria and were willing[62] to cooperate in the research, turned out to be from either Turkish or Iranian background. All of them were born in Germany with both their parents being from Turkish or Iranian descent. They were all between the ages of 18-23. Three

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[59] (Kaplan, Korf, & Sterk, 1987) & (Griffiths, Gossop, Powis, & Strang, 1993)
[60] (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997)
[61] (Atkinson & Flint, 2001)
[62] The response rate in this first phase of the research was high – I found ten people altogether, of which nine were willing to cooperate.

people in the interviewee sample were Iranian, six were Turkish. Five were female, four were male. Three people had already passed the decisive date of their 23rd birthday, six had not yet[63].

Eight of the people I interviewed were either holding dual citizenship and claiming that they were going to renounce their German citizenship when required, or had already chosen Turkish/Iranian citizenship over the German one. One Turkish girl (20) did not meet my initial criteria: she claimed that she was most likely going to choose German citizenship, but only under severe pressure of her parents, with whom she still disagrees. I decided to keep her in the sample for the simple reason that her personal preference would lie with the non-German citizenship, and therefore it would still be interesting to ask for her motives.

The interviews were mainly conducted via Skype, and lasted roughly an hour. I had the chance of talking to one interviewee face to face, because he went on a trip to Budapest – besides that, I did not have the time or financial opportunities to go to Germany and meet these people in person. Even though I personally prefer face to face conversations simply because I feel more comfortable with that, I do not think interviewing via Skype somehow influenced the outcomes. Through the video option I was still able to incorporate body language into my conclusions. As far as spoken language was concerned, I speak German fluently and therefore was able to conduct the interviews in German without any problem.

The findings of this first part of the research are summarized in the next chapter of this thesis, but first I will move on with an explanation of how the rest of the research design developed.

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[63] An important thing to note here is that my sample overrepresents the amount of Iranians, as they constitute far less than one third of all *Optionspflichtigen*. As far as the age and gender splits, my sample is largely in line with the bigger picture. For more demographic data about the Option Model, please check chapter 5.

The Second Phase

As you could read in the first chapter, Germany changed its legislation in the beginning of 2014, and that new law scrapped large parts of the Option Model. This development changed a lot for me, especially when I decided to continue working on this topic for my thesis. It encouraged me even more to dig deeper into the topic and consult statistical reports to learn more about the bigger picture of the model. The results of this report analyses can be found in chapter 5 of this thesis.

However, I soon found out there was also an inducement for a second round of interviews. The fact that dual citizenship was now allowed for a large group of second generation migrants (who at first were told that they could not keep dual citizenship), gave me the chance to test yet another assumption made by the German government at the time when the model was still in practice.

According to the original argumentation put forward by the German state, acceptance of dual citizenship supposedly would lead to alienation from Germany, a lower level of identification and as a result, a group of citizens that have dual loyalties and can therefore not fulfill their citizenship duties. I could test this assumption by interviewing people after the law has changed, to see what happened to them, how they looked towards Germany – both during their *Optionspflicht* and after the system has been abolished - and note possible changes.

My second round of interviews, in other words, would focus on societal attitudes and political behavior. I was looking to see through the interviews whether something had changed in the attitudes of *Optionsflichtigen* after the model had basically been scrapped. This was relatively easy in the case of the group of people I had already interviewed before. I managed to talk to eight of the nine people again, and could obviously compare the answers in the two rounds of interviews.

Second Interviewee Sample

At this point I decided that it was necessary to also incorporate some of those people who had chosen German citizenship, because only then could I paint a full picture of what both citizenship choices really meant for the individuals who made them. Therefore I decided to start looking for these people as well, again through a snowballing technique – not only to keep as much consistency between the two rounds of interviews as possible, but also because even this 'larger group' of *Optionspflichtigen* was still a difficult group to get in contact with.

I ended up with ten people in that category. The interviews were in six of the ten cases taken in person instead of through Skype, because I had more time to go to Germany and meet some of them in person. As mentioned earlier, I personally feel more comfortable with the face to face meeting, although I do not believe it makes any difference in the outcome of the conversation.

Needless to say, having ten people who opted for German citizenship and nine who opted for another is in no way a proportional sample. However, I consider this not to be a major issue for my research, as I was never specifically trying to present a numerically representative sample of the whole group.

It was, however, an issue that in the case of the second group of interviewees, I did not have a first conversation, and so I had no previous data set that I could compare with. For that reason I had no choice but to ask them questions like 'How did you feel about this/that when the model was still in practice?'. I have to rely on the answers that they gave to these questions now – obviously it would have been more accurate had I been able to ask them these questions two years earlier, but considering how my research developed, this was not how it went.

Interviewees had to be born in Germany with both their parents being from Turkish or Iranian descent. They were all between the ages of 18-23, had dual citizenship at some point, went through the Option Model and ended up with either both citizenships (because the law was abolished at a favorable time for them) or just the German one. Their preference should lie with the German one from the beginning.

The group I interviewed in the end existed out of ten people, of which nine were Turkish and one was Iranian. I spoke to six girls and four boys. The results of this second phase of my research can mainly be found in chapter 6 of the thesis.

Chapter 4:   Resistance

Introduction

This chapter deals with the main findings from the first round of interviews I did. As I explained in more detail already in the previous chapter, this first round of interviews was intended to test assumptions made by the German government about identification among second generation migrants. Within the Option Model, the German government was hoping for Turks to choose German citizenship as a sign of identifying with Germany. This assumption implies that those who chose the non-German citizenship, do not identify (enough) with Germany.

I wanted to test this assumption by talking to Turks & Iranians who chose to keep their 'other' citizenship. I asked them a series of questions, and therefore I will start out this chapter by highlighting a few questions/conversation topics that stood out from the rest. Questions that induced a reaction with almost all the interviewees, or topics that they all brought up. In the end, I will draw some conclusions about the assumption I wanted to test in this chapter.

Why keeping the citizenship of your parents' country, instead of the German one?

Obviously this was the key question and the starting point to all interviews. Many interviewees immediately brought up the broader political situation as being linked to their personal decision. They highly disagreed with the fact that dual citizenship was not allowed, and saw the current law as designed to make them get rid of their Turkish (or Iranian) citizenship voluntarily. This according to them did not make sense, because they are "both German and Turk/Iranian", and I therefore recorded multiple responses stating "It is a set-up".

Therefore making the unexpected choice is a way for them to make a **statement**. Especially among Turkish participants, knowledge of the politics of the issue was high, as well as opposition to the Option Model as such. "Something needs to be done" was a quote I signed up multiple times, and a Turkish guy of 19 years old said "If everybody would succumb to this pressure, it seems like we accept the system".

"It is obvious that the system is targeted specifically at us. Supposedly, all citizens are equal, or at least they should be. But apparently, those citizens with a special history, with links to a different country… Those citizens are not equal. […] Or at least I do not feel equal now."

Some of the people that mentioned this political statement to be part of their reasoning, yet not all of them, also showed signs of **despondency** when talking about their German identity. Even though two respondents declared to feel "more German than Turkish", both of them were afraid that their feelings would never be reciprocated by the world around them. "Even if my passport says I'm German, even if I was born here and speak the language fluently, people will still call me *Turkish*, so I might as well choose Turkish citizenship".

Last but not least, four participants spoke about their citizenship as being a **last resort** of attachment to the homeland of their parents. This argument was mentioned by one Turk, yet by all Iranians. An Iranian girl (21) admitted regret for losing ties with her family in Iran. "I already live in Germany, I speak German at home, I hardly have the opportunity to visit my family… This is the last thing that ties me to the place where my parents come from". Note that 'hardly having the opportunity' in this case is a culturally determined understatement. When asked, the girl admitted she had never been to Iran – but that she felt too ashamed about this to outright say so.

What relation do you feel towards the homeland of your parents?

Most of the interviewees mentioned having family in Turkey/Iran, even though around half of them has never even visited these relatives. As all Iranians were political refugees, they have so far never been able to go back to Iran. Yet especially they mentioned the care for their relatives, whose safety they fear for, as an extra reason for holding on to their Iranian identity. "My uncle and aunt who still live in Iran […] I think about them every day. Giving up the citizenship would feel like giving up on them, as if I am not one of them anymore just because I live in a safer place."

Besides family, the homeland of their parents is also perceived as a kind of missing link in their personal story. It is a place that they, in most cases, rarely visit, but that they know forms an explanation for the fact that they can sometimes feel different from their autochthonous friends. There was a girl in the group who told me that whenever she would feel different than others, she would always tell herself that this is probably a consequence of her different background. "It did not even have to really be because of that. I just was happy to have an explanation. It is nice to have a reason to be different."

Some of the participants felt the need to point out that they support German sports teams just as much as their Turkish equivalents. But almost all of them described Turkey or Iran as something in their personal history. A couple of quotes: "This country is a part of me", "[…] which makes Turkey part of my story", and "My family history is over there".

These answers could not be cut loose from the broader citizenship discussion. An illustrative quote was for example: "They want to take away our history, and distance us from the country of our family. But why? I can be a good German and still have family there, can't I?"

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What do your parents think of the choice you made?

Parents were mostly against the choices their kids made. According to the interviewees, their parents mostly advised them to choose German citizenship, for the economic security that it entails. This was surprising to me at first, considering the fact that the parents (unlike their kids) grew up in Turkey/Iran, and therefore could have had closer emotional ties to this homeland.

However, the parents generally did not see the citizenship choice from an identitarian perspective. The interviewees all expressed their parents to have instrumental arguments for objecting their choices. "Be wise, choose German citizenship, it is better for your future". The parents thereby take up this traditional role of the reasonable alternative, telling the kids 'to do their homework'.

The interviewees themselves disagree with the arguments of their parents. A Turkish guy (24) states: "My parents do not understand why I renounced these rights [that come with German citizenship], but I did not renounce them; the German government deprived me of these rights." Out of his words, as well as the words of other respondents, I noticed the inner will to maintain both citizenships, or moreover the desire to not having to choose between them. In their perception, the German government, by forcing them to make this decision, forced them into renouncing German citizenship. But this is something "that I can never explain to my parents because they will just not understand."

Even though Turks and Iranians differed from each other in their motivations, they all shared the battle with their parents about the choice they made or are about to make. In the case of the Iranian refugees, the parents emphasize: "Be wise, Iran is not good for us, we are safe here", while the interviewees themselves claim: "We may not be able to go there, but we can at least keep our Iranian passports."

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The sports-element; did you follow the discussions surrounding Turkish-German soccer players?

In Germany, the nationality choice of soccer players is a big deal. There are many successful German soccer players from Turkish roots, and at some point they will have to choose for which national team they want to play. Media afford a lot of attention to this subject as well, especially when it concerns some of the biggest stars in the game. Mesut Özil and Ilkay Gündogan for example chose to play for Germany, while the Altintop-twins both chose for Turkey.

Of course we have to factor in that their choices are influenced by other arguments as well – sportive arguments that do not play a role in the choice of the interviewees of this research. The German team for instance is a lot stronger than the Turkish one. Therefore, you could simplify these sportive arguments by saying that the absolute top players would probably be better off playing for Germany, because then you would have a better chance at winning prices, whereas lesser players are better off if they choose for Turkey, because then they will have a bigger chance of actually making it into the team.

I had not included this topic into my question list at the beginning. Turkish interviewees came up with these examples mostly themselves. They often referred to the media hype around these players in a justifying way: "Altintop was also born in Germany, but he decided to play for Turkey. If he can make this decision, why can't I do the same?"

Summarized findings

There is no evidence to support the assumption made by the German state. The people I interviewed are the people who supposedly identify less as Germans (signified by their choice for non-German citizenship) but from my conversations with them it became clear to me that they all in fact do identify as Germans – and in some cases even more than as Turkish or Iranian[64].

This makes my conclusions distinctly different from the ones drawn by Harpaz in his research on value assessment of dual citizenship. He wrote about Israeli dual citizens who admit that they feel 100% Israeli. They refer to their other citizenship as their 'European passport', and when asked, they do not state any identitarian affiliation with that country at all[65]. In chapter two, I have already hinted on the mode of acquisition and the element of a forced choice as crucial distinguishing factors between our two case studies. I therefore claim that in the case of Turks born in Germany, generally identification with both countries is present.

The interviewees do not see this as a zero sum game: the fact that they are also partly Turkish makes them no less of a German. At least, this is the way they see it when they look at themselves – they often assume that there will always be others who regard them as less German, due to the way they look for example. However, this is something they cannot do anything about. When it comes to how they perceive themselves, they are both – and this often means 'fully both'; not a zero sum game. Therefore, in the Modood[66] vs. Kaya[67] debate that I mentioned in chapter two of

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[64] This corresponds to the conclusions drawn by the 2011 BAMF Naturalisation Study, commissioned by the German government, in which over 1500 Optionspflichtigen completed a survey. Among them, only 11% declared to feel more connected to the country of their parents than to Germany. 43% said they identified with both countries equally, and 46% stated they felt more German than Turkish/Iranian/anything else.
[65] (Harpaz, 2013)
[66] (Modood, 2000)
[67] (Kaya, Citizenship and the hyphenated Germans: German-Turks, 2005)

this thesis, my conclusions definitely support the Kaya side of the story, suggesting that in hybrid identity formation, an increasing identification with one country does not automatically decrease the 'level' of identification with the other.

The question then remains: if these people identify as Germans, and if we assume that they would be better off with German citizenship in terms of instrumental rights, why did they choose for the non-German citizenship? From the conversations, it became clear to me that the choice for Turkish or Iranian citizenship was a **sign of protest** against the system. The interviewees considered the system to be stupid, because until then they had never felt the need to make a choice between Turkey/Iran and Germany.

In other words: **they do identify with 'Germany as their world'**. But because of the Option Model, **they identify less with the German state**, because they feel the state is pushing them to abandon the part of them that also identifies with Turkey/Iran. The interviewees expressed a kind of political rebellion against this choice that is forced upon them. Especially the Turkish interviewees were receptive for this feeling of rebellion. However, it must not be mistaken for rebellion against the German nation. It is the government that they blame for revoking their German citizenship and the rights that come with it.

Value Assessment

Interviewees saw their future lives take place in Germany, and German identity was definitely present in the lives of the interviewees, but they never related this to citizenship. 'Of course I am German,' some would say, 'I was born here, I live here, go to school here, I speak the language…' But the German citizenship seemed completely unrelated to this. Identification with

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Germany is seen as completely self-evident. Therefore, German citizenship is not necessary for identitarian purposes – it is necessary only to obtain instrumental rights, and this is the primary value they attribute to it.

Turkish or Iranian citizenship on the other hand becomes a last resort, the only way to hang on to this other identity that they also feel is/should be a part of them, but that they do not encounter much in their daily lives (which take place in Germany). The Iranian interviewees especially expressed concern for their relatives who are still in Iran, and whom they have never been able to meet. They felt guilty about not being able to visit their relatives, and often expressed their citizenship choice as a last resort sacrifice they can make for them. "We can't go there, but we can at least keep our passports."

The parents of basically all interviewees disagree with these choices. They advise them to choose for the German citizenship and the instrumental rights that it entails. The interviewees claim that it is the German state who deprives them of these rights – that they had no real choice themselves.

Economic rights are the most important factor in the decision-making for the parents – political rights seem to matter less to them. For the interviewees themselves, however, political rights are also very relevant. Many expressed an interest and involvement in German politics. However, this involvement was for a large part related to the dual citizenship discussion. When I asked about their position in the political spectrum, it seemed to me as though their answers were highly influenced by this one issue.

An a-political Turkish identity

The *Optionspflichtigen* I interviewed, all felt more connected to German politics than to Turkish/Iranian. Their Turkish/Iranian identity is a-political, it is a '*part of my history*' –feeling but not a political connection. When the Turkish presidential elections came around in 2014, I re-interviewed all Turkish participants from my previous research and asked them if they were going to cast their vote for the presidential elections this summer. None of them was planning to do so.

It is striking that these people, who have chosen Turkish citizenship over their German ones, feel more connected to German politics than to Turkish. Their choice, after all, would result in a loss of voting rights in Germany while they can maintain their voting rights in Turkish elections. For these young adults, however, Turkish citizenship represents an identity – not voting rights or any other instrumental value. In that regard, my research forms an empirical proof of the theories that I mentioned in chapter two. According to several scholars[68] specializing in Turkish citizenship, identitarian value has always been the predominant factor in value assessment of the Turkish citizenship. Kaya and Kentel[69] already provided some empirical data on the matter, but on top of that, my research proves that this tendency in value assessment also holds up for people who were not born in Turkey and did not grow up there.

The interviewees see the Option Model as a choice between giving up their Turkish identity (Turkish citizenship) or their instrumental rights in Germany (German citizenship). The table below schematically shows how they perceive their choice between the two:

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[68] (Içduygu, 2005) & (Kadioglu, 2005) & (Kahraman, 2005)
[69] (Kaya & Kentel, Euro-Turks; a bridge or a breach between Turkey and the EU?, 2005)

Table 1:   *Irrational Choice?*

	Identity	Instrumental rights (political & economic)
German Citizenship	Self-evident (no citizenship required)	Only available through citizenship
Turkish Citizenship	Only available through citizenship	Not relevant

The people addressed by the Option Model are all born and raised in Germany, and they speak German fluently. Therefore, their German identity is self-evident to them. Their Turkish/Iranian identity, however, is something that they feel they have abandoned in most parts of their life. Holding on to their other citizenship is therefore perceived as '*the least I can do'*. As far as instrumental rights are concerned; they are not interested in politics, and economic rights are irrelevant to them since they do not plan to remigrate. The instrumental rights that come with German citizenship are relevant to them, but they are only available by giving up their Turkish/Iranian citizenship.

This crosstabled view of both citizenships is an indirect consequence of the forced choice that the Option Model poses. And instead of 'forcing young people to integrate', as CSU-minister Hans-Peter Friedrich claimed the Option Model does, it pushes them in the opposite direction – rebelling against the German state. After being born and raised in Germany, and having lived there for their entire life, the grandeur of the forced formal choice between two identities that until then had never seemed conflicting to them, can be intimidating and polarizing.

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The general discussion about which citizenship to choose, is framed with a bias towards the instrumental dimension of German citizenship – and in particular to what Marshall called 'social rights'. This can also be seen in the argumentation of the parents. Therefore, a polarized view of both citizenships is created. In this view, the German citizenship is framed purely from its instrumental perspective, whereas the Turkish/Iranian citizenship represents holding on to some kind of identity.

Chapter 5: Confusion

Introduction

In 2011, the German government presented a statistical report conducted by the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), with preliminary statistics on the Option Model. The study, according to government statements, showed its great success: with almost 90% of the people choosing German citizenship, the vast majority of the people "showed their loyalty towards Germany".

Whether or not the choice of an individual for German citizenship actually means that he or she identifies only with Germany, can of course be contested. I have already done this in the previous chapter and will continue to do so in the next. However, in this chapter I specifically want to contest the assumption that everyone subjected to the Option Model made a deliberate choice.

I will do this by looking a little bit deeper into the BAMF-study. I will combine my own critique with that of Falk Lämmermann, who wrote a long in-depth analysis of the statistics. The chapter will contain conclusions drawn sometimes by Lämmermann, sometimes by myself, but I will try to be as clear as possible about the original source of every claim.

Tendency to postpone

The study was conducted in 2011, and thus we can assume that some of the numbers mentioned have grown since. However, at the time of the report, the estimated number of kids that had acquired German citizenship on the basis of *ius soli* was estimated at 444.000. Among them, 49.000 were born before the introduction of the citizenship law of 2000. They received the German citizenship under the so-called 40b StAG law, a transitional arrangement that allowed parents to obtain German citizenship on the basis of *ius soli* for their kids born after January 1st 1990.

It is important to note that the 40b StAG-group in the end turned out to be the only group among whom some actually ended up in the Option Model. For the 'regular' *ius soli* kids, born after 2000, the model was abolished before they could turn 18 years old. The BAMF-study estimates that in 2011, roughly 20.000 of the 49.000 40b StAG-kids had passed the age of 18. The quantitative study featured 1534 of them; they all were asked to fill in questionnaires.

According to the study, there was a high tendency towards postponing the decision. This tendency is never mentioned in the press releases by the German state following from the study's results. The researchers, however, clearly mention a divide into two clear groups. 52% of the people who took part in the research (798 participants) had responded to the letter within a few months. The other 48% (736 participants) waited really long – often too long, and some of them had already missed the first deadline[70].

The statistic of "nearly 90% choosing for Germany" can also be traced back to the report. Among the group of 798 participants that did in fact respond to the authorities quickly, 702 chose for the

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[70] (Weinmann, Becher, & Babka von Gostomski, 2011)

German citizenship (88%). Another 80 had applied to keep both citizenships and only 16 chose the non-German citizenship. However, we have to keep in mind that these numbers only take into account the group of Optionspflichtigen that responded to the authorities within a few months.

When it comes to the other group, the BAMF-study states the following:

[Frequently, those] who had not yet answered […] harboured the wish to retain both nationalities (64%). In this respect they were, for example, hoping for a change in the law, or hoping that the other country in question would accede to the EU. […] Further factors that must not be underestimated in this context are a simple disinclination to visit the authorities, a certain age-specific "laxity" in dealing with official correspondence and other factors that assume prominence at this point in their lives, such as obtaining their school leaving or training qualifications. These tendencies are reinforced by the fact that the relevant time period up to their 23rd birthday may give the impression of being relatively long, thereby misleading them into thinking that they still have time, or even lots of time.[71]

Unawareness

Among those participants who had up until then failed to react to correspondence, 34% (this means roughly 250 people in the study – but if these numbers are seen as representative of the whole, it would mean roughly 3.000 youngsters altogether) were under the impression that this behavior did not have any legal consequences[72]. Obviously, not-responding will in fact have legal

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[71] (Weinmann, Becher, & Babka von Gostomski, 2011)
[72] (Weinmann, Becher, & Babka von Gostomski, 2011)

consequences: it generally leads to the loss of German citizenship. In the last part of this chapter I will explain that such cases actually occurred even after the law changed.

The Option Model works in multiple steps. At the age of 18, the Optionspflichtige receives his/her first letter from the authorities, explaining the process. At the age of 21, he or she is required to have documented a decision, and then at the age of 23, all the legal actions that follow from this decision need to be taken. This means for example that if someone decides to keep only the German citizenship, he should let this decision be known to the authorities before turning 21, and then give up his Turkish citizenship before turning 23.

Most of the youngsters subject to the Option Model are unaware of this first deadline at the age of 21[73]. This can cause serious problems, especially for Iranians, who might end up losing their German citizenship because they did not respond in time. Turks have the advantage that after turning 21, they often still have the opportunity to renounce their Turkish citizenship and thus keep their German one – Iranians often do not have that exit option.

Because of the difficult situation that i.a. Iranians face when trying to renounce their other citizenship, the Option Model in fact allows people to apply for maintaining dual citizenship. The form to be filled in before turning 21, included that option. People who opt for dual citizenship have to wait for an official reply from the authorities to find out if they are actually eligible for this. Lämmermann estimates that around 20% of the Turks and 90% of the Iranians are in fact eligible, but that they are often not aware of it[74].

For many of the youngsters, the letter they receive after they turn 18 is the first time they find out that they have two citizenships. Lämmermann hints upon this fact, but it also came up in several

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[73] (Lämmermann, 2011)
[74] (Lämmermann, 2011)

of my interviews. The fact that they had only one passport, made people think that they also had just one citizenship. Two interviewees told me that they used to have two passports, but when the Turkish one expired, they assumed this would also terminate their Turkish citizenship.

Insufficient communication

Lämmermann believed communication from the German authorities to the Optionspflichtigen needed to be improved. First of all, because the exact rules of the game were unclear. In media reports and state commercials, it was often communicated that people had time until they turn 23 – but the first decision already needed to be made by the age of 21. For those people eligible for maintaining dual citizenship, it was crucial that they made this first deadline.

Also, the fact that the Bundesländer are responsible for dealing with these cases, often led to miscommunication. The only clear rule stated is, that the letter needed to be sent out by the time someone turns 18. But the content of the letter was drafted by every Bundesländer itself. That way it could happen that one family member received a different letter from another family member, and although these letters supposedly communicate the same process, it can still come across as highly confusing[75].

These miscommunications had consequences for a group of people even when the law was finally changed. The model was not abolished entirely and so the processes that had already

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[75] (Lämmermann, 2011)

started, needed to be completed. People who had missed the first deadline, still needed to give up their other citizenship before turning 23 in order to keep their German citizenship[76].

For most Turks, this was not an issue – even though it made them feel treated unfairly, especially if for example a younger brother or a friend was able to keep both. In the case of Iranians, however, German citizenship could be lost due to unawareness of the process. This all happened despite the law change, causing the Green Party to raise questions about this issue in parliament, asking the government to come up with a solution. The last time I spoke to the Iranians from my interviewee sample who lost their German citizenship, the issue was not yet resolved.

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[76] (Lämmermann, 2011)

Chapter 6: Acceptance

Introduction

In this sixth chapter I will present the findings from my second phase of interviews. Following from the statistics analyzed in the previous chapter, we can conclude that there are roughly two kinds of reactions among Optionspflichtigen. Some find the decision not difficult at all – they immediately respond to the authorities. Among this group, almost everyone opts for the German citizenship. The second group of people postpones the decision. They find the choice of citizenship very difficult, because they do not want to choose between the instrumental rights that come with German citizenship, and the identitarian value that comes with their other citizenship. This last group would therefore prefer to maintain dual citizenship.

The fourth chapter of this thesis focused exclusively on this second group, but in this second phase of my interviews, both groups will be present. The interviews were taken after the law changed and effectively ended the Option Model. I used the conversations to answer a couple of final questions. First of all, to find out exactly what happened to the group of people that I interviewed when the Option Model was still in practice. Secondly, I wanted to know from the other group, whether the choice for German citizenship did in fact mean *loyalty to Germany over everything*, as it did according to the rhetoric of the German state when the Model was introduced.

My last question also targets a governmental assumption. According to the original argumentation put forward by the German state, acceptance of dual citizenship supposedly would lead to alienation from Germany, a lower level of identification and as a result, a group of citizens that have dual loyalties and can therefore not fulfill their citizenship duties. I tested this

assumption by trying to note changes in the identification of interviewees with Germany after dual citizenship became in fact allowed.

Relief

So what did happen to the people I spoke to in phase 1 – those who wanted to choose Turkish/Iranian citizenship even though they really wanted to maintain dual citizenship? As said before, these interviewees basically belong to the 48%-group of the BAMF-study, because most of them wanted to 'choose non-German' by not responding to the authorities as a protest.

From the second round of conversations I had with these people, it turned out that indeed, most of them had not replied to the authorities. The law changed just in time – at least for most of them. Two of the Iranian interviewees did in fact lose their German citizenship due to the situation explained in the previous chapter. For them, the law change came when they were between 21 and 23 years old, but there was no chance for them anymore to renounce Iranian citizenship even if they had wanted to.

With the others, however, I noticed a change in their attitudes towards German politics. Obviously they were happy with the new legislation, not just for themselves but also from an idealistic point of view. Some of them even called it "a relief" that now they did not have to worry about this anymore. A couple of them mentioned having younger siblings who now would never have to go through the same process. They felt glad about this, and most of the anger and protest attitude had gone away from their answers.

"It is a good thing not just for us but also for future generations. We were I think a kind of test group but kids born after 2000 were the larger group, and now none of them will ever face this decision. We can just keep our citizenship status that we were born with, just like everyone else."

When I asked about what they were planning to do with their German citizenship now that they managed to hang on to it after all, some mentioned travelling, which is easier with a German passport, but even more mentioned voting. A Turkish girl (21) who was studying to become a nurse, and who had told me in a previous conversation that the issue of dual citizenship was "the only politics I follow", now speculated on voting for a certain party "because they have good viewpoints on health care."

Another girl, about to study Political Science, stated: "I thought I was going to lose the German citizenship but it turns out I did not, and now I will use my rights. Because this is important. And when there will be new elections, I will follow everything and read everything, and I hope to discuss everything thoroughly with my new classmates. Because for me this is an opportunity that I know is not just a given."

Not a difficult choice at all

In this second round of interviews I also incorporated people who chose German citizenship from the very beginning – people who, in other words, belong to the 52%-category in the BAMF-study. These people considered the choice posed by the Option Model to be not so difficult at all. Below I have organized a general overview of the conversations, and just as in chapter 4 with the first round of interviews, I decided to do this in four questions/conversation topics.

Why did you decide to opt for the German citizenship?

The answers to this first and most important question were mostly conclusive with the conclusions drawn in the first round of interviews. Participants found that their German citizenship simply had more practical/instrumental value for them in their daily lives. Travelling was mentioned, as well as possible economic benefits and job security. Also, many people mentioned an interest in politics and/or the willingness to use their voting rights.

Out of the ten people that I spoke to, nine replied that they were 100% sure that they would spend the rest of their lives in Germany. One Turkish girl (20) had just been on an exchange program to Istanbul, and said that this made her consider to go back there and work & live there for possibly a few years. Ironically, it was this same girl that was one of the ones who claimed to identify themselves the least as Turkish. "It is certain that I will be a foreigner in Istanbul," she said. "People will see me that way and I will feel that way. I do not even speak Turkish that well. But it does not matter. I have a friend who worked in Peru for three years. Now it is my turn to have an adventure."

How do you see yourself – as German, Turkish, Iranian, both, something else?

It is important to note that although I never posed this question as directly as it is phrased above, I always received very explicit answers. While I was trying to be careful, it seemed as though for the interviewees, expressing their feelings of identification was not a sensitive issue at all.

In the answers, then, there was hardly any difference between this group and the group subject to my first round of interviews. Almost all the people I spoke to, saw themselves both as German and as Turkish or Iranian. There were slight differences in the way people saw the balance between the two: some said they were "fully German and fully Turkish", others said "a little bit

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of both", and two found it important to point out that although they are both, they were still "more German than Turkish". One Kurdish guy (22) gave me a long speech about how he did not feel an identification towards any nation, because nations are constructed… (This guy was studying at the Rotterdam conservatorium, but it almost sounded like he attended CEU at some point in his life).

Some illustrative quotes on this topic, things that people brought up:

"I think hospitality is an important thing in Turkish society, and this was something I learned from my parents, always to be friendly to visitors and offer them food. I think I live up to this, however, only when they let me know well in advance that they are coming. I do not like people to show up at my doorstep, better to make an appointment – that is something very German in me, no?"

"My views towards family are very 'Turkish', I guess. For most of my autochthonous friends, their family is not so important, it seems. But for me this is the most important relationship there is. However, when it comes to marriage, I guess I am more German. […] I mean when it comes to the role of the woman – I am not going to stay at home and just take care of the kids, you know."

<u>If you identify with both countries, did that make the citizenship choice difficult for you?</u>

Only one, clear, short answer resounded when I asked this question: No. As the interviewees almost exclusively wanted to spend the rest of their lives in Germany, they were very much aware of the fact that they would need their instrumental rights in Germany, and that made the choice very easy for them. "Citizenship is not about identity," said at least four of my respondents, and one of them continued "I am still also partly Turk, even without the pass."

"I think there is a big difference I choosing your citizenship and choosing the person you want to be, and the culture you want to live out," said the same girl that did not want to stay home to take care of the kids. Another guy (18) mentioned that his older brother had already explained the whole procedure to him. "I knew what was expecting me, I knew I needed the German citizenship and I knew how to make sure I got what I needed. So no, this was not difficult at all."

How do you look upon the political discussion surrounding dual citizenship & the Option Model?

Answers were different here, but it did not really seem like the interviewees cared as much about this issue as the other group did. Possibly because the choice was not difficult for them personally, and therefore they did not feel the need to be so angry about it. "I personally do not need to have both citizenships, because I am not going to live in Turkey. But I know others wanted to have both, and I don't see why they shouldn't."

Many participants indicated some knowledge about the political situation, but they did not show the same signs of involvement that the other group did. "I think it is important that the German state allows people to have both. The Option Model was a bad idea, although for me personally it was not a big problem," said the same guy (18) who got help from his older brother.

Altogether, it became clear to me that this second group does not find the choice to be difficult at all – just as suggested by the BAMF-study. They generally do not see identitarian value in citizenship at all, and therefore the choice becomes easy: German citizenship brings the most practical value. This does not mean – as the German state suggested – that the choice for German citizenship brings 'an end to dual loyalty', and that now Germany is the only country these

people identify with. Identification with both Germany and Turkey (or Iran) is present in the conversations, and I noticed no differences on this topic between the first group and the second.

The citizenship choice they made, was based on the fact that they wanted to spend the rest of their lives in Germany and therefore the German citizenship would have much more practical value for them. Still most of them did disagree with the former Option Model, saying something like 'It was not such a big issue for me, but I can understand that it put other young people into a difficult situation.'

A positive influence rather than negative

What rests is the question whether or not allowing dual citizenship has a negative impact on identification with host country Germany – as suggested not only by the German state, but also by Kymlicka[77] in Citizenship in Diverse Societies. When answering this question on the basis of my second round of interviews, I excluded those people who are somehow still in the middle of the process, because they accidently lost German citizenship. For them, dual citizenship is not really allowed yet – the Option Model is still very much present in their lives.

The other two groups, however, can both be included in the research, regardless of whether or not they actually have dual citizenship. It is important to distinguish between the groups when drawing conclusions, but I consider the reactions of both groups to be relevant.

First of all, there is the "52%-BAMF-group", the group of people whom I interviewed only during the second round. They chose German citizenship from the beginning and as a result, they

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[77] (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000)

now do not possess dual citizenship. However, they do not mind this at all, and they were never interested in it. They do however feel happy that others (family, friends or people they identify with as fellow-half-Turks) now have the chance to maintain dual citizenship.

One person even said: *"I am glad and proud to live in a country that is welcoming and no longer suspicious towards newcomers."* I would therefore conclude here that allowing dual citizenship did not really have a big influence on the identification of these people with Germany, but if it had any, it would rather be a positive influence than a negative.

Even more important is the reaction of the other group, the people that I interviewed during both rounds. Most of them actually got dual citizenship by delaying their decision until after the Option Model law had changed. They can now let go of their protest attitudes, and it seems like they have in fact done so. Some even speculated on voting in German elections, and when asked about their motivations, the citizenship discussion was no longer overshadowing their decision.

I am sure that for this group, allowing dual citizenship had a positive impact on their identification with Germany. By this, I do not mean to say that this identification was not already partially there – they mostly identified with Germany as their world, their daily lives. Germany was the country they grew up in, and they identified themselves as German, but still there was one part missing: identifying with the German state/government/politics. They saw the state as an enemy, this vague but hostile institution who did not trust them. Now that dual citizenship is allowed, they feel more accepted.

Allowing dual citizenship has, in that sense, the opposite influence of what Kymlicka feared. Instead of being a minority right that creates an uneven situation, perhaps even a "society within a society", it actually helps integrating a minority group into society. In this regard, it seems like

the Option Model turned out to be more of a hindrance towards identifying with Germany than a helping tool to speed up this process. Therefore, my conclusions fit with those of Ricky van Oers, who came to a similar conclusion about citizenship tests in the UK, Germany and Netherlands.

Van Oers concludes in her book 'Deserving Citizenship' that restrictive immigration legislation that is being passed off as 'helping people to integrate'/'to become German' in fact does not help to achieve this goal at all. Because these laws often target a group of people who already is well integrated into the host society, who speaks the language well and has been living her for a sizeable amount of years, the obstructions on the road to citizenship are seen as 'unnecessary', 'belittling' and often even 'humiliating'. As a result, these people develop a feeling of discontent towards the state of their host country[78].

In this chapter, I have shown that the same goes for the Option Model. This system, perhaps even more than the citizenship tests, specifically targets a group of young people that is generally already well at home in the host society. They have been living there for all their lives and often speak the language fluently. Therefore, the requirement to give up their other citizenship as a 'declaration of loyalty' is seen as 'unnecessary' and 'suffocating', and leads to an attitude of rebellion towards the German state.

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[78] (van Oers, 2014)

Conclusion

I started out this research with the question 'How did the Option Model and the forced choice that it poses, influence identification among young adults with Germany and/or the country of their parents?' I was interested in this mostly because I wanted to compare the answers with the views uttered by the German government when they initiated this model.

Throughout the course of this research I tested a couple of statements, in three different chapters, mainly to find out that the state was oversimplifying things. The general level of identification among second generation migrants with Germany was put in a rather pessimistic perspective, and the positive effect that the Option Model supposedly would have on this, was put in a rather optimistic perspective.

The most important conclusion I would draw is that the Option Model did not increase identification with Germany in the way it was intended. Instead, it had negative effects on some of the people affected by the model, who because of the model did not develop a connection towards Germany as a political community. One of the main reasons for this is that the model mostly targeted a group that already identified with Germany a lot. Both rounds of interviews showed that identification among second generation migrants, regardless of which citizenship they preferred, was generally very high.

This makes my conclusions different from the ones drawn by Harpaz in his research on value assessment of dual citizenship among Israelis, in which he noted a lack of identification with the country that provided 'higher tier citizenship'. In this research, I explained why his case study is different from mine and how that explains my different conclusions. My case study features second

generation migrants, born in the new country but with multiple links to the home country of their parents, as well. The results of this case study could therefore indicate that in the case of second generation migrants, hybrid identification is much more likely than a one-sided identification with the home country of the parents. However, I would recommend a larger scale study extended to immigrant communities in countries like France and The Netherlands to verify such hypotheses.

When speaking of hybrid identification, I would also like to emphasize that my results indicate identification with multiple countries is not a zero sum game. Therefore, in the Modood vs. Kaya debate my conclusions definitely support the Kaya side of the story, suggesting that in hybrid identity formation, an increasing identification with one country does not automatically decrease the 'level' of identification with the other. For purposes of illustration: in chapter 4, focusing on the first round of interviews, I wrote:

[T]hey all in fact do identify as Germans – and in some cases even more than as Turkish or Iranian. The interviewees mostly identify with both countries and do not see this as a zero sum game: the fact that they are also partly Turkish makes them no less of a German. At least, this is the way they see it when they look at themselves – they often assume that there will always be others who regard them as less German, due to the way they look for example. However, this is something they cannot do anything about.

And in chapter 6, I noticed a similar tendency when I interviewed the other group:

Almost all the people I spoke to, saw themselves both as German and as Turkish or Iranian. There were slight differences in the way people saw the balance between the two: some said they were "fully German and fully Turkish", others said "a little bit of both", and two found it important to point out that although they are both, they were still "more German than Turkish".

No identitarian value in German citizenship

Interestingly enough, citizenship did not play any part in this identification with Germany. Participants felt that they did not need the German citizenship to prove that they were in fact Germans.

I paid a lot of attention to this phenomenon especially in chapter 4, where I displayed my crosstable to prove that the group who chose the non-German citizenship, felt they did not need German citizenship for identitarian purposes, because they felt that their German identity was self-evident – more self-evident than their Turkish/Iranian identity. When it comes to this last identity, citizenship was (for some) an important feature in establishing this identity.

In that regard, my research forms an empirical proof of the theories on Turkish citizenship, stating that identitarian value has always been the predominant factor in value assessment of the Turkish citizenship. My research indicates that this tendency also holds up for people who were not born in Turkey and did not grow up there.

When I interviewed the group of people in chapter 6, I noticed again that identification with Germany had nothing to do with carrying German citizenship. These people had chosen German citizenship, and they also mostly considered themselves to be German, but these two things were unrelated. The choice for German citizenship was a purely rational and instrumental decision.

Misinterpreted choices

The group that ended up postponing their decision because they would rather lose German citizenship than giving up their Turkish/Iranian one, felt anger because they had to 'prove their loyalty' towards Germany. This felt as an insult for most of them. It created the attitude of rebellion that I described in chapter 4.

Their choice for the non-German citizenship should not at all be confused with a choice against a German identity – as often mistakenly done by German politicians. Identification with Germany as 'their country, their world' already existed. It was only the German state that they could not identify with, as they were angry at them for forcing them into a decision and thereby 'depriving them of the rights that come with German citizenship'.

In between the two rounds of interviews, I also contested another assumption made by the German government in chapter 5. Based on a research conducted in 2011, the German government initially interpreted the response figures as a massive 'vote' for German identity. However, in reality German citizenship is rarely seen as a sign of identification among Optionspflichtigen.

Also, these numbers only showed half of the picture. It did not show why the other half of the group had not responded yet – either out of protest, laziness or failure to understand the procedure. Many Optionspflichtigen were unable to comprehend what was expected from them, and therefore ended up delaying their response.

Different attitudes towards Turkish/Iranian citizenship

As you can see from the summarized conclusions above, both groups have many similarities to each other. They both consider themselves to be German (although often also Turkish/Iranian). They both view German citizenship from a purely instrumental perspective. The only main difference that defined their different attitude in this debate, is the fact that one group felt like they needed to maintain also their Turkish/Iranian citizenship as a 'last resort', to hold on to that part of their identity. The other group did not see the need for this – they also felt connected to the homeland of their parents, but saw no identitarian value in citizenship whatsoever.

This led to one group developing a protest attitude towards the German state, while the other maintained a much more pragmatic attitude of cooperation and giving up their second citizenship. For this second group, the abolishment of the Option Model did not make that much of a difference, although they supported the principle that dual citizenship was now allowed. For the first group, however, allowing dual citizenship in fact helped them to take their identification with Germany 'to a next level'. They now did not only feel Germany to be their home country, but also a political community in which they want to participate.

The Option Model therefore influenced identification with Germany in a negative way – at least for some people. The model worked out as a simple administrative barrier for some, but as a belittling or even insulting forced choice for others, who as a result felt diametrically opposed from the government of the country they felt most at home in. Allowing dual citizenship helped getting these people involved again, not as protesting outsiders but as fully participating citizens.

It therefore had the opposite influence of what Kymlicka feared: instead of being a minority right that creates a "society within a society", allowing dual citizenship cleared the hindrance to

integration that was the Option Model. The Option Model turned out to be more of a hindrance towards identifying with Germany than a helping tool to speed up this process – much like the citizenship tests in Ricky van Oers' book 'Deserving Citizenship'. Her research, too, focused on restrictive immigration laws, being passed off as 'helping people to integrate'. In both our case studies, it turned out that these laws did not fulfill their original purposes and instead formed a hindrance to identification with the host society for many people subject to it. In light of the findings, it could be interesting to investigate whether such laws had similar effects in other Western European countries.

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