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Ethnic fractionalisation and social cohesion: the relation between immigration, ethnic fractionalisation and potentials for civic, collective action in Germany

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Chapter 6

Which Groups are Mostly Responsible for Problems in your Neighbourhood?

The Use of Ethnic Categories in Germany[1]

Introduction

The last chapter has shown the importance of perceptions of ethnic fractionalisation. The findings support scholars, who see ethnicity as cognition and object that ethnic categories do not necessarily reflect real-existing groups, but are first and foremost cognitive distinctions that actors impose on the world; "They are ways of recognizing, identifying, and classifying other people" (Brubaker et al., 2004, p. 47). While this position qualifies over-simplistic views on ethnicity by emphasising the key role of actors' cognition, it does not see ethnicity as a purely subjective and hence arbitrary perception; ethnic categories may overlap with cultural differences as well as clusters of networks, but this does not necessarily need to be the case (Wimmer, 2008b). Following this qualification, ethnicity is relevant only to the degree that actors impose ethnic categories on others, which points to the central need to study the conditions under which ethnic categories become salient: Why and under which conditions do people employ ethnic categories rather than

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others such as age, class or gender distinctions to conceptually organise persons and groups in their social environment?

There are different but complementary approaches to answer this question. One approach refers to micro-level social interactions. So far, many ethnographic studies, which are especially well suited for this task, have studied how ethnic categories are established, reproduced and negotiated in everyday interactions (for a review see: Pachucki et al., 2007). A second approach emphasises the role of elites and sees ethnic categories "as the outcome of a political and symbolic struggle over the categorical division of society" (Wimmer, 2008b, p. 985). Following this perspective, a growing literature engages in historical comparative investigations of the implementation of census categories (e.g. Kertzer and Arel, 2002), or performs claim analyses of public media (e.g. Koopmans et al., 2005). A third approach points to the dependence of ethnic categorisations on wider societal and economic conditions. In this regard there exists a large body of survey research on the impact of economic decline or other societal conditions on anti-immigrant sentiments (for a review see: Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). While survey research is well suited for such a comparative task, we cannot infer from the existing studies whether people use ethnic categories more frequently under any contextual conditions, because these studies rely on standardised items that presuppose certain categories and conceptual distinctions. Analysing the use of ethnic categories should instead rely on open-ended questions, since only these may reveal whether ethnic categories are salient in the minds of respondents.

Given this background, the present work analyses an open-ended question placed in a recently conducted large-scale survey in Germany. In particular, this analysis deals with the categories native Germans apply to describe groups that are seen as being "mostly responsible for problems in your neighbourhood". In doing so, the enquiry makes two contributions. First, it offers novel insight on the ethnic folk classifications native Germans apply in organising responsibility for problems in their neighbourhood. Germany is an interesting case for such an analysis, since Brubaker (1992) described it as a nearly ideal-typical case of a country with an ethnic conception of nationhood, which also characterises its public discourse (Koopmans et al., 2005). As ethnic categories are taken for granted in German public discourse, we should likewise expect ethnic categories to be relevant in everyday life and to be a manifest reference to the question who causes problems. This paper shows, however, that members of the lower classes, drunkards, elderly and especially teenagers are more frequently blamed for neighbourhood problems than any ethnic minority.

Second, the enquiry aims to identify contextual factors that might explain why people characterise problem groups along ethnic rather than other distinctions. Relying on implications of group threat theory (e.g. Blalock, 1967) and

the disintegration approach (Anhut and Heitmeyer, 2000), I compare how out-group size and conditions of economic decline are associated with the likelihood that respondents will use ethnic categories to characterise problem groups in their neighbourhood. One key finding is that the effect of rising unemployment on the likelihood to see ethnic minorities as a problem group increases with the initial level of unemployment and is thus accumulating in strength.

Theoretical Background

Qualifying ethnicity as cognition does not answer what characterises certain categories as ethnic. Earlier I followed (Weber, 1987, p. 389), in defining ethnicity as the subjective belief in a common descent, with the additional qualification that the denoted group must be larger than a family unit (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Accordingly , ethnic categories can involve race as in the US, religion as in Northern Ireland, language as in Belgium, or nationality as in many immigrant-receiving Western European countries (Banton, 2011; Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Given this definition, I wish to tackle two questions on the use of ethnic categories by native Germans when they describe neighbourhood problem groups.

What Kinds of Ethnic Categories do Native Germans Use? Since ethnicity may involve such different things as language, race and religion, we may first wish to know what kinds of ethnic categories native Germans use to categorise ethnic out-groups? By discussing this question against the background of Germany's conception of nationhood (e.g. Brubaker, 1992; Koopmans et al., 2005) and its immigration history (the following historical descriptions are based on: Bade et al., 2007), I derive five different types of categories that are theoretically plausible.

According to Brubaker (1992), there exist important differences between states in the way they define their citizenries. He sees Germany as a nearly ideal-typical case for a state with an ethnic conception of nationhood, meaning that descent defines membership, rather than birth in the national territory. On this basis, Brubaker explains the way in which Germany dealt with post WWII migrants, as reflected in its particularly low naturalisation rates. Post WWII migration to Germany started with guest workers, most of them coming from Turkey, Yugoslavia and Italy, who were recruited for the West-German labour market from 1955 to 1973. These guest workers, their reunited families, as well as their offspring made up about eight per cent of the population and lived in Germany as foreign nationals - whether born on German territory or not. In comparison, 'Aussiedler' (immigrants from Eastern Europe whose numbers rose by the mid 1980s) and until reunification in 1990 'Übersiedler' (immigrants from the former GDR) had

an unrestricted right to German citizenship until 1993[2], because of their ethnic German descent. Koopmans et al. (2005) expand this approach by showing that conceptions of nationhood do not only translate to the legal, but also to countries' discursive opportunity structures and thereby characterise their public discourse. Together, the tight association between nationhood and ethnicity and its manifestation in German public discourse suggest that for native Germans ethnic categories are rather characterised by nationality than by race, religion or language and that ethnic out-groups are in general conceived of as foreign nationals. Hence, the first two types of categories I expect native Germans to use when describing ethnic out-groups are country of origin and foreign nationals categories.

By the mid 1980s the number of refugees from Eastern Europe, Turkey, Iraq and Yugoslavia who sought asylum in Germany increased rapidly. A peak was reached with over 400,000 applications for asylum in 1992. Accordingly, the German right-wing extremism of the early 1990s was characterised by a focus on asylum seekers (Braun and Koopmans, 2010), who were seen as a main economic threat by the German population, even though they were not allowed to participate in the German labour market (Steinbach, 2004). In consequence, the asylum law was reformed in 1993. Since then only those can apply for asylum who do not enter over 'safe third countries'. These events received a lot of media attention and established asylum seekers as a third type of category for ethnic out-groups.

Two recent trends contest this tradition of an ethnic conception of nationhood. First, political attempts to change German citizenship law began in the early 1990s. These attempts resulted in the citizenship law of 2000 that introduces the acquisition of German nationality by birth in the national territory as well as the right to naturalisation after eight years of economically independent and legal residence. As a result, the country's foreigner politics changed to integration politics and the category of 'person with a migration background'[3] was introduced to both the German micro-census and the public discourse. Thereby, migrants are officially recognised as potential citizens rather than as tolerated foreign nationals so that person with migration background categories denote the fourth type of category native Germans might use when they try to be politically correct. A second recent trend in Germany's immigration history is the public attention Islam and Muslims receive. Since 9/11 there has been a public shift of attention from national groups to Muslims and Islam (Dolezal et al., 2010; Yurdakul, 2009). In contrast to the ethnic tradition of nationhood, this trend implies that ethnicity is increasingly defined by religion, suggesting religious categories as the fifth and final type.

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[2]Since 1993 only 'Spätaussiedler' who have been born before 1993 and come from CIS members have the right to citizenship.

[3]Person with a migration background denotes people who were born abroad or have a parent who was born abroad.

However, against this elaboration of the conception of German nationhood as a background for this enquiry, Brubaker (1992, p. 242 note 9) himself emphasises that such conceptions are relevant primarily for national elites and questions whether they correspond to the views of the general population. Existing survey research on this question provides inconclusive evidence, with some finding relations between individuals' attitudes and citizenship models (e.g. Wright, 2011), while others do not (e.g. Bail, 2008). Such a line of critique seems even more valid when we disregard the particular ethnic categories used, and focus on the frequency with which we expect native Germans to use ethnic categories as compared to others such as class, age or gender categories. On the one hand, we should expect ethnic categories to be relevant in everyday life and a manifest reference to the question who causes problems, given that ethnic categories are taken for granted in German public discourse and that media attention related to Islam and Muslims is increasing in recent years (Dolezal et al., 2010). Yet again, it is unclear how or whether one should expect these macro-level trends to translate to the frequency with which native Germans categorise groups that they see as responsible for neighbourhood problems. Accordingly, in Wimmer 's (2004) ethnographic work on downtown neighbourhoods in Basel, Bern and Zurich, categories that denote ethnic out-groups are by no means the most frequently applied distinctions. I expect that while the kinds of categories people use reflect macro-level trends, the salience of categories is more context-specific.

Under Which Conditions do Ethnic Categories Become Salient? But which are the context-specific conditions that make people characterise problem groups in ethnic terms? While the literature on anti-immigrant sentiments has established a range of explanations (for reviews see: Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010; Wimmer, 1997), I will here focus on two contextual factors and discuss these from the perspectives of first, group threat theory and second, the disintegration approach. A first possibility is that those people living in neighbourhoods with conflicts between native Germans and ethnic minorities should be more likely to apply ethnic categories.

Group threat theory (e.g. Blalock, 1967) assumes that larger percentages of minorities go along with real or perceived competition for individual but also collective economic and symbolic resources as well as perceived conflicts over power. This, in turn, causes prejudices and growing social distances, because discrimination is a means in the competition and can ensure a dominant position in the struggle over power. For present purposes, this translates into the presumably obvious expectation that the frequency of categorising problem groups as ethnic increases with the percentage of ethnic minorities in the neighbourhood. But how should we imagine the relationship between the likelihood to use an ethnic

distinction and ethnic minority group size to be shaped?

While the recent literature mostly tests a linear relation without much further discussion (for a review see: Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010), Blalock (1967) actually makes two different predictions. If discrimination with which the majority reacts to ethnic competition is successful, the relation should be positive, but decreasing in strength. This follows from the idea that in areas with higher ethnic minority percentages discriminatory practices are already established, which compromises the minorities' competitiveness and thus makes further increases in the ethnic minority percentage less threatening (Blalock, 1967, pp. 147-150). For threats concerned with power loss, Blalock assumes the opposite, namely a relation with an increasing slope, because he conceptualises power as a multiplicative function of mobilisation and resources (Blalock, 1967, pp. 150-154). Since both resources and mobilisation potential increase with the percentage of ethnic minorities, minorities' power increases exponentially with their relative size and so should the majority's threat of power loss. Insofar as both processes overlap, we should expect what indeed most empirical studies on prejudice and threat test, namely an approximately linear relationship.

There is even good reason to assume a relationship that first increases and then decreases again. Two processes suggest such a relationship: First, Semyonov et al. (2004) emphasise the importance of perceived minority group sizes and how these are inflated especially when there are only few minority members. Second, inter-ethnic friendships and inter-marriages increase as opportunities to make contact rise with the percentage of ethnic minorities (e.g. Martinovic, 2010). Thus an initially positive relation between minority percentage and threat, aggravated by inflated perceptions of the latter, should level off and even start to decline as perceptions of out-group size become less inflated and processes of social integration emerge. Yet, Semyonov et al. (2006) allow for decreasing or increasing effects of out-group size on prejudice over time, but find no evidence for any curvilinear relation. Overall, what seems on first blush to be a fairly banal statement on the relationship between ethnic minority group size and the likelihood to categorise problem groups as ethnic is not so trivial, once we theorise about the actual shape of the relationship.

Next to the relative size of ethnic out-groups, group threat theory suggests that poor economic conditions foster ethnic conflicts, by making the resources over which ethnic groups compete scarcer (e.g. Coenders et al., 2008). But as Blalock qualifies, only so far as "discriminatory behaviour is perceived as instrumental either for large numbers of persons or for influential elites, in achieving status objectives by these efficient means" (Blalock, 1967, p. 49). This qualification implies an interaction effect between poor economic condition and the percentage of ethnic minorities, because in places with no or only few out-group members,

discrimination is not an effective means of competition within poorly performing economies; only few people would be affected.

In comparison, the disintegration approach (e.g. Anhut and Heitmeyer, 2000) does not make such a qualification in its prediction on the impact of economic decline on prejudices and discrimination. The approach builds on Durkheim's concept of Anomie, which denotes a breakdown of a society's value system. It predicts rapid social change to erode individuals' embeddedness in norms, values and social relations. This process of disintegration, meaning that individuals' capacities of adaptation cannot keep up with the speed of social change, is associated with substantive uncertainty, feelings of threat and questions about personal, social and national identity. The responsibilities for these unsatisfying circumstances are then projected on ethnic out-groups that are seen as threat, independently of any real existing ethnic conflict. Here discrimination is not a means to achieve status goals, but rather a coping strategy that helps to retain a positive self-conception, because the problem is transferred from one's own inability to adapt to the new circumstances to the 'outsiders' and also presents an opportunity to release frustration. Furthermore, nothing suggests a levelling of this process, in contrast to group threat theory's predictions on the effects of out-group size. Quite to the contrary, a continuation of economic decline can function as validation or empirical support for actors who propagate ideas on the responsibility of ethnic minorities for the poor economic conditions. Thus a worsening of the economic conditions should yield more convincing power in regions with initially poor economic performance.

Data and Methods

The Open-Ended Variable and Its Coding   The initial third of the EDCA-Survey entails a module on the neighbourhood. After having been asked about the general condition of the neighbourhood, but before being posed questions on immigrants and inter-ethnic relations in the neighbourhood, respondents were posed the following open-ended question:

> "Which groups of people are mostly responsible for problems in your neighbourhood? You may now name up to three groups."

The interviewers were strictly instructed not to give any examples and to note the answers literally. The analysis draws on the various answers to this open question, which range from 'speeding car drivers' or 'teenagers' to 'scouts'.

In order to analyse this open-ended question, I had to code ethnic out-group distinctions made by respondents. Given the above-made definition of ethnicity, I accounted for national, racial, religious and linguistic dimensions. A frequent response was a negative ethnic category as in 'foreigners' or 'immigrants', which

are negative definitions of not native German (negative in logical, not normative terms). In line with the theoretical discussion above, I differentiated three categories here: foreign nationals, persons with migration background and asylum seekers. The respondents also named concrete nationalities (such as 'Turks' or 'Albanians') with each receiving their own category in the coding procedure. Furthermore, there are instances in which respondents named racial categories (such as 'blacks') regional categories (such as 'Southern Europeans') or religious categories (such as 'Muslims'), all of which again received their own category independent of their frequency. Finally, I coded the remaining answers, so as to give an impression of non-ethnic categories applied to characterise problem groups. This latter coding, however, is not theoretically guided and just serves the purpose of a comparison to the ethnic categories. Some of these answers were not coded, because the categories they entailed were used by less than 0.5 per cent of the respondents who gave a valid answer; examples are 'Scouts' or 'Neighbours'. It is important to note that many responses involved a couple of distinctions or a combination of categories as in the example of 'Turkish Teenagers' or 'Young men with migration background'. In such cases the reply was coded as several categories and not as one category 'Turkish Teenagers' or so. This means the frequency of categories does not add up to 100 per cent, because people named up to three groups, and some of these responses involve several categories. The categorisation process thus reveals how many respondents gave responses that involved the categories coded here.

Just Another Threat Measure? For the enquiry of contextual factors, I generated a binary variable differentiating those who used any ethnic category to characterise problem groups in the neighbourhood from those who did not. To what extent is this binary variable not just another threat measure? Figure 6.1 shows the density distribution of a common threat measure and compares respondents who did draw an ethnic distinction to those who did not. The threat measure is a predicted factor score, which relies on four indicator variables, measuring economic, cultural and religious threat and whether migrant children threaten the quality of education native children receive. The dashed reference line shows the 75 percentile and the three-dot-dashed reference line the 25 percentile of the threat measure, here taken to designate the most and least threatened respondents. On average, respondents who did draw an ethnic distinction indeed feel more threatened (t-test (diff≤0) p= 0.0018). A larger share of respondents who did draw an ethnic distinction falls above the 75 percentile threshold (51 as compared to 39 per cent) and a smaller share below the 25 percentile threshold (12 as compared to 22 per cent).

But Figure 6.1 and the just-reported percentages also show that there is a

Figure 6.1: Threat by Ethnic Category Usage
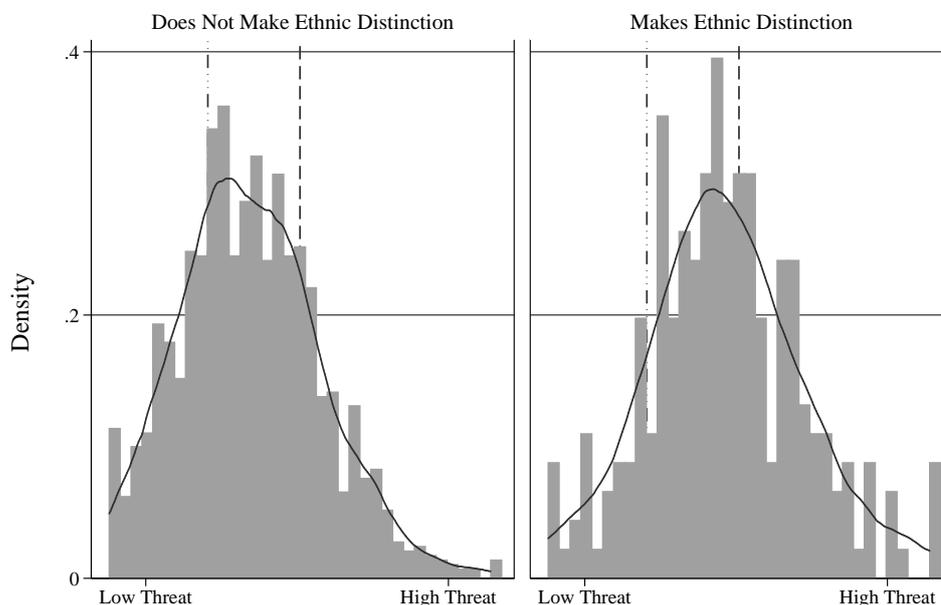
considerable number of respondents who do not use an ethnic distinction yet feel very threatened; conversely, there is also a considerable number of people who do draw an ethnic distinction, but do not feel threatened. This supports my claim that the salience of ethnic distinctions in respondents' everyday lives measures something other than our standard threat measures, so that the current chapter complements existing research.

No Answers, 'Do Not Know'-Answers and the Population Under Investigation Not all respondents did name a category. Some for example said there are no problems in their neighbourhood. Next to respondents who gave such a valid response, a considerable number of respondents either did not give an answer or said they did not know an answer. Figure 6.2 shows that only about 31 per cent of the respondents did actually name a category, whereas about 17 per cent think that no particular group can be blamed or that there are no problems in the first place. These overall 46 per cent of the respondents gave a valid answer to the question and their responses are investigated here.

54 per cent of respondents not giving an answer or saying that they do not know an answer is, by normal standards, a high proportion of missing values. Yet, studying categories that people employ necessitates a vaguely formulated question, so as not to predetermine the answers. Accordingly, many people will feel uneasy

Figure 6.2: The Population Under Investigation
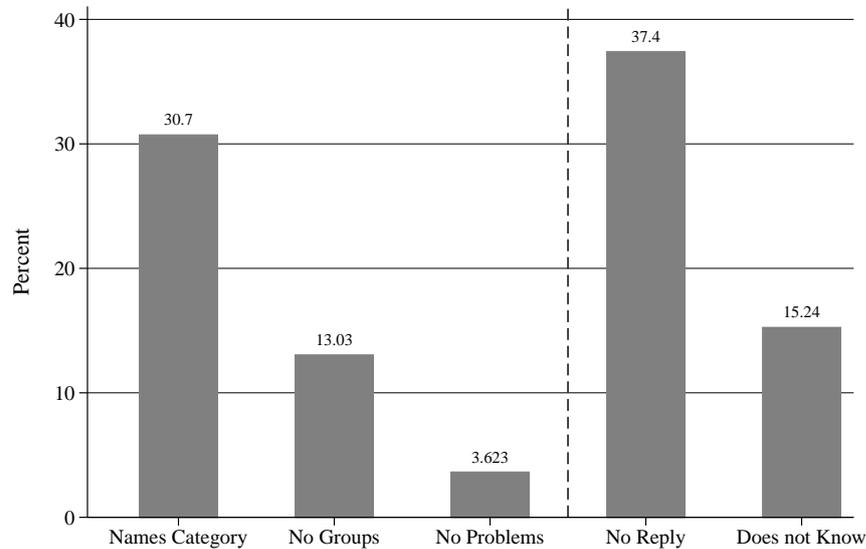
about misunderstanding the question and thus open-ended questions are known to generate higher rates of item non-response (e.g. Peterson, 2000, p. 32).

Presumably, missing values are associated with selection bias. Let me make two comments on this point. First, mentioning a category could also be an indication of salience and a severe frustration with a problem group. The threshold to actually blame a certain (ethnic) group in a public survey might be rather high. It is of interest, therefore, to study those who surpass this threshold. Second, and in contrast to the implications made by assuming strong bias, missing a value, i.e. not giving an answer or even explicitly mentioning not to know one, might also indicate the absence of salient categories for responsible problem groups.

In this regard, the regression results of Table 6.1 show that respondents who miss a value report levels of neighbourhood satisfaction that are much higher than and significantly different from those of respondents who did name a category. More importantly, those respondents missing a value are not appreciably more likely to move to another neighbourhood than respondents who said that there are no problems in their neighbourhood. This stands in contrast to respondents who did categorise a problem group, since these are the only ones that do have a significantly higher likelihood to plan to move away. This supports my claim that respondents who miss a value can also be seen as an intermediate category between those saying that there are no problem groups or problems and those who do. For this reason, all inference statistics in the remainder of this chapter are conducted both without and with the 56 per cent of the respondents who did not

Table 6.1: (Non-)Response and Neighbourhood Satisfaction

	Neighbourhood Satisfaction (OLS)	Plans to Move Away (Logisitc)
main		
Reference: No Problems	0	0
	(.)	(.)
No Groups	-0.122	0.396
	(0.125)	(0.488)
Does not Know	-0.580***	0.632
	(0.113)	(0.467)
No Reply	-0.545***	0.405
	(0.115)	(0.437)
Names Category	-1.162***	0.918*
	(0.134)	(0.438)
Observations	4347	4351
R^2	0.070	
Pseudo R^2		0.109
AIC	17300.8	2632.4

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses; $^+$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
Effects of **control variables** are shown in Table E.1 on page 261

give an answer, so as to further enhance the validity of the enquiry.

Modelling Strategy   All inference statistics on contextual conditions are based on logistic regression models with cluster-robust standard errors to account for the data structure that is clustered at the regional (Kreis) level. I also ran rare events logistic regression models (King and Zeng, 2001), but since these support the same conclusions, their results are only shown in the appendix. The models include several predictor variables: education, age, gender, religious denomination, regional population density, regional share of unemployed in 2007 and the change in the share of unemployed from 2007 to 2009, a dummy for East Germany, an interaction between the latter two variables and the share of foreign nationals. To check the robustness of the findings, the regressions were estimated for three populations:

1. for respondents who actually named any category and those that said there were no problem groups or no problems in their neighbourhood (Model 1)

2. only for respondents naming a category for a problem group (Model 2)

3. and finally for all respondents including those who did not reply or did not know an answer (Model 3).

Since the results are by and large robust across all models, the discussion refers only to Model 1.

Results

To what extent do native Germans see ethnic out-groups as responsible for neighbourhood problems? Figure 6.3 shows the frequencies of ethnic and other categories mentioned by at least 0.5 per cent of the respondents who gave a valid answer.

Figure 6.3: Commonly used Categories
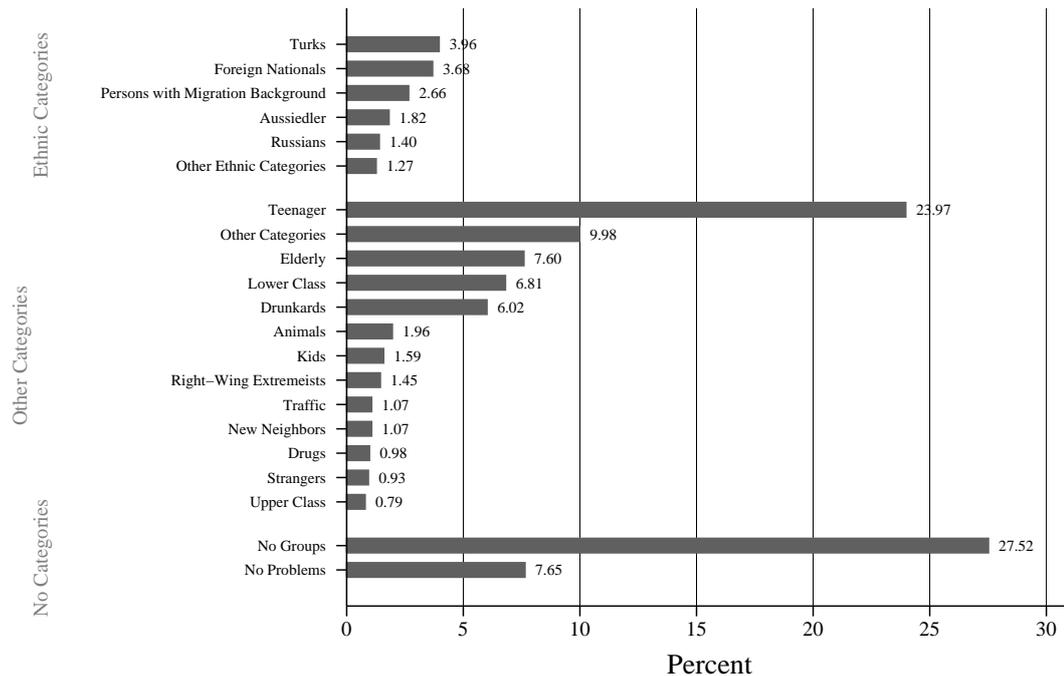
Taken together, about 13 per cent of those 46 per cent of respondents who did give a valid response, used an ethnic category to denote problem groups. But as in Wimmer's (2004) work, categories that denote ethnic out-groups are by no means the most frequent. About 23 per cent use teenagers as a category to describe problem groups in the neighbourhood. One might be inclined to highlight that ethnic categorisations are the second-most frequent when taken together. However, next to teenagers, responses concerned with the elderly, lower class, and drunkards are more frequent than the mentioning of Turks, the most frequent ethnic category. Animals, and among them mostly dogs, are more often seen as responsible for problems than the second-most frequently mentioned ethnic category, namely Aussiedler. Even if we only take into account respondents that

live in regions with shares of foreign nationals that lie above the median[4], as is shown in Figure E.1 on page 262, the overall frequencies of ethnic categories increase (as can also be concluded from the regression models discussed below), but the discussed relational pattern does not change generally. These results suggest that people's everyday life issues differ from those that are expounded in public discourse. This is also true for other salient macro issues, such as class, religion and region as highlighted by cleavage theory (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Neither divides between Catholics and Protestants or Christians and Muslims nor between people from East and West Germany play any role. Lower class is a more common category for problem groups. Yet, examples of responses in this category include 'low educated', 'homeless people' or 'underclass mob' and these responses do not seem to reflect the conflict between capital and labour.

Turning from magnitude to type of ethnic distinctions, we first see that about half of the respondents who do use an ethnic category, applied a distinction that denotes none native Germans in general such as 'migrant children' or 'foreigners'. A comparison of the three types of general distinctions (foreign nationals, person with migration background and asylum seekers), shows that the foreign nationals category is more frequently applied than that of persons with migration background. This indicates that in their everyday life, large parts of the population did not follow the change in publicly used categories. The asylum seeker category is mentioned by only 0.36 per cent of the respondents, which implies that the conflict of the early 1990s has passed.

A slight majority of those respondents using an ethnic category specified a concrete ethnic group. Nearly 30 different categories describing distinct ethnic groups can be found in the answers, with only three being named by more than 0.5 per cent of the respondents. These three are Turks, followed by Aussiedler and Russians and relate to the largest migrant groups in Germany. All other ethnic categories are mentioned by only few, on the whole amounting to only little more than one per cent of the respondents. Two thirds of these are country of origin categories with the others being regional (such as Eastern Europeans) or national minority categories (such as Kurds). A single respondent used the racial category blacks.

This also means that less than 0.14 per cent of the respondents mentioned Muslims as problem group and thus used a religious category and no one characterised an ethnic out-group by their language. One might argue that people answering 'Turks' are thinking of a religious distinction, since the categories of Turks and Muslims overlap to a large degree. But for this analysis it is precisely of interest, which types of categories seem to be the more salient ones in describing certain people: country of origin, foreign nationals, person with migration back-

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[4]which might be called for since the EDCA-Survey is not respresentative

ground or religious categories? The answer to this question is that the results strongly suggest the first three. As further validation we can investigate whether the usage of certain categories, such as Turk, is associated with other categories applied, such as Muslim. This is possible, because respondents could name up to three groups and because they could also name groups that involve several categories such as 'Turkish teenagers'. Table 6.2 shows the tetrachoric correlation coefficients between the binary variables denoting the most frequently mentioned ethnic categories and those other mentioned categories, where the coefficients passed the five per cent significance threshold.

Table 6.2: Tetrachoric Correlations between Categories

	Migrants	Foreign Nationals	Turks
Migrants	1		
Foreign Nationals		1	
Turks			1
Russians			0.6902**
Aussiedler			0.2674*
Teenager	0.2406**	0.1544*	-.1646*
Lower Class		0.2213**	

Only significant correlations; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Respondents who denote problem groups as foreign nationals also characterise problem groups by their low socio-economic status as in 'foreigners socially deprived' or one respondent who named as a first group 'foreigners' and as a second 'welfare recipients'. The more politically-correct respondents, i.e. those using the category of persons with migration background, have a tendency to characterise problem groups as teenagers as in 'teenagers with migration background'. If the five per cent significance level is considered, this also holds for those respondents who characterised ethnic out-groups as foreign nationals, but only to a weaker extent. Respondents who apply a category that denotes concrete ethnic groups are more likely to name a second concrete ethnic group. But neither is there a relation between the category of Muslim and any other category nor among the national categories that we tend to associate with Islam such as Turk and Moroccan. By and large, ethnic minorities are identified by their national origin and are not conceptually classified as religious, linguistic and even less as racial groups. Hence, ethnic categories largely correspond to the classical conception of German nationhood and do reflect the recent political, legal and discursive changes only to a limited extent.

After having discussed the types and frequency of ethnic categories, I now turn to investigate the conditions under which ethnic distinctions become salient; what makes native Germans blame ethnic minorities for problems in their neighbourhood? As any version of group threat theory would predict, the results of regression Model 1 of Table 6.3, which comprises the main results, show a highly significant

Table 6.3: Ethnic Category Usage (Logistic)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
% Foreign Nationals	0.184***	0.192***	0.120**
	(0.0528)	(0.0547)	(0.0439)
% Foreign Nationals^2	-0.00390**	-0.00405**	-0.00206$^+$
	(0.00144)	(0.00152)	(0.00119)
Local Unemployment Rate$_{07}$	0.0672*	0.0464*	0.0336$^+$
	(0.0290)	(0.0216)	(0.0194)
$\Delta Unemployment_{07-09}$	-0.542*	-0.525*	-0.350$^+$
	(0.254)	(0.237)	(0.210)
Local Unemployment Rate$_{07}$*			
$\Delta Unemployment_{07-09}$	0.0852*	0.0768**	0.0605*
	(0.0344)	(0.0296)	(0.0282)
Observations	2002	1300	4141
Pseudo R^2	0.064	0.075	0.054
AIC	1482.8	1237.6	1875.6

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses
$^+$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
Effects of **control variables** are shown in Table E.2 on page 263

Table 6.4: Ethnic Category Usage, Additional Results (Logistic)

|	(1)	(2)	(3)
% Foreign Nationals	0.192**	0.202***	0.120*
	(0.0675)	(0.0593)	(0.0506)
% Foreign Nationals^2	-0.00423**	-0.00422**	-0.00242$^+$
	(0.00162)	(0.00143)	(0.00143)
$\Delta Unemployment_{07-09}$	0.315	0.214	0.191
	(0.420)	(0.429)	(0.340)
%Foreign Nationals*			
$\Delta Unemployment_{07-09}$	-0.0386	-0.0313	-0.00247
	(0.0660)	(0.0615)	(0.0494)
%Foreign Nationals^2*			
$\Delta Unemployment_{07-09}$	0.00101	0.000965	-0.000329
	(0.00218)	(0.00190)	(0.00157)
Observations	2002	1300	4141
Pseudo R^2	0.060	0.073	0.053
AIC	1488.4	1241.1	1877.7

Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses
$^+$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
Effects of **control variables** are shown in Table E.3 on page 264

positive relationship between the regional percentage of foreign nationals and the likelihood to mention an ethnic minority as being responsible for problems in the neighbourhood. As there are different expectations on the shape of this relation, it is visualised in Figure 6.4 along with its confidence intervals (denoted by the dashed lines). The plot shows the average marginal effect[5] of the percentage of foreign nationals on the probability to see immigrants in general or ethnic minorities as a problem group conditional on the percentage of foreign nationals.

Figure 6.4: The Diminishing Average Marginal Effect of Out-Group Size on Drawing Ethnic Distinctions
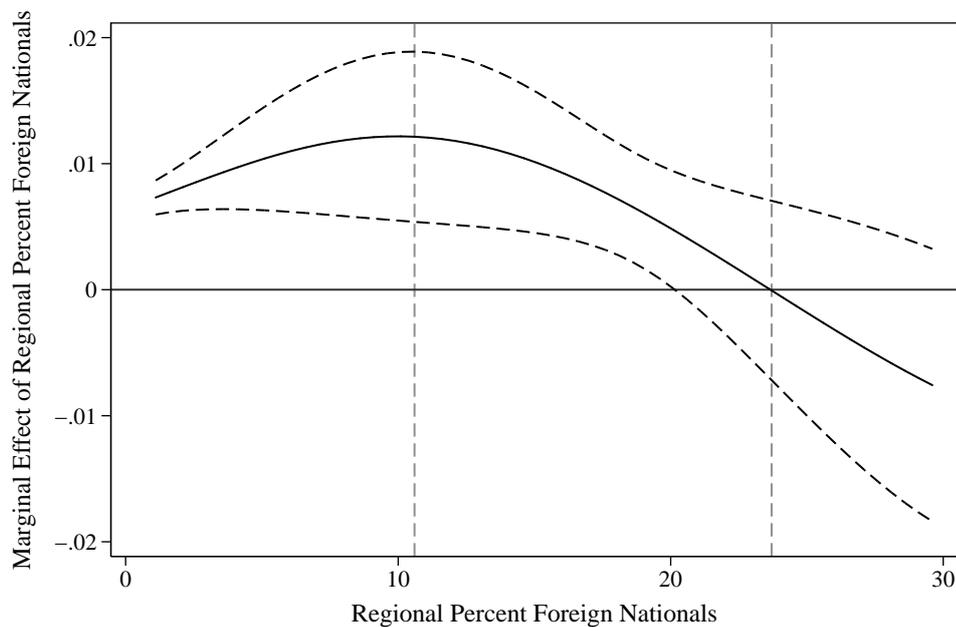
Neither Blalock's assumption of an exponential impact because of power threat (as a linear slope would signify), nor the expectation of a linear relationship (as a flat line above the zero level would suggest) are supported. Instead, we see the following curvilinear relationship: Initially, as the percentage of foreign nationals increases, the marginal effect of the percentage of foreign nationals on the probability to draw an ethnic distinction increases as well. After a maximum turning point at about 11 per cent foreign nationals (first grey line from the left), the positive marginal effect decreases in strength. At about 23 per cent foreign nationals (second grey dashed line from the left), the model suggests an inflection point, where the relationship even turns from positive to negative. However, here the

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[5]The change in probability to draw an ethnic distinction if the per cent of foreigners increased by one per cent.

observations get sparse and thus the confidence intervals are too broad to allow for any thorough conclusions. Overall, these findings fit best to the fourth assumption. According to this interpretation, inflated perceptions of out-group size are driving the increasing marginal effect as there are few ethnic minority members initially. After a certain number of ethnic minorities has established itself in the region, the perceptions become more realistic so that the marginal effect remains positive, but decreases. Eventually, processes of social integration diminish this marginal effect even further.

Figure 6.5: The Average Marginal Effect of Economic Decline on Drawing Ethnic Distinction Conditioned on Out-Group Size
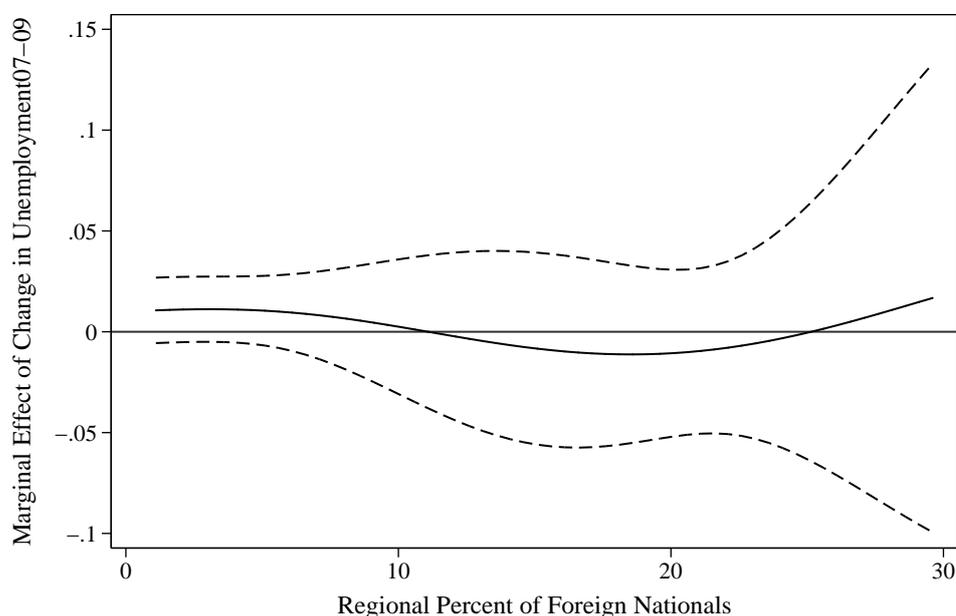
Turning to economic decline, group threat theory conditions any association on the share of ethnic minorities, since only in their presence is discrimination an efficient means in achieving status goals. However, Model 1 of Table 6.4, which shows the results of the respective additional regressions, does not support the hypothesis on an interaction effect between an increase in unemployment and the percentage of foreign nationals. This can also be seen from Figure 6.5, which visualises the marginal effect of an increase in unemployment conditional on the relative share of foreign nationals. Maybe, as the disintegration approach suggests, the assumption of discrimination as an instrumental means is too rigid?

Focusing on Model 1 of Table 6.3 again, we see the effect of rising regional unemployment from 2007 to 2009 conditioned on the initial level of unemployment

Figure 6.6: The Accumulating Average Marginal Effect of Economic Decline on Drawing Ethnic Distinctions
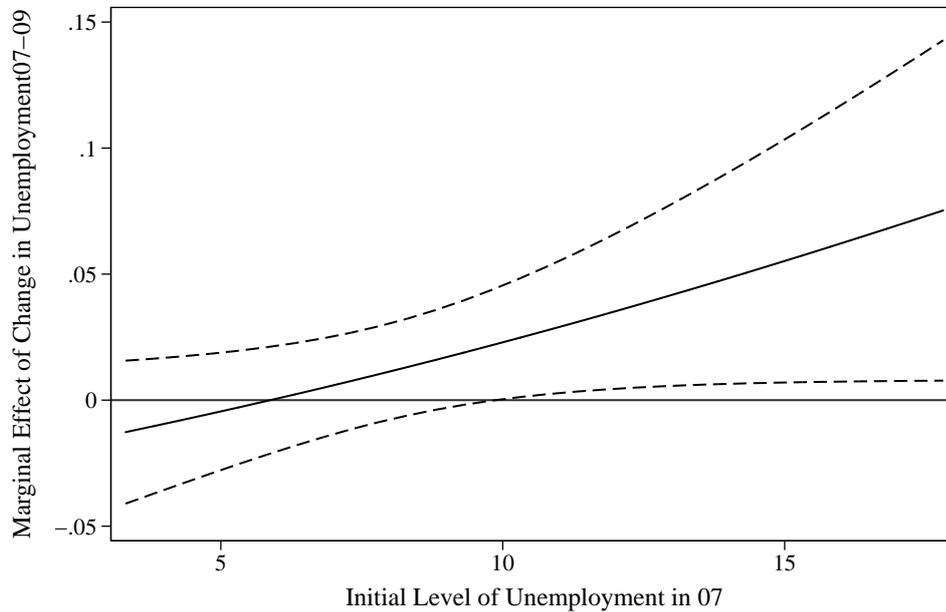
in 2007. The single coefficients should not be interpreted, because of the interaction term, which makes the impact of rising unemployment dependent on the initial level of unemployment. Instead, Figure 6.6 visualises the results, by showing the average marginal effect of the change in unemployment as a function of the initial level of unemployment. The plot suggests that for regions with initially low levels of unemployment an increase in the same has no impact on the probability to categorise problem groups in the neighbourhood as ethnic. But as we turn to regions with initially higher levels of unemployment, the impact of an increase of unemployment becomes stronger. In regions with an initial level of unemployment of more than ten per cent, an increase of unemployment is significantly related to an increase in the probability to see ethnic minorities as responsible for neighbourhood problems. With higher levels of initial unemployment the marginal effect of an increase in unemployment accumulates in strength. Thus the marginal effect of economic decline behaves just the other way as that of the above-discussed out-group size: while the marginal effect of out-group size levels-off and might even become negative, the impact of economic decline seems to accumulate in strength.

In addition to these contextual factors, Model 1 of Table E.2 on page 263 also shows that the likelihood to make an ethnic distinction decreases with education and employment and is lower for women, which is in line with expectations

of both group threat theory, the disintegration approach and earlier studies on individual-level predictors of prejudices (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). The difference between East and West Germany as well as the impact of population density tend to be negative, but are not robust over the three models of Table 6.3.

Conclusion

As a consequence of the claim that ethnic categories are first and foremost cognitive categories that actors impose on the world, arises the central need to study the conditions under which these become salient. Given this background, this chapter sought to investigate two questions: first, along which ethnic distinctions do native Germans conceptually organise responsibility for problems in their neighbourhood and second, how do contextual conditions help explain why people characterise problem groups as ethnic over other categorisations. To do so, I analysed answers to an open-ended question asking respondents about 'which groups of people are mostly responsible for problems in your neighbourhood'? Such an open ended item is not just another threat measure, because it allows investigating the salience of ethnic categories in the minds of respondents, something existing survey research, which relies on standardised survey items, does not inform us about.

Regarding native Germans' use of ethnic folk classifications, this chapter shows that about thirteen per cent of the respondents did draw an ethnic distinction to denote neighbourhood problem groups. Yet the elderly, drunkards, lower class members and especially teenagers are mentioned more frequently than any single ethnic category. Thereby, this chapter suggests that the issues of people's everyday lives differ from those that are expounded in public discourse. About half of the respondents who did draw an ethnic distinction applied a general category by drawing a distinction against non-natives in general. The other respondents who did draw an ethnic distinction used country of origin categories. In contrast to Brubaker's doubts, this chapter suggests that the ethnic distinctions native Germans draw do reflect the classical conception of German nationhood and its immigration history. In so far as Banton (2011) is right in positing that the way the majority conceives of itself provides the standard against which members of minorities are judged this also allows us to infer that the self-conception of native Germans is national and not religious or racial. To further validate this conclusion, it would be interesting to replicate these analyses in countries with different conceptions of nationhood and immigration histories such as France, the UK, the US or the Netherlands to see whether in these countries ethnic out-groups are defined in other terms, such as religion or race.

The recent legal, political and discursive changes are only partially reflected in the everyday ethnic category usage of native Germans. Only half of those re-

spondents who use a general category follow the change in official categories, which recognises ethnic minorities as migrants and hence as potential citizens rather than tolerated foreign nationals. Furthermore, despite growing media attention, Islam and Muslims play no role in the ways native Germans ascribe responsibility for neighbourhood problems. Further research is needed to investigate whether certain kinds of ethnic distinctions translate more easily from the macro-level to everyday life and how they gain in salience. In this regard, it would also be interesting to study migrants' use of ethnic categories and investigate whether it relates to the public discourse of the host country or the country of origin.

With respect to the two explanatory contextual determinants, the results suggest a curvilinear relationship between out-group size and seeing ethnic minorities as problem groups that first increases in strength, but decreases in strength after a threshold of about eleven per cent. After this threshold, processes of social integration and less inflated perceptions of out-group sizes take place presumably; this would explain the specific curvilinear function. In contrast, the impact of regional economic decline, as measured by change in regional unemployment, increases in strength in regions with initially higher levels of unemployment. In such regions, so one possible explanation, the negative development can be framed as empirical validation of the claim it was the minorities' fault. Overall this results in the sobering conclusion that while people do adapt to ethnic diversity, the negative impact of economic decline is accumulating in strength.

These findings complement existing research in three important ways. First, it shows that predictions of central theories on prejudice also hold for the salience of ethnic distinctions. Second, rather than just testing for linear dependence, the chapter shows more complex and theoretically plausible relations between ethnic out-group size, economic decline and the probability to blame ethnic out-groups for neighbourhood problems. Third and most importantly, however, the analysis answers the question raised by the literature on ethnicity as cognition, why and under which conditions people start to employ ethnic categories rather than others such as age, class or gender distinctions to conceptually organise persons and groups in their social environment; something ethnographic studies, claim analysis and other research have attended to, but that existing survey research has not been able to do.

The analysis also faces limitations. Challenges of analysing non-standardised variables for category usage include dealing with larger numbers of missing values and sensitivity of the results to the coding procedure. Several measures, such as regression models with different populations or comparisons to other indicators were taken to counter possible objections. Despite these problems, the fact that such an open-ended variable enables insights into people's lines of reasoning without conceptually predetermining categories seems to make for a rewarding social sci-

ence approach. With powerful software to handle string variables, future research should investigate the potentials of open-ended questions and different ways to code such data in both conceptually meaningful and empirically reliable ways.