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ABSTRACT

It is commonly assumed that sport plays an important role for national identity. However, empirical research has primarily focused on sport's role for emotional-affectice rather than cognitive aspects of national identity. Therefore, research presented here explores whether identification with the German national soccer team serves to reinforce ethnic or civic conceptions of national identity. Analyses of a unique dataset conducted during the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 EURO show that national team identification is an important determinant of national pride and national belonging. Respondents who identify with the national soccer team can adhere to different conceptions of national identity. It seems that national pride and affection as well as conceptions of national identity represent stable attitudes not affected by the success of the national team. Further research should improve conceptual clarity and measurement.

Introduction

It is commonly assumed that sport serves as both, catalyst of social cohesion and integration *and* marker of social and cultural divisions and exclusions (Mangan 1996). Accordingly, scholars have claimed that international sport reinforces feelings of national affection and identity (Washington and Karen 2001). In particular, national teams are supposed to play a central role in defining and symbolizing national identity and belonging. As Eric Hobsbawm (1992: 143) has put it, 'the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people. The individual, even one who cheers, becomes a symbol of his nation himself'.

However, even though sociological and psychological scholarship on sport and nationalism has intensified, a thorough look at the literature reveals a number of research gaps. Thus, scholars have primarily focused on the impact of sport on the emotional-affective dimension of national identity, that is, sport's capacity to invoke feelings of national pride and belonging, but less on its cognitive dimension, that is, sport's role for reinforcing specific conceptions of belonging.

Concerning the emotional-effective dimension, empirical studies suggest that international sports might inspire national pride and feelings of national belonging, but also that such effects might be rather short-lived (Mutz 2012). Concerning the cognitive dimension,

Billig (1995) has argued that international sports naturalize a nationalistic perspective according to which the world is structured in nation states and in which national belonging is central. In contrast, research presented here focuses on a different cognitive aspect of national identity, that is, the question of how belonging to a nation is defined. Scholars usually distinguish between two conceptions of national identity, that is, an ethnic version two to an ethnic version, a nation is defined by ethno-cultural heritage and membership is granted on the base of ethnic descent. In contrast, a civic version perceives the nation as political unity to which membership is granted on the base of a commitment to its political institutions, values and rights (Brubaker 1990). What is here ultimately at stake is the question how a national community is defined, who can be part of it and, by implication, who will be granted citizenship.

The question whether sport reinforces or challenges certain conceptions of national belonging is of particular interest in a European context where persistent migration flows have not only changed the ethnic fabric of societies (Pettigrew 1998) but also left its impact on sports. Multi-ethnicity comes with implications for the ways in which citizenship is taught, publicised, contested and symbolized through sport (Guschwan 2014: 860–861). As Poli (2007) has put it, sport represents a domain where the 'de-ethnisation' of the nation has become most visible. At the same, immigration is far from uncontroversial. Unfavourable views toward immigrants have been widely spread across receiving societies and citizens generally prefer lower levels of immigration (Ceobanu and Escandell 2011). The recent refugee crisis has served to turn immigration policy into a major political issue and has resulted in political polarization and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments (Kentmen-Cin and Erisen 2016).

Starting from the insight that the German national soccer team represents a national icon, this piece of research asks whether identification with the German national soccer team serves to reinforce ethnic exclusionism or a more open civic concept of national identity. As already indicated, this question is not only of theoretical interest but also of broader political relevance in particular in a German context. In general, a civic identity is related to more positive attitudes toward immigrants and foreigners (Billiet, Maddens, and Beerten 2003; Figueiredo and Elkins 2003). With regard to Germany, it is important to note that German national identity has been traditionally based on ethnic exclusionism. At the same time, Germany is a main target of migration flows. In order to provide a tentative answer on how national team identification and conceptions of national belonging relate, two waves of street survey conducted in the city of Münster during the FIFA World Cup of 2014 and the EURO 2016 are analyzed.

Sport and national identity

Key insights and research gaps

Sport sociologists have long adhered to the idea that international sport plays an important role for national identity (Washington and Karen 2001). In essence, the argument relies on three specific characteristics of international sports (cf. Meier and Mutz 2016):

First, international sport events represent textbook occasions for 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995) as these competitions are organized on a national base and represent unique showcases for displaying national symbols. Therefore, Billig (1995: 127) has argued that

international sport provides a 'constant flagging' reinforcing and naturalizing a nationalistic perspective according to which the world is organized on a national base: 'The constant flaggings ensure that, whatever else is forgotten in a world of information overload, we do not forget our homelands.' By reinforcing a nationalistic conception of how the world is organized, international sport serves to reproduce the nation state. Moreover, in particular major sport events render the national category salient. As emphasized by social psychologists, international sport can create social connections, which come with the potential of tangible psychological benefits in particular in terms of a sense of belongingness and connectedness to society (Wann 2006b: 273).

Second, due to its dramatic and competitive character (Giulianotti 2012), sport has unique potential for arousal. Accordingly, spectators often report strong (positive and negative) emotions, e.g. joy, euphoria, anger, sadness or disappointment (Kerr et al. 2005). Assumed that international sports serves to make the national identity salient, positive emotions can translate into enhanced self-esteem if audiences view national athletes or teams as extensions of themselves. It is well-known among social psychologists that individuals often enhance their social identity by identifying with prestigious groups (Wann 2006b: 273). Accordingly, sport psychologists have demonstrated that identification with successful athletes or teams represents a central motive for any sport consumption (Wann and Branscombe 1993; Wann 1995). In the context of international sports, audiences identify with athletes or teams on the base of a shared national identity. Thus, international sport is a suited venue for enhancing national pride.

Finally, sport bears the potential to add positive images and success stories to the concept of the nation. As has been stressed by the modernist paradigm of nationalism research (Gellner 1983; Anderson 2006; Hobsbawm 1992), modern nations rest on invented or at least heavily edited traditions (Smith 2000). Accordingly, sport can contribute to nation building by providing the narrative 'raw materials' for the construction of national identities. As Butterworth (2014: 871) has put it, people are bound together by the shared myths disseminated through rhetorical means. Accordingly, sport's ability to fashion collective mythologies turns it into an ideal arena from which to constitute political identity and citizenship.

While there are good reasons to assume that international sport matters for national identification, sport sociologists have not taken fully advantage of the opportunities provided by social psychology to elaborate this idea. According to social psychologists, national identity represents just one form of social identity; (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Tajfel (1972: 292) defined social identity as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.' Thus, it seems necessary to distinguish between international sport's impact on the cognitive and on the emotional-affective dimension.

When this distinction is applied to the literature on national identity and sport, it becomes evident that that empirical research has primarily focused on sport's role for the emotional-affective dimension. Scholars have examined sport's impact on two distinct emotions, that is, national pride and feelings of national belonging. In a number of surveys, respondents have reported to experience pride in relation to sporting success of national athletes (Hallmann, Breuer, and Kühnreich 2013). According to longitudinal survey data from Germany, pride of athletic performances represents one of the main correlates of general

national pride (Meier and Mutz 2016). However, contrary to common assumptions that sport or athletic success inspire national pride, research suggests that causalities might work the other way around. More specific: National identification seems to be rather a precondition for pride in athletic achievements than their outcome (Van Hilvoorde, Elling, and Stokvis 2010; see also von Scheve et al. 2014). In addition, even if major sport events and athletic achievements might inspire intense feelings of national pride and belonging, this kind of euphoria appears to be only of temporary character (Mutz 2012: 523; Elling, van Hilvoorde, and van den Dool 2014). This is in accordance with social psychology, which has argued that identification might not necessarily lead to an enduring social connection but might just result in temporary social connections (Wann 2006b). Accordingly, feelings of national pride and belonging experienced in relation to soccer have been characterized as diffuse, affective 'public mood' emerging in the context of social identifications, which is not stable in the long run (cf. Hagen et al. 2002).

Thus, previous research on sport's role for the emotional-affective dimension of national identity suggests that feelings such as national pride and national belonging strongly correlate with pride in athletic achievements. However, the scarce evidence on causal relationships nurtures rather skepticism about claims on a strong causal impact of athletic achievements on feelings of national pride and belonging. Yet, whereas sport's role for national feelings might be more limited than assumed, much less is known about its role for the cognitive dimension of national identity, that is, the way how nations or national belonging are defined. Most of the relevant insights have been conducted by studies on media discourses on international sports.

Scholars have demonstrated that media coverage of international sport events employs to a substantial extent traditional stereotypes on 'national characters' (Blain, Boyle, and O'Donnell 1993; Garland and Rowe 1999; Maguire et al. 1999; Wernecken 2000; Müller 2004). These findings inspired Crolley et al. (2000) to conclude that media representations of sport play an important role in the construction of national identities. Media sports are supposed to 'contribute to the maintenance of a set of shared cultural values which serve to reinforce a consensual perception of national unity' (Crolley et al. 2000: 109).

However, subsequent research employing alternative methods has cast some doubts on such strong claims. Thus, evidence conducted in Germany suggests that athletic achievements do not necessarily reinforce a traditional – in the German case: ethnic – understanding of national identity. Hence, using convenience samples of students, Mutz (2012) found that the Euro 2012 served to increase civic patriotism but not ethnic nationalism suggesting that enthusiasm for the national team was not related to exclusionism. Furthermore, based on the assumption that the increasing multi-ethnic composition of the national soccer team was likely to repel fans with ethnic prejudices, Meier and Leinwather (2013) examined TV ratings for the German national soccer team. The study found only weak evidence for discriminatory behaviour but suggested that audiences have developed a 'taste for diversity'. However, the evidence is slightly contradictory as the analysis of longitudinal German survey data covering a period from 1988 to 2008 has demonstrated that pride in German athletic achievements was related to right-wing attitudes and ethnic exclusionism (Meier and Mutz 2016).

Thus, the relationship between sport and different conceptions of national identity has remained unclear. This state of the art is rather frustrating since the question whether sport serves to reinforce ethnic exclusive conceptions of national identity or could, on the contrary,

be used as vehicle for modernizing perceptions of national belonging remains of political relevance in particular after immigration has recently become a major policy issue. Therefore, research presented here aims to address some basic issues. As the data have been conducted in Germany, it seems necessary to describe the national context in some detail.

National identity and immigration in Germany

As so-called 'belated' nation, Germany represents the prototype of a pre-political ethnic national identity. Accordingly, citizenship was traditionally granted on the base of the exclusivist principle of ethnic decent (cf. Brubaker 1990; Green 2004). Such an ethnic concept of national identity and citizenship comes with strong implications for the exclusion of immigrants (Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Coebanu and Escandell 2011). In the traditional German ethnic concept of national belonging, there was hardly a way for immigrants to become members of the national community. In contrast, a civic concept of national identity refers to a shared set of political values and grants citizenship on the base of the commitment to those values and the political institutions representing them (Brubaker 1990).

Notwithstanding a strong ethnic national identity, labour force immigration during the post war 'economic miracle' turned Germany into the prototype of a society inhabited by large numbers of immigrants (Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006; Zick, Pettigrew, and Wagner 2008). However, since immigration does not figure within German identity construction, politicians kept adhering to the idea that these immigrants would not stay (Citrin and Sides 2008: 34). Accordingly, long periods of residency were needed for immigrants to apply for citizenship, while ethnic Germans could become citizens upon arrival (Hjerm 1998). Only after bitter debate and a change of government, a modest civic modernization of German citizenship law was adopted in 1999 granting birth right citizenship to some immigrants (Green 2004; Howard 2005). Yet, such legal reforms do not automatically affect public opinions toward a pro-immigration stance (Facchini and Mayda 2008). Thus, given the tension between an ethnic tradition and the actual status of Germany as immigration country, German attitudes on national identity, citizenship and immigrants are particularly interesting.

On the one hand, a number of studies found Germans not to be particular xenophobic (Hjerm 2007; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2009; Meuleman, Davido, and Billiet 2009). Thus, according to one study most German respondents to prefer 'integration' as acculturation strategy in contrast to 'assimilation'. Whereas 'assimilation' expects immigrants to completely adapt to the customs and attitudes of the incumbent population, the preference for 'integration' indicates that the majority of Germans have a desire for culture maintenance of immigrants as well as for contact with immigrants (Rohmann Florack, and Piontkowski 2006). In some international surveys, Germans appear even as having a more civic than an ethnic national identity (Jones and Smith 2001a, 2001b). Furthermore, a recent comparative study suggested that national customs and traditions are of particular low importance for Germans when it comes to being truly German and that language matters most (Stokes 2017).

On the other hand, there is substantial evidence for persistent legacies of Germany's ethnic identity. According to a recent study, a majority of Germans continues to adhere to the idea that a specific German 'national character' exists. The respondents' self-characterizations fit

into every cliché: Germans think of themselves as being disciplined, orderly and diligent; a relative majority appears to link being truly German still to descent and tradition (Petersen 2016). This fits into previous findings according to which Germany's ethnic national identity has resulted in strong support for assimilation and separation (Zick et al. 2001) and low scores on multi-culturalism (Sprague-Jones 2011). In some studies, German respondents have shown substantial support for the marginalization of immigrants (Zagefka and Brown 2002) and demanded the maintenance of German culture and cultural adoptions by immigrants (Gerschke et al. 2010).

Furthermore, scholars detected substantial and increasing xenophobic tendencies in Germany, particularly in the East (Decker, Kiess, and Brähler 2012). Germans seem concerned about negative effects of immigration on welfare spending and crime and show a strong desire to decrease immigration (Bauer et al. 2000; Semyonov et al. 2004; Sides and Citrin 2007; Citrin and Sides 2008; Coenders, Lubbers, and Scheepers 2008; Facchini and Mayda 2008; Howard 2010; Ceobanu and Escandell 2011). Thus, there is evidence on 'serious xenophobic tendencies in the German society' (Cornelissen and Jirjahn 2012, p. 3; see also Howard 2010) and on an ambivalent stance concerning the integration of immigrants.

Moreover, the Syrian refugee crisis and Angela Merkel's open-door policy of October 2015 have promoted immigration into a major policy issue. Thus, the crisis has resulted in electoral polarization and has given rise to anti-immigration demonstrations and a right-wing party (Kentmen-Cin and Erisen 2016). There is also evidence for a substantial opinion-policy gap between political elites and the population at large (Schammann 2015), which is further indicated by the increasing dissatisfaction with Merkel's refugee policy since 2015 (Infratest Dimap 2016: 11-2).

National identity and the men's national soccer tam

As the 'de-ethnisation' of the nation is particular visible in national teams (Poli 2007), the increased political saliency of immigration and its consequences raise the question whether sport is able to mitigate xenophobia and to promote a more civic understanding of national identity. Therefore, the current study focuses on the role of identification with the German men's national soccer team for national pride and belonging and conceptions of national identity.

The team qualifies as subject for studying these issues for several reasons: In the interwar period, the men's national soccer team has started inspiring patriotic feelings among the (male) population (Pfister 2006). Ultimately, the Nazis turned the national team into a patriotic icon. Reichssportführer Hans von Tschammer und Osten characterized the players as national representatives and used the team as political instrument to demonstrate national unity as well as support for the war effort (Havemann 2005; Oswald 2008). After the war, the importance of the team as object of national identification only increased. The win of the 1954 World Cup symbolized Germany's recovery from the defeat. The 'miracle of Berne' has been characterized as the 'true birth hour of the Federal Republic' (Brüggemeier 2004).

Given the fact that many national traditions had been compromised by the Nazi atrocities, the national team represents one of the few uncontested national icons. Furthermore, the team has been depicted as role model for the successful integration of immigrants (Ulrich

2010) and as indicating the rise of a more civic German national identity (Kersting 2007). The increasing ethnic diversity of the team was inspired by the particular poor performance of the national soccer team in the 1998 World Cup and the victory of a multi-ethnic French team. Accordingly, the German Soccer Association (Deutscher Fussballbund – DFB) started attempts to capitalize on playing talents among immigrants in Germany. Hence, since the 2000s the DFB has actively promoted the integration of immigrants (DFB 2008). In result, the ethnic diversity of the national soccer team has substantially increased, which has been most visible personalized by Ghanaian-born Gerald Asamoah, Turkish-descent Mesut Özil, Tunesian-descent Sami Khedira and Ghanaian-descent Jérôme Boateng. Thus, as the literature on sport and citizenship has emphasized, by playing for the German national team athletes are expressing their citizenship in an active manner (Butterworth 2014; Guschwan 2014).

Yet, the team's increased multi-ethnic composition does neither guarantee that fans approve of these changes nor that the team inspires more positive attitudes toward immigrants. Unfortunately, there exist no surveys on how the visible presence of immigrant athletes impacts on conceptions of national identity and belonging. Meier and Leinwather's (2013) study on consumer discrimination against immigrant players in the national soccer team indicates their growing acceptance but does not allow for inferences regarding audience attitudes.

Given the status of the national soccer team as national icon in post war Germany, research presented here aims to shed new light on the debate about sport's role for national identification by exploring the impact of identification with the national soccer team. As elaborated by Wann (2006a, 2006b), team identification represents another form of social identity, which due to the social nature of the activity can create important connections to others and a sense of belongingness. For sport psychologists, it is important that team identification serves as an intensity modulator of fans' affective, cognitive and behavioral reactions and relates to psychological well-being. Yet, the primary aim of the research conducted here is to examine how the two social identities, national identity and team identification, relate in a German context. More specifically, it will be studied how identification with the national soccer team relates to competing conceptions of national identity. Thus, while it is assumed that identification with the national soccer intensifies feelings of national pride and belonging, it is asked whether these feeling are dependent or at least amplified by a specific conception of national identity:

RQ1: Are feelings of national pride and belonging reported by respondents with higher national team identification dependent on a particular conception of national identity?

In addition, it is of utmost interest to explore which concept of national identity is reinforced by the national soccer team's success. Therefore:

RQ2: Which conception of national identity is reinforced by the success of the national soccer team?

Moreover, given the fact that the refugee crisis of 2015/16 has substantially increased the political saliency of immigration policies, it is interesting to trace a possible effect of the refugee crisis on the relationship between team identification and concepts of national identity.

Study design and methods

Street survey data

The data were conducted during a street survey in the inner city of Münster, the capital of the local government region Münsterland with about 300,000 citizens, located in the Western part of Germany. The data were collected as part of a broader project on identification with the national soccer team in the context of big tournaments. Since the project started in 2002, survey waves have been conducted at World and European championships. Whereas the survey always included the German version of the Team Identification Scale (Wann and Branscombe 1993; Strauss 1995), the questionnaires varied in some parts. So far only one academic paper has been published (Meier, Strauss, and Riedl 2017).

Thus, the fact that the street surveys have been conducted during every major international soccer tournament provides a unique opportunity to trace the impact of changed immigration policies on the relationship between national team identification and national identity. Accordingly, the paper presented here analyzes data from the 2014 and 2016 survey waves, which included identical items on conceptions of national identity.

Thus, the data have been conducted during the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, which was won by the German national soccer team, and the UEFA Euro 2016 tournament in France where Germany was defeated in the semi-final. The street surveys were conducted every day during a one hour slot starting at 12 a.m. and lasting until 1 p.m. at both events. The survey period for the 2014 World Cup started on 12 June 2014, that is, the day of the opening match of the World Cup in Brazil, and ended on 15 July 2014 that is, two days after the end of the tournament. At the 2016 European Cup, the survey period started on 6 June, five days prior the cup, and ended at 15 July, five days after the cup.

The survey was conducted in the city center of Münster, which provides a large pedestrian zone composed of two shopping promenades and a central square. The specific location chosen represents one of the most central points in Münster and is located in front of a large department store, which is busy throughout the day. Typically, a mix of pensioners, business people, families and students pass this point at noon. There are almost no homeless people in the city center of Münster. Therefore, people participating in the survey while they were involved in their daily routines, that is, going to work, shopping or going to lunch. Due to the specific time slot, no people were walking to games directly. Respondents were chosen on random but were informed that the survey was conducted on behalf of the University of Münster. Respondents filled out the questionnaires on their own. The average number of completed questionnaires per day equaled 72.0 with 118 as maximum and 32 as minimum number of questionnaires. In total, 5,328 questionnaires were conducted, but not all provide complete data.

Although the questionnaire did not include questions whether the respondents had watched a match of the national soccer team during the events, it is important to note that these mega soccer events are highly visible in Germany so that people can hardly escape from noting them. Actually, they have been characterized as the last remaining 'campfire' around which a pluralized society is gathered (Meier and Hagenah 2016). Accordingly, these events gain extraordinary media coverage. Moreover, due to German media regulations, all matches of the German national soccer team are broadcasted in free TV and reach impressive audience figures. Thus, 61.60 million German viewers or 85.30% of the entire

audience potential watched at least one match of the 2014 World Cup (Gerhard and Zubayr 2014) and 59.79 million viewers or 79.6% at least one match of the 2016 EURO (Gerhard and Geese 2016).

Measures and variables

First, the data were stratified according to the two tournaments studied. Accordingly, a strong impact of the refugee crisis on the relationship between sport and national identity should be indicated by significant effects of the dummy variable *Tournament*. In order to study the development of attitudes during the tournaments, the data were further stratified according to 'tournament phases'. The first phase includes the survey days before the first match of the German national team; the second phase includes all survey days following the first match; the third all survey days following the second match and so on. As the German team advanced to quite late stages in both tournaments (champion in 2014, semi-final in 2016), the variable phase can be considered to be some proxy for the team's success. However, the defeat against France in the semi-final of the 2016 EURO might cast some doubts on this interpretation of phase. Therefore, in order to be able to control for the effect of individual matches, a series of dummy variables referring to every tournament phase was coded (see Table 1).

Identification with the national soccer team was measured by using the Team Identification Scale as developed by Wann and Branscombe (1993), adapted for Germany by Strauss (1995). The scale consists of seven Likert items employing five response levels. The data conducted during the street survey confirmed again the high reliability of the German adaptation by Strauss (1995) as Cronbach's α equaled 0.813. Accordingly, it can be inferred that the individual items measure a general construct in a consistent manner. Therefore, a variable called *Team identification* was created.

In order to detect whether national pride and belonging have increased over the tournaments, two items from the module on perceptions of national identity included in the 2013 version of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) were used. First, respondents were asked on a five level Likert scale to rate on how proud they were of Germany. The variable is called *National pride*. Second, respondents were asked on a five level Likert scale to rate on how close they felt to Germany, whereby feeling close had to be understood as 'emotionally attached to' or 'identifying with'. In the remainder of this study, the variable is referred to as *National belonging*.

For measuring different conceptions of national identity and citizenship, the ISSP 2013 battery on conceptions of national identity was used. Accordingly, respondents were asked on a five level Likert scale to rate the importance of eight characteristics 'for being truly German'. These characteristics were 'to have been born in Germany', 'to have German citizenship', 'to have lived in Germany for most of one's life', 'to be able to speak German', 'to be a Christian', 'to respect Germany's political institutions and laws', 'to feel German' and 'to have German ancestry'. An explorative factor analysis suggested a two factor solution, which appeared to be quite compatible with the common theoretical distinction between ethnic and civic national identity (see Table 2). The first factor indicates an ethnic conception of national identity. Accordingly, a 'true German' has to be of German ancestry, to be born in Germany, to be a Christian and to have lived in Germany for most of his/her life.

Table 1. Tournament phases and respondents.

Tournament phase	Match	Respondents	Per cent
2014 World Cup			
Before first group match	–	301	5.57%
After first group match	**Germany** – Portugal	359	6.64%
After second group match	Germany – Ghana	423	7.82%
After third group match	USA – **Germany**	257	4.75%
After eighth-final	**Germany** – Algeria	350	6.47%
After quarter-final	France – **Germany**	264	4.88%
After semi-final	Brazil – **Germany**	347	6.42%
After final	**Germany** – Argentine	72	1.33%
2016 EURO			
Before first group match	–	560	10.36%
After first group match	**Germany** – Ukraine	357	6.60%
After second group match	Germany – Poland	330	6.10%
After third group match	Northern Ireland - **Germany**	403	7.45%
After eighth-final	**Germany** – Slovakia	418	7.73%
After quarter-final	**Germany** – Italy	403	7.45%
After semi-final	Germany – **France**	563	10.41%
Total	–	5,407	100.00%

Note: Match winner in **bold**.

Table 2. Conceptions of national identity.

Important factors for being truly German	Factor 1: Ethnic identity	Factor 2: Civic identity
To have German ancestry	**0.842**	0.023
To be born in Germany	**0.767**	0.230
To be a Christian	**0.718**	−0.048
To have lived in Germany for most of one's life	**0.601**	0.423
To have German citizenship	0.476	**0.555**
To feel as a German	0.264	**0.585**
To be able to speak German	0.168	**0.760**
To respect Germany's political institutions and laws	−0.124	**0.748**
Cronbach's α	0.756	0.648
Mean	2.451	3.874
SD	0.974	0.791

Note: Method is principal-component factors; orthogonal varimax rotation.

Its internal consistency equals 0.756. Based on the average scores for these four items, a variable *Ethnic identity* was constructed. The second factor reflects 'true Germans' to be of German citizenship, to feel as a German, to speak German and to respect Germany's political institutions and laws. Its internal consistency yielded a slightly lower value of 0.648. The variable constructed has been named *Civic identity* (see Table 2).

Admittedly, the reliability of both factors is not optimal. Cronbach's α for *Ethnic identity* is still acceptable, which indicates that the four items might actually measure an underlying ethnic identity concept in a sufficiently consistent manner. The internal consistency of the four items measuring *Civic identity* is more problematic suggesting that *Civic identity* represents a less clearly defined identity concept. Thus, in contrast to the theoretical literature on national identity, which has defined *Ethnic identity* and *Civic identity* as contrasting ideal types (e.g. Brubaker 1990, Green 2004), it seems that respondents' perceptions on what constitutes a true German beyond ethnic descent are more diffuse.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Münster population might not be completely representative for the whole of Germany. Thus, the importance of Christian belief for being considered a true German might be specific for the site of the investigation. Due to a strong

Table 3. Independent and dependent variables.

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Tournament[a]	5,328	0	1	0.555	0.497
Tournament phase	5,328	1	8	4.066	2.128
Phase dummies					
Before World Cup	5,328	0	1	0.056	0.231
After Germany-Portugal	5,328	0	1	0.067	0.251
After Germany-Ghana	5,328	0	1	0.079	0.270
After USA-Germany	5,328	0	1	0.048	0.214
After Germany-Algeria	5,328	0	1	0.066	0.248
After France-Germany	5,328	0	1	0.050	0.217
After Brazil-Germany	5,328	0	1	0.065	0.247
After Germany-Argentine	5,328	0	1	0.014	0.115
Before Euro	5,328	0	1	0.105	0.307
After Germany-Ukraine	5,328	0	1	0.067	0.250
After Germany-Poland	5,328	0	1	0.062	0.241
After Ireland-Germany	5,328	0	1	0.061	0.239
After Germany-Slovenia	5,328	0	1	0.078	0.269
After Germany-Italy	5,328	0	1	0.076	0.264
After Germany-France	5,328	0	1	0.106	0.307
Team identification	5,099	1	5	2.856	0.913
Ethnic identity[b]	5,152	1	5	2.451	0.974
Civic identity[c]	5,139	1	5	3.874	0.791
National affection	5,304	1	5	3.883	0.983
National pride	5,249	1	5	3.454	1.079
Age	4,812	14	95	35.294	18.435
Sex[d]	5,264	0	1	0.490	0.500

[a]Dummy variable: '0' for 2014 World Cup, '1' for EURO 2016.
[b]Average score of the four items on ethnic identity.
[c]Average score of the four items on civic identity.
[d]Dummy variable: '0' for male, '1' for female.

catholic tradition, the Münsterland population is more religious than inhabitants of other German regions in particular in East Germany (see IfS 2010; Pollack et al. 2010). Moreover, in the last general national election, the populist party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) pursuing an anti-immigration agenda, fared particular poorly in Münster. Actually, Münster city was the only electoral district in Germany where the AfD failed to overcome the five percent threshold (Bundeswahlleiter 2017: 155). Thus, concerning the representative of the respondents the Münsterland region might be more religious and less nationalistic than other German regions. In any case, among the Münsterland respondents a civic conception of national identity clearly dominates over an ethnic conception. Finally, since age and sex have been shown to be relevant for team identification (Meier et al. 2017), both variables were included as controls (see Table 3).

Concerning the modelling approach employed, it has to be noted that the dataset has a hierarchical structure according to which observations on a lower level, that is, individual matches, are nested in aggregate units, that is, tournaments, it had to be determined whether methods for multilevel analyses were necessary. Actually, intra-class correlations (ICC) showed that the differences in deviances between simple and multi-level models were significant for *National pride* and *National belonging*. However, according to the ICC the variance located at the aggregate level equaled only 0.3% for *National pride* and 1.6% for *National belonging* suggesting that MLA models were not necessary. The same applies to *Ethnic identity* and *Civic identity*. According to the ICC, the variance located at the aggregate level equaled only 0.6% for *Ethnic identity* and 0.2% for *Civic identity* suggesting that MLA models were not necessary. Accordingly, simple OLS regression were employed. In addition,

Table 4. Correlations between indicators of national identification and team identification.

		1	2	3	4
1	National pride				
2	National belonging	0.549***			
3	Ethnic identity	0.284***	0.272***		
4	Civic identity	0.318***	0.352***	0.455***	
5	Team identification	0.506***	0.362***	0.248***	0.223***

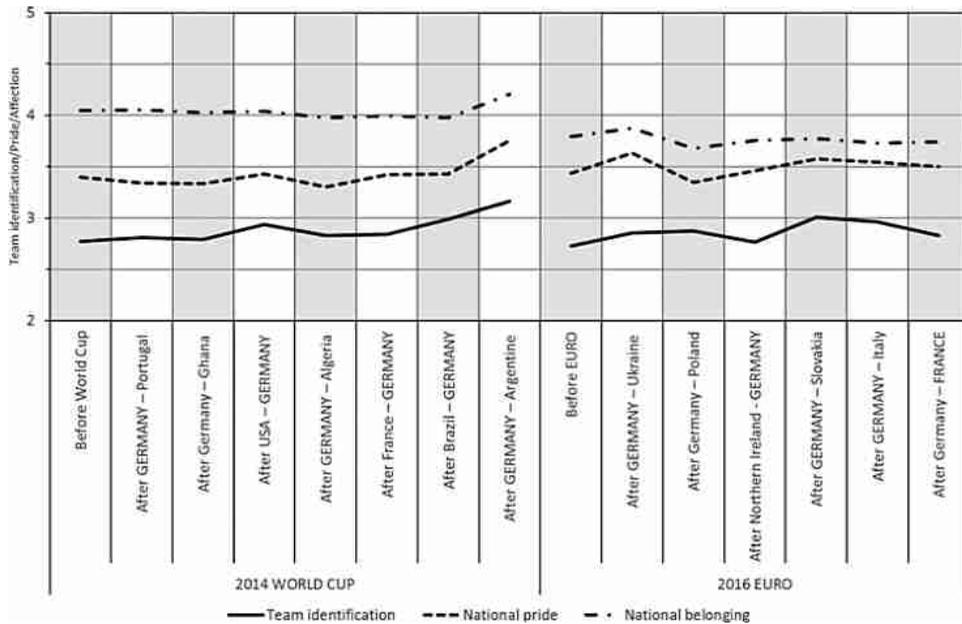Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; $p < .001$.

Figure 1. National pride and belonging and national team identification. Note: Match winners in CAPITALS.

given that the interpretation of *Phase* as proxy for success might be problematic semi-parametric models using match dummies have also been calculated.

Results

Descriptive results

Before the research questions are addressed, some descriptive results will be reported in appropriate brief. First of all, as was to be expected *Team identification* correlates positively with *National pride* and *National belonging* implying that respondents who are stronger identified with the national soccer team experience stronger feelings of pride and belonging. In addition, *Team identification* correlates positively with both conceptions of national identity but the correlation is slightly stronger for *Ethnic identity* than for *Civic identity*. However, the difference in correlation coefficients is rather small (see Table 4).

Visual depiction of the data suggests that *National belonging* experienced a drop from 2014 to 2016. In general, respondents show higher scores on national pride and belonging than team identification (cf. Figure 1).

Table 5. National pride, team identification and conceptions of identity.

Independent variables	Model 1a	Model 1b	Model 1c	Model 1d
Tournament	0.135*** (0.027)	0.131*** (0.027)	−0.107 (0.116)	−0.111 (0.116)
Team identification	0.512*** (0.016)	0.747*** (0.073)	0.513*** (0.016)	0.746*** (0.073)
* Ethnic identity		0.003 (0.017)		0.004 (0.017)
* Civic identity		−0.062** (0.021)		−0.062** (0.021)
Tournament phase[a]	0.009 (0.006)	0.008 (0.006)		
Before World Cup			−0.225 (0.120)	−0.227 (0.120)
After Germany-Portugal			−0.276* (0.119)	−0.277* (0.119)
After Germany-Ghana			−0.275* (0.117)	−0.281* (0.117)
After USA-Germany			−0.279* (0.123)	−0.281* (0.123)
After Germany-Algeria			−0.251* (0.120)	−0.257* (0.120)
After France-Germany			−0.194 (0.122)	−0.197 (0.122)
After Brazil-Germany			−0.255* (0.119)	−0.258* (0.119)
After Germany-Argentine			−	−
After Germany-Ukraine			0.080 (0.074)	0.078 (0.074)
After Germany-Poland			−0.158* (0.067)	−0.159* (0.067)
After Ireland-Germany			0.034 (0.068)	0.029 (0.068)
After Germany-Slovenia			−0.035 (0.064)	−0.032 (0.064)
After Germany-Italy			0.011 (0.066)	0.007 (0.066)
After Germany-France			0.049 (0.059)	0.044 (0.059)
Ethnic identity	0.089*** (0.016)	0.082 (0.051)	0.090*** (0.016)	0.080 (0.051)
Civic identity	0.274*** (0.019)	0.436*** (0.059)	0.275*** (0.019)	0.439*** (0.059)
Age	0.002* (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	−0.015 (0.027)	−0.018 (0.027)
Sex	−0.014 (0.027)	−0.017 (0.027)	0.002* (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)
Constant	0.517*** (0.085)	−0.089 (0.204)	0.792*** (0.133)	0.192 (0.226)
N	4,436	4,436	4,436	4,436
Adj. R²	0.317	0.318	0.318	0.319

Note: Dependent variable is *National pride*.
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; $p < .001$.
[a]Reference category in the semi-parametric specifications is *Before Euro*.

National pride, national belonging, team identification and conceptions of identity

The first research question aims to examine whether feelings of national pride and belonging reported by respondents with higher team identification are dependent on a particular conception of national identity. As referred above and supported by the bivariate analyses, the question assumes that feelings of *National pride* and *National belonging* relate positively to *Team identification*. Yet, if these feelings are dependent on a particular conception of national identity, significant interaction effects between *Team identification* and *Ethnic identity* or *Civic identity* should be detected.

Concerning *National pride* (see Table 4, Models 1a to 1d), the results confirm the bivariate findings that respondents with higher *Team identification* show higher *National pride*. Moreover, *National pride* seems to have significantly increased between 2014 and 2016. Surprisingly, *National pride* is stronger related to *Civic identity* than to *Ethnic identity*. When an interaction between *Team Identification* and both conceptions of national identity is introduced, the main effects for *Team identification* and *Civic identity* substantially increase and a significant negative interaction effect between *Team identification* and *Civic identity* appears. Moreover, the coefficient for *Ethnic identiy* is no longer significant. These results are not easy to interpret. The interaction seems to indicate that for respondents with high *Team identification* and *Civic identity*, the otherwise positive relationship between these variables and *National pride* is slightly weakened. However, it has to be taken into account that the respondents who score higher on *Civic identity* show higher levels of *National pride* and *Team identification* (Table 4)**.** In any case, the results defy clearly the idea that the effect

Table 6. National belonging, team identification and conceptions of identity.

Independent variables	Model 2a	Model 2b	Model 2c	Model 2d
Tournament	−0.227*** (0.026)	−0.230*** (0.026)	−0.309** (0.111)	−0.313** (0.111)
Team identification	0.346*** (0.015)	0.568*** (0.070)	0.347*** (0.015)	0.565*** (0.070)
* Ethnic identity		−0.011 (0.016)		−0.009 (0.016)
* Civic identity		−0.050* (0.020)		−0.050* (0.020)
Tournament phase[a]	−0.009 (0.006)	−0.009 (0.006)		
Before World Cup			−0.076 (0.115)	−0.076 (0.115)
After Germany-Portugal			−0.073 (0.114)	−0.076 (0.114
After Germany-Ghana			−0.094 (0.112)	−0.101 (0.112)
After USA-Germany			−0.111 (0.118)	−0.112 (0.118)
After Germany-Algeria			−0.082 (0.115)	−0.086 (0.114)
After France-Germany			−0.143 (0.117)	−0.146 (0.117)
After Brazil-Germany			−0.216 (0.114)	−0.219 (0.114)
After Germany-Argentine			–	–
After Germany-Ukraine			0.033 (0.071)	0.032 (0.071)
After Germany-Poland			−0.118 (0.064)	−0.118 (0.064)
After Ireland-Germany			0.024 (0.065)	0.020 (0.065)
After Germany-Slovenia			−0.061 (0.061)	−0.058 (0.061)
After Germany-Italy			−0.066 (0.063)	−0.070 (0.063)
After Germany-France			−0.009 (0.056)	−0.014 (0.056)
Ethnic identity	0.039* (0.015)	0.073 (0.049)	0.039* (0.016)	0.068 (0.049)
Civic identity	0.309*** (0.018)	0.440*** (0.056)	0.310*** (0.019)	0.441*** (0.056)
Age	0.008*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)
Sex	0.034 (0.026)	0.031 (0.026)	0.031 (0.026)	0.029 (0.026)
Constant	1.440*** (0.081)	0.865*** (0.194)	1.509*** (0.128)	0.945*** (0.217)
N	4,480	4,480	4,480	4,480
Adj. R²	0.258	0.259	0.258	0.259

Note: Dependent variable is *National belonging*.
 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; $p < .001$.
[a]Reference category in the semi-parametric specifications is *Before Euro*.

of *Team identification* on *National pride* depends on a particular conception of national identity and show that *Team identification* and *Civic identity* are both strong correlates of *National pride*.

   Concerning *National belonging* (Table 5, Model 2a to 2d), the results are quite similar apart from the fact that *National belonging* seems to have significantly declined from 2014 to 2016. Thus, the idea that the effect of *Team identification* on *National belonging* is dependent on a particular conception of national identity has to be rejected. Again, *Team identification* and *Civic identity* appear to be strong correlates of *National belonging* while *Ethnic identity* does not.

Team success and reinforcement of conceptions of national identity

The second research questions aims to examine whether team success serves to reinforce a particular conception of national identity. Accordingly, the impact of *Team identification* and team success on *Ethnic identity* and *Civic identity* was estimated (Table 6).

   The models for *Ethnic identity* (Table 7, Model 3a to 3d) show first of all, that *Team Identification* is a strong correlate of *Ethnic identity* whereas team success is not. This conclusion holds true even when a semi-parametric approach is employed (Models 3c and 3d). Thus, progress in the tournaments does not reinforce an ethnic conception of national identity. Rather, respondents who identify stronger with the national team tend to have a stronger ethnic identity. Moreover, the simple model for *Ethnic identity* (Model 3a) suggests

that *Ethnic identity* has declined among the respondents between 2014 and 2016. Whereas the effect is not significant when other model specifications are employed (Models 3 b to 3d), the coefficients are consistently negative.

The models for *Civic identity* show again a significant positive impact of *Team identification* (Table 8, Models 4a to 4d). However, the effect is smaller than for *Ethnic identity*. Again, team success does not leave much of an impact. Only in the semi-parametric specifications, there is a significant negative effect for the interaction between *Team identification* and the dummy variable for the period after the lost semi-final against France. Thus, after the disappointment stronger identified respondents reported lower support for *Civic identity* (Models 4c and 4d). Yet, the regressions show interesting results when an interaction effect between *Tournament* and *Team identification* is introduced (model 4b). Then, *Civic identity* appears to have increased between 2014 and 2016 but not for respondents showing a stronger *Team identification*. However, the small effect is not significant in the semi-parametric specifications.

Taken together, the results concerning the relationship between *Team identification* and different conceptions of national identity first of all suggest that identification with the national soccer team is fundamental ambivalent in ideological terms. Regardless of an intensified media and academic discourse about soccer or sport patriotism, people who identify with the national soccer team can adhere to highly different ideas of what constitutes a 'true' German. The results seem to suggest that *Team identification* might relate slightly stronger to an ethnic conception of national identity and belonging. However, the differences in correlation coefficients as well as in effect sizes are rather small (see Appendix). However, it seems that as in the case of *National pride* and *National belonging*, divergent dynamics seem to be at work: There seems to be a negative yet non-significant trend for *Ethnic identity* between the two tournaments. In contrast, the findings are less consistent for *Civic identity*. Here, three out of four models show a positive trend for *Civic identity* between the two tournaments.

Discussion and conclusion

The 2014 FIFA World Cup and the EURO 2016 provided unique occasions for studying the relationship between identification with the national soccer team on the one hand and national pride and belonging and conceptions of identity on the other hand. Moreover, the design of the current study allowed tracing a potential impact of the 2015 refugee crisis. The findings established in this study are certainly complex. While the results support some previous insights, they are also likely to challenge some a number of commonly held ideas:

First of all, the results are insofar consistent with previous research as identification with the national soccer team appears to be positively related to feelings of national pride and belonging. Thus, the study confirms that sport plays an important role for the emotional-affective dimension of national identification. However, whereas other studies have presented evidence according to which major sport events inspire enthusiastic outbursts of 'patriotism', research presented here found that success of the national soccer team over the tournaments did not significantly increase feelings of national pride and national belonging. Thus, according to the results presented here national pride and belonging represent rather stable attitudes. Given Germany's tradition of ethnic exclusionism, it might come as surprise that these attitudes are significantly related to a civic identity but not to an ethnic identity.

Table 7. Ethnic identity, team identification and team success.

Independent variables	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 3c	Model 3d
Tournament	−0.113*** (0.027)	−0.047 (0.086)	−0.507 (0.364)	−0.507 (0.364)
* Team identification		−0.023 (0.029)		0.086 (0.113)
Team identification	0.334*** (0.032)	0.345*** (0.035)	0.297*** (0.048)	0.212* (0.102)
Tournament Phase[a]	0.013 (0.020)	0.013 (0.020)		
Before World Cup			−0.588 (0.377)	−0.588 (0.377)
After Germany-Portugal			−0.131 (0.372)	−0.131 (0.372)
After Germany-Ghana			−0.218 (0.368)	−0.218 (0.368)
After USA-Germany			−0.548 (0.390)	−0.548 (0.390)
After Germany-Algeria			−0.327 (0.376)	−0.327 (0.376)
After France-Germany			−0.556 (0.389)	−0.556 (0.389)
After Brazil-Germany			−0.687 (0.380)	−0.687 (0.380)
After Germany-Argentine			−	−
After Germany-Ukraine			0.014 (0.239)	0.014 (0.239)
After Germany-Poland			−0.177 (0.211)	−0.177 (0.211)
After Ireland-Germany			0.294 (0.218)	0.294 (0.218)
After Germany-Slovenia			−0.067 (0.209)	−0.067 (0.209)
After Germany-Italy			0.275 (0.213)	0.275 (0.213)
After Germany-France			0.212 (0.189)	0.212 (0.189)
* Team identification	−0.007 (0.007)	−0.007 (0.007)		
Before World Cup			0.090 (0.076)	0.176 (0.117)
After Germany-Portugal			−0.037 (0.072)	0.049 (0.115)
After Germany-Ghana			−0.034 (0.070)	0.052 (0.114)
After USA-Germany			0.081 (0.081)	0.167 (0.121)
After Germany-Algeria			0.011 (0.074)	0.097 (0.116)
After France-Germany			0.043 (0.081)	0.128 (0.121)
After Brazil-Germany			0.076 (0.074)	0.162 (0.117)
After Germany-Argentine			−0.086 (0.113)	−
After Germany-Ukraine			0.001 (0.082)	0.001 (0.082)
After Germany-Poland			0.100 (0.071)	0.100 (0.071)
After Ireland-Germany			−0.074 (0.075)	−0.074 (0.075)
After Germany-Slovenia			0.043 (0.070)	0.043 (0.070)
After Germany-Italy			−0.033 (.0713)	−0.033 (0.071)
After Germany-France			−0.075 (0.065)	−0.075 (0.065)
Age	0.014*** (0.001)	0.014*** (0.001)	−0.020 (0.027)	−0.020 (0.027)
Sex	−0.019 (0.027)	−0.019 (0.027)	0.014*** (0.001)	0.014*** (0.001)
Constant	1.111*** (0.103)	1.077*** (0.112)	1.512*** (0.339)	1.512*** (0.339)
N	4,572	4,572	4,572	4,572
Adjusted R²	0.138	0.138	0.141	0.141

Note: Dependent variable is *Ethnic identity*.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
[a]Reference category in the semi-parametric specifications is *Before Euro*.

Concerning the question whether identification with the national soccer team is related to or reinforces a particular conception of national identity and belonging, the results presented here are likely to challenge some bold claims. First of all, feelings of national pride and national belonging inspired by team identification are not strongly related to a particular conception of national identity. In general, identification with the national soccer team appears to be ambivalently connoted in ideological terms. In other words, the national soccer team inspires identification by people who adhere to ethnic exclusionism as well as by people who support a more inclusive idea of identity and citizenship. Thus, the idea that identification with the national soccer team serves to produce support for one particular vision of national identity appears questionable. The study found only very weak support for the idea that team identification is stronger associated with support for an ethnic conception of national identity. However, the findings suggest that support for a civic conception of national identity declines among strongly identified respondents in case the team fails

Table 8. Civic identity, team identification and team success.

Independent variables	Model 7	Model 8	Model 7	Model 8
Tournament	−0.027 (0.022)	0.172* (0.072)	0.214 (0.306)	0.214 (0.306)
* Team identification		−0.070** (0.024)		−0.032 (0.095)
Team identification	0.271*** (0.027)	0.306*** (0.029)	(0.246)*** (0.041)	0.277** (0.085)
Tournament Phase[a]	0.016 (0.017)	0.014 (0.017)		
Before World Cup			0.065 (0.316)	0.065 (0.316)
After Germany-Portugal			0.104 (0.312)	0.104 (0.312)
After Germany-Ghana			0.310 (0.308)	0.310 (0.308)
After USA-Germany			0.066 (0.327)	0.066 (0.327)
After Germany-Algeria			0.250 (0.315)	0.250 (0.315)
After France-Germany			0.101 (0.325)	0.101 (0.325)
After Brazil-Germany			0.040 (0.319)	0.040 (0.319)
After Germany-Argentine			0 (omitted)	0 (omitted)
After Germany-Ukraine			0.049 (0.201)	0.049 (0.201)
After Germany-Poland			0.122 (0.178)	0.122 (0.178)
After Ireland-Germany			0.275 (0.185)	0.275 (0.185)
After Germany-Slovenia			−0.098 (0.178)	−0.098 (0.178)
After Germany-Italy			0.105 (0.181)	0.105 (0.181)
After Germany-France			(0.285) (0.160)	0.285 (0.160)
* Team identification[a]	−0.009 (0.006)	−0.009 (0.006)		
Before World Cup			0.078 (0.064)	0.046 (0.098)
After Germany-Portugal			0.044 (0.061)	0.012 (0.096)
After Germany-Ghana			−0.029 (0.059)	−0.061 (0.095)
After USA-Germany			0.058 (0.068)	0.0257 (0.101)
After Germany-Algeria			−0.014 (0.063)	−0.046 (0.097)
After France-Germany			0.040 (0.068)	0.008 (0.101)
After Brazil-Germany			0.040 (0.064)	0.008 (0.098)
After Germany-Argentine			0.032 (0.095)	0 (omitted)
After Germany-Ukraine			−0.040 (0.069)	−0.040 (0.069)
After Germany-Poland			−0.036 (0.060)	−0.036 (0.060)
After Ireland-Germany			−0.120 (0.064)	−0.120 (0.064)
After Germany-Slovenia			0.035 (0.060)	0.035 (0.059)
After Germany-Italy			−0.061 (0.061)	−0.061 (0.061)
After Germany-France			−0.110* (0.055)	−0.110* (0.055)
Age	0.008*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.064** (0.023)	0.064** (0.023)
Sex	0.066** (0.022)	0.064** (0.022)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)
Constant	2.877*** (0.087)	2.776*** (0.093)	2.683*** (0.284)	2.683*** (0.284)
N	4,555	4,555	4,555	4,555
Adjusted R²	0.089	0.091	0.090	0.090

Note: Dependent variable is *Civic identity*.
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.
[a]Reference category in the semi-parametric specifications is *Before Euro*.

to perform. Thus, strong identification with a multi-ethnic team might be conditional on athletic achievements implying that immigrant athletes might only be accepted representatives of the national community as long as they perform.

Nevertheless, the findings suggest reflecting on the fundamental ambiguity of national symbols, such as, the national soccer team. The team might qualify as inclusive national symbol because it can be associated with a modern vision of Germany as multi-ethnic country as well as with a more traditional vision of the team as reflecting certain features or virtues of German 'national character'. However, as the literature should have made evident, it seems that the Germans hold contradictory views on immigration, national identity and citizenship.

Finally, the results presented here suggest that, even though the refugee crisis of 2015 appears to have left an impact on feelings of national pride and belonging, it did not affect the relationship between team identification and conceptions of national identity in a very

strong manner. Between 2014 and 2016, *National pride* and *Civic identity* seem to have slightly increased whereas *National belonging* and *Ethnic identity* decreased. Thus, divergent dynamics appear to be at work, which might invite different speculations. Thus, the increase in *National pride* might indicate support for assuming responsibility in the refugee crisis. Moreover, the arrival of at least 1.2 million seems to have challenged an ethnic conception of national identity in favor of a civic one. This might indicate that the Germans more and more accept the realities of an immigrant society and are willing to abandon their tradition of ethnic descent. However, the decrease in national belonging might reflect discomfort with the increased political polarization or unease about large-scale immigration and its effects as well. Unfortunately, the street survey data conducted are not sophisticated enough to substantiate such far-reaching interpretations. The data support, however, the idea that, regardless of a long tradition of ethnic national identity in Germany, at least the Münster respondents have now come to adopt a more civic understanding of identity and citizenship. However, there is some weak evidence that stronger identified fans are less likely in 2016 to support a civic identity than they were in 2014.

Taken together, these results serve to question some claims about the impact of international sport on feelings of national pride and belonging. While the data suggest that identification with the national soccer team is an important correlate for national pride and belonging, the study presented here provides no evidence that the national soccer team respectively its success inspire outbursts of national euphoria. It seems that emotional attitudes as well as cognitive conceptions of national identity represent too fundamental and too stable political attitudes to be easily affected by the success of the national soccer team. In a way, the results presented here echo the caveats raised by ethnographic research on football supporters. Thus, Abell et al. (2007: 113–4) concluded that the popular 'fusing' of international soccer with political discourses 'does not currently have any clear parallel in the everyday practices and explanations of members of the English general public'. The analyses of the street survey data call for a more cautious interpretation of the political implications of identification with the national soccer team. In the light of fundamental and deep-seated beliefs about national identity, sport might represent simply some form of entertainment compatible with different beliefs. By implication, the findings presented here strike a rather skeptical note concerning sport's capacity to effectively promote a more civic understanding of citizenship and belonging regardless of the ongoing trend towards 'de-ethnicised' national teams and athletes. In essence, the results indicate that audiences might cheer for a national soccer team consisting of immigrant players but can nevertheless continue to adhere to ethnic exclusionism.

Limitations

However, it is important to reflect on the limitation of the current study. As has been referred above, the population of Münster might not be representative for the entire Germany as the Münster population might be more religious and less nationalistic. In addition, it would have been interesting to include a number of additional variables in the survey, such as, actual media consumption. However, it should be taken into account that any street survey faces the problem of space restrictions. Concerning the impact of team success on national pride, national belonging and conceptions of national identity, it is important to note that the survey period might have started too late. Extensive media coverage could have served to turn

German identity salient from the first time of measurement. Accordingly, the lacking impact of team success might partly reflect an artefact of the research design. Furthermore, as emphasized before, the psychometric qualities of the scales measuring competing conceptions of national identity are not optimal. More sophisticated instruments have to be developed.

Prospects for future research

The findings serve to provide more complexity than clarity to the debate. However, they come with a number of implications for future research:

First, for tracing the importance of sport for national identity and affection, it is necessary to methodologically distinguish more thoroughly between emotional and cognitive aspects of national identity, that is, national pride, national belonging and conceptions of national identity and citizenship. The interrelationships between these attitudes should be examined in more detail in a more comprehensive study.

Second, it is necessary to employ more reliable and sophisticated measures for the different conceptions of national identity. The measure used here was relatively parsimonious and corresponded to theoretical ideal types as identified by the literature. Yet, public attitudes appear to be more complex and contradictory.

Third, examining the question how the visible 'de-ethnisation' of international sports affects conceptions of national belonging and citizenship requires much more sophisticated research designs. It is strongly recommended that sport sociologists examine more directly to what extent immigrant athletes are perceived not only as members of the national community but also as its representatives. In addition, it should be studied to what extent the visible presence of immigrant athletes actually challenges traditional understandings of national the identity. With regard to the latter, subsequent research should examine how immigrant athletes are framed in mainstream media narratives. As already indicated, journalists have occasionally depicted the multi-ethnic national team as role model for successful integration (Ulrich 2010). However, more systematic research on media discourses is needed for understanding how immigrant athletes are depicted. Finally, it would be interesting to know whether immigrant athletes inspire the same degree of fan loyalty as native athletes.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendix

Table A1. Effect sizes for team identification.

Model	Partial ω^2
Ethnic identity	
Model 3a	0.023
Model 3b	0.023
Model 3c	0.076
Model 3d	0.077
Civic identity	
Model 4a	0.022
Model 4b	0.022
Model 4c	0.067
Model 4d	0.067