

Finally a ‘Taste for Diversity’? National Identity, Consumer Discrimination, and the Multi-ethnic German National Football Team

Henk Erik Meier* and Marcel Leinwather

Abstract: Persistent immigration towards industrialized countries has challenged traditional conceptions of citizenship. In Germany, immigration has visibly changed the ethnic fabric of the national football team, which is one of the few national post-war icons. Although some commentators consider the team to be a role model for successful integration of immigrants, unanimous approval of a multi-ethnic team would be surprising, given substantial xenophobic tendencies in Germany. Therefore, by analysing regional TV ratings, we examine consumer discrimination against the presence of ethnic out-group players in the national football team and explore how such discrimination relates to discriminatory attitudes. We find some but limited evidence for consumer discrimination but also for a trend towards a ‘taste for diversity’, suggesting that the audience gets used to a multi-ethnic team. While identity politics seems to be important for sport consumption, the links between sport, identity, consumer discrimination, and discriminatory attitudes seem more complex than initially assumed.

Introduction

Persistent migration flows have changed the ethnic fabric of European societies and challenged traditional understandings of citizenship and nationality (Pettigrew, 1998). This also applies to Germany as the prototype of an ethnic national identity in which immigration does not figure (Citrin and Sides, 2008: p. 34). The ‘de-ethnization of the nation’ (Poli, 2007) has become particular visible with the German national football team as one of the few post-war national icons. As the national team’s increasingly multi-ethnic character, personified by Ghanaian-born Gerald Asamoah and Turkish-descent Mesut Özil, has been accompanied by successful and attractive play, the team has been depicted as role model for integrating immigrants into German society (Ulrich, 2010).

However, it cannot be taken for granted that the audience approves of an increasing multi-ethnic national team, as (some) consumers might expect the national football team to represent Germany’s ethnic conception of citizenship. Thus, we test whether the presence of ‘out-group players’ in the team reduces television (TV)

ratings for national team matches and explore the relationship between consumer discrimination and more general discriminatory attitudes. Given sport’s relevance as symbolic arena, evidence for consumer disapproval of a visible de-ethnization of the nation would raise serious concerns about the ability of multi-ethnic societies to create an ‘imagined community’. Moreover, consumer discrimination in sport might indicate consumer bias harming the economic prospects of immigrants.

We first try to combine the literatures on national identity, consumer discrimination, and discriminatory attitudes to develop empirical hypotheses. We then discuss Germany as a critical case. Analyses provide support for some consumer discrimination against the presence of out-group players in the German national team but also for trend towards a ‘taste for diversity’. Thus, our results indicate the relevance of identity politics for sport consumption and potential problems of multi-ethnic societies to find images of cohesion. Finally, results raise serious questions concerning the relationship between sport, national identity, consumer discrimination, and discriminatory attitudes.

Institute für Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Münster. *Corresponding author.
Email: Henk.Erik.Meier@uni-muenster.de

National Identity and Consumer Discrimination in Sport

Sport and Identity Politics

Sport sociologists commonly claim that international sport plays a key role for national identity (Washington and Karen, 2001). However, the argument lacks conceptual clarity and valid empirical evidence.

Sport is supposed to be a key factor of national identity because nations as 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991) are desperate for unifying narratives and invented traditions. Because of its dramatic and antagonist qualities, sport can serve as vehicle of social cohesion *and* marker of social exclusions (Boyle and Haynes, 2009: pp. 144–145; Giulianotti, 1999). Moreover, sport teams share with nations 'the modern power of continuity' and exhibit 'organic solidarity' (Markovits and Helleman, 2001: p. 17). Thus, national football captures perfectly the notion of nations as 'imagined community' (Duke and Crolley, 1996: p. 4). National teams are supposed to inspire 'passionate nationalism' because 'an international football match involving *our* team intrudes into our daily routines, reminding us with whom we stand with regard to our fellow nationals and whom we stand against in the international sphere' (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998: p. 304).

The argument suffers, however, from conceptual vagueness about how exactly national sport teams represent nations and how they contribute to identity construction. Moreover, the claim of a strong link between nationalism and enthusiasm for national team football rests on strong assumptions. National identity is framed as 'all-or-none'-phenomenon, whereas manifold opportunities for identity choices are ignored (Huddy, 2001), and sport is uncritically characterized as 'deep play' ignoring the 'carnavalesque' character of national self-celebration in football (Abell *et al.*, 2007: p. 114).

Moreover, empirical evidence seems problematic. Researchers often stress deliberate uses of sport as vehicle of identity politics (Tomlinson and Young, 2006), but they hardly discuss the malleability of sport's symbolism (Houlihan, 1997). Scholars point also to the use of national stereotypes in sport media (Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell, 1993; Garland and Rowe, 1999; Maguire, Poulton, E. and Possamai, 1999) to claim that sport media win people's consent to a shared image of national identity (Crolley, Hand and Jeutter, 2000). However, the hyping of national rivalries may only represent a marketing strategy (Boyle and Haynes, 2009: p. 163), and the idea of clearly defined and static national identities reinforced by sport media stereotypes seems to simplistic (Ward, 2007). Most detrimental,

however, is the lack of empirical evidence on how discourse on international sports influences individual identity construction and national affection. Thus, the claim that support for a national team 'provides symbolic expression for a more fundamental and far-reaching sense of patriotic sentiment' seems 'highly speculative' (Abell *et al.*, 2007: p. 99).

Ethnic Nationalism and Consumer Discrimination

Therefore, we try to elaborate the popular idea that international sports and feelings of national affection are linked by assuming that the appeal of national sport teams results from their representation of national 'in-groups'. According to Reijerse (2012), 'citizenship representations' form an important part of national identity. As suggested by social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and comparative historical research (Brubaker, 1990), citizenship representations define 'national in-group prototypes' (Reijerse, 2012). Here, we assume that this prototype is ethnically defined implying that sportive nationalism and ethnic exclusionism are closely linked. Accordingly, if the audience gains use from the representation of an ethnic in-group prototype by national teams, multi-ethnic teams should lose their appeal. These ideas allow framing the relationship between sport and national identity as a problem of 'consumer discrimination'.

Salary discrimination (e.g. Holmes, 2011; Robst *et al.*, 2011), discrimination by referees (e.g. Price and Wolfers, 2010), or positional segregation are well-known phenomena in sport (e.g. Kahn, 1991, 2009). Although non-discriminators in sport enjoy competitive advantages in terms of productivity (Szymanski, 2000), consumer discrimination, which we address here, will not be eliminated by competition. According to Becker (1971: p. 153), some consumers have 'tastes for discrimination' and act as if the consumption of goods or services provided by certain minority groups incurs 'non-pecuniary, psychic costs' resulting in a distaste of ethnic in-groups to purchase goods from ethnic out-groups.

Consumer discrimination in sport implies that some consumers sacrifice specific entertainment experiences. Sport entertainment is not only about athletic prowess but also about 'winning' and 'commonality' (Fort, 2006: pp. 14–19). Winning provides consumers distinctive opportunities to raise their self-esteem (Raney, 2006). Moreover, sport consumption creates unique occasions to experience social affiliation and is, therefore, often socially motivated (Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap, 1999). As discriminating consumers waive commonly shared experiences, discrimination against multi-ethnic

teams could indicate difficulties of multi-ethnic societies to create images of cohesion. In contrast, a 'taste for diversity' would imply an approval of a less ethnic citizenship conception, which is related to more positive attitude towards foreigners (Billiet, Maddens and Beerten, 2003; Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003).

Following Becker (1971), consumer discrimination in sport is operationalized as negative impact of minority background of athletes or teams on consumer demand measured by stadium attendance, TV ratings, all-star votes, or memorabilia sales. There is substantial evidence for consumer discrimination in sport. Hill, Madura and Zuber (1981) established that baseball stadium visitors discriminated against minority pitchers. Burdekin and Idson (1991), Hoang and Rascher (1999), and Burdekin, Hossfeld and Smith, (2005) found evidence that a 'match' between the racial composition of a team and its target market's racial profile increased attendance. Kanazawa and Funk (2001) detected a positive impact of white player participation on TV ratings for NBA matches. Furthermore, Nardinelli and Simon (1990) and Gabriel, Johnson and Stanton, (1999) found consumer discrimination against non-white players in the market for baseball memorabilia. Replica shirt sales in German league football showed bias against Eastern European players (Kalter, 1999). However, consumer discrimination in US team sports seems to have declined (Hanssen and Andersen, 1999; Depken and Ford, 2006). There is even evidence for a new 'taste for diversity' (Aldrich, Arcidiaconoy and Vigdor, 2005; Tainsky and Winfree, 2010). Yet, consumer discrimination might also have become more subtle (Primm *et al.*, 2011).

Nevertheless, previous research supports the idea that the presence of players in the national team that do not conform to the ethnic in-group prototype might repel consumers whose use depends on the representation of the in-group prototype. Thus:

H1: The presence of ethnic out-group players in the national football team will leave a negative impact on the TV consumption of matches of the team.

While it is conceivable that ethnic nationalism increases both consumer discrimination and demand for national team matches, matches of high sporting relevance allow testing whether tastes for discrimination prevail over the interest in unique opportunities to experience national affiliation. Moreover, in case of strong consumer discrimination, there should be no habituation effects.

Furthermore, we aim to explore the sources of such discrimination by applying explanatory approaches derived from the more general literature on discriminatory attitudes. Here, scholars have claimed that deeply

held symbolic attitudes account for discriminatory sentiments (Sides and Citrin, 2007). For example, the particular content of national identity seems to matter for anti-immigrant attitudes (Billiet, Maddens and Beerten, *et al.*, 2003; Coenders and Scheepers, 2003; Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003), as well as political ideology (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009). The idea that deeply held symbolic attitudes are decisive for discrimination resonates well with our basic assumption that discriminatory attitudes and consumer discrimination are related. Therefore, we hypothesise:

H2: The negative impact of ethnic out-group players on TV consumption will increase with general xenophobic attitudes.

In contrast, group threat theory as a key approach for studying discriminatory attitudes against immigrants (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010) claims that prejudice represents a defensive reaction towards explicit or implicit challenges to a dominant group's position (Blumer, 1958; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). Thus, competition for scarce resources between social groups catalyses antagonistic attitudes (Coenders and Scheepers, 2003; Semyonov *et al.*, 2004; Semyonov, Raijman and Gorodzeisky, 2006).

Competitive threat theory is supported by the fact that socially and economically vulnerable individuals are more likely to express discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes towards members of out-group populations (Fetzer, 2000; Kunovich, 2004; Semyonov, Raijman and Gorodzeisky, 2006). However, these felt threats cannot always be related to realistic economic competition (Schneider, 2008). Moreover, some studies found little evidence for an influence of economic self-interest on anti-immigration sentiments (Fetzer, 2000; Malchow-Møller *et al.*, 2009). The influence of education (Coenders and Scheepers, 2003; Coenders, Lubbers and Scheepers, 2008; Fertig and Schmidt, 2011) suggests also that cognitive skills might serve as explanation (Kunovich, 2009).

Competitive threat theory also claims that discriminatory attitudes increase with poor economic conditions and size of the minority population, which determines competition and the minority group's potential for collective action (Quillian, 1995; Semyonov *et al.*, 2004, 2006; Hjerm, 2007). There is evidence that both contextual factors influence discriminatory attitudes (Quillian, 1995; Scheepers *et al.*, 2002; Kunovich, 2004; Semyonov, Raijman and Gorodzeisky, 2006; Coenders, Lubbers and Scheepers, 2008) or conceptions of national identity (Kunovich, 2009). However, it seems that perceived rather than actual threat matters (Semyonov

et al., 2004; Schlueter and Wagner, 2008; Schneider, 2008), and that minority size is more relevant than economic prosperity (McLaren, 2003; Ceobanu and Escandell, 2008; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Malchow-Møller *et al.*, 2009). However, size of immigrant population eases also inter-group contact, which reduces perceived group threat and derogation of immigrants (McLaren, 2003; Schlueter and Wagner, 2008). Finally, some studies found no effects of contextual features on discriminatory attitudes (Hjerm, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Citrin and Sides, 2008; Davidov *et al.*, 2008; Schneider, 2008; Strabac and Listhaug, 2008). Yet, competitive threat theory might need a more dynamic reformulation, as it is likely that perceived threat responds to sudden changes rather than to slow evolution. Actually, change in immigrant group size seems more relevant than absolute group size (Meuleman, Davido and Billiet, 2009).

Thus, notwithstanding mixed empirical support, we test competitive threat theory in static and dynamic form:

H3: The negative impact of players not adhering to the national in-group prototype on TV consumption will increase with poorer economic conditions and size of minority population or with economic downturns and suddenly growing minority populations.

Rationale for a German Case Study

Germany represents a critical case for testing our ideas, as it is the prototype of an ethnically defined nation that grants citizenship on the exclusivist principle of descent (Brubaker, 1990). As immigration does not figure in Germany's citizenship conception (Citrin and Sides, 2008: p. 34), long periods of residency were needed for immigrants to apply for citizenship (Hjerm, 1998), and, despite Germany became inhabited by large numbers of immigrants, Germany's status as an immigration country was long denied. Moreover, the limited *jus soli* modernization of citizenship laws in 1999 was subject of bitter political debate (Green, 2000).

Given these strong ethnic roots of German national identity, it is surprising that, in a number of studies, Germans do not appear as particular xenophobic (Hjerm, 2007; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Meuleman, Davido and Billiet, 2009) and as having a more civic than ethnic national identity (Jones and Smith, 2001a, b). However, there is evidence on 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, Lofstrom and Zimmermann, 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).

Research on the expectations of ethnic Germans concerning the role and the behaviour of immigrants leaves also ambivalent impressions. There is evidence that 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). German respondents show substantial support for the marginalization of immigrants (Zagefka and Brown, 2002) and demand the maintenance of German culture and cultural adoptions by immigrants (Gerschke *et al.*, 2010). Other studies found that most German respondents preferred integration as acculturation strategy denoting a desire for culture maintenance of immigrants, as well as for contact with immigrants (Rohmann, Florack and Piontkowski, 2006). Unfortunately, research has hardly addressed to what extent Germans accept to be symbolically represented by immigrants.

Germany is a critical case not only because of its ethnic citizenship representation but also because of its strong tradition of identity politics in sport ranging from the nationalist Turner movement (Krüger, 1996), the 'Nazi Olympics' (Mandell, 1971; Hart-Davis, 1986), to the communist attempt to use sport to create an East German identity (Balbier, 2005). Moreover, after World War II heavily compromised German national symbols, the West German football team became a national icon because the win of the FIFA World Cup in 1954 served to restore national self-confidence (Merkel, 2007). Its iconic status grants the national team much bigger TV audiences than any other program (Gerhards and Klingler, 2011).

For a long time, the national football team strongly reflected an ethnic concept of citizenship. Until the 1990s, the only three multi-ethnic national footballers were children of US soldiers. At least one of them, 'Jimmy' Hartwig, complained about racial prejudices within the German Football Association (Deutscher Fußballbund—DFB) (von Becker, 2010). The DFB's reluctant stance towards multi-ethnic players only changed when the European Court of Justice abandoned nationality restrictions in European club football in 1995. After a multi-ethnic French team won the 1998 World Cup, the DFB aimed to capitalize on immigrants' talents,

which served even as an argument for the modernization of German citizenship laws (Kalter, 2003: p. 18). Actually, football is by far the most popular sports among immigrants in Germany (Breuer and Wicker, 2011). While the DFB now promotes the integration of immigrants (DFB, 2008), the far right German National Democratic Party (NPD) campaigned against African-descent players in the national team (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2006). In summary, there is enough reason to expect some consumer discrimination against a multi-ethnic national team in Germany.

Method and Data

Data Source and Sample

As other scholars of consumer discrimination in sport (Kanazawa and Funk, 2001; Aldrich, Arcidiaconoy and Viggdor, 2005; Tainsky and Winfree, 2010), we use TV ratings as measure of consumer demand. We acquired a unique data set from Media Control on TV ratings from the German federal states for live telecasts for all matches of the men's national football team between 1 January 1995 and 31 December 2011. Media Control enjoys a monopoly for conducting TV ratings in Germany on behalf of the most important stakeholders of the TV industry who agree on Media Control's methods. The ratings are conducted based on a sample of 5,640 German and EU citizen TV households comprising ~13,000 persons (GfK, 2011). The sample is claimed to be representative according to socio-demographic variables, including city size, residence, household size, income, education, and citizenship of the main breadwinner, children, and TV distribution platform. Although sampling quality is annually evaluated, researchers can only access aggregate data. Here, it is most relevant that the sample does not include non-EU citizens ignoring the TV consumption of ~4.32 m people residing in Germany who might have a particular distant relationship to Germany (Supplementary Data).

In the period under scrutiny, the national team played 237 matches of which 127 matches were of relevance for winning an international tournament title and 110 were friendly matches. Because of German broadcasting regulations, all matches were broadcasted on nationwide free-to-air TV channels. Here, we analyse regional TV ratings, reflecting the shares of regional population, for these nationwide live-casts for all 16 federal states resulting in 3,792 observations. As our data set consists of repeated observations (TV ratings) on individual units (federal states) over time, we deal with panel data that allow for causal inferences (Halaby, 2004). However, the time-series-cross-section (TSCS) character of the data

implies that we potentially deal complex error structures (Reed and Ye, 2011).

Out-group Player Background

Becker (1971: p. 76) suggested to study consumer discrimination by dividing 'the attributes of any output into two classes, the attributes in one of these being relevant only when consumer discrimination exists'. As we focus on discrimination against ethnic out-group players, we conducted ethnic background data for all 154 players fielded in a national team match between 1995 and 2011. According to the rather inclusive definition of official statistics (Decree on Immigration Background Statistics, 2010), 34 (22.1%) players fielded had an immigrant background. However, we assume that perceived ethnic distance matters more than a legal definition. Survey data suggest that players of Turkish, Tunisian, and African descent are perceived as ethnic most distant. Thus, their number in the line-ups was calculated to create *Out-group Players* as central independent variable (Supplementary Data).

Quality Features of Sport Entertainment

Studying consumer discrimination in sport requires accounting for quality features of sport that are relevant for non-discriminating consumers. While there is a rich set of indicators (García and Rodríguez, 2009), we follow Feddersen and Rott (2006) in applying these approaches to national team football: for measuring sporting relevance of a match, we constructed dummies for friendly (*Friendly*) and for international tournament matches (*Tournament*). We use Germany's FIFA ranking (*German FIFA-Ranking*) and the international titles won by the opponent team (*Opponent Titles*) as indicators of sporting quality. As outcome uncertainty is supposed to play a central role for consumers (Szymanski, 2003), we calculated a measure for the probability of a German victory on the base of differences in FIFA rankings (*German Victory*). In addition, we calculated 'winning streaks' (*German Winning Streak*, *Opponent Winning Streak*) and constructed a dummy for historical rivalries (*Rivalry*). Furthermore, we accounted for match schedules (*Prime Time*, *Weekend*).

Context-level Control Variables

Several contextual level variables account for the embedded nature of prejudice. As H2 claims that consumer discrimination increases with xenophobic attitudes, we used the General German Social Survey (GESIS, 2012) to create a longitudinal indicator. The survey includes four items on anti-foreigner attitudes, which allow to

construct a xenophobia scale and to calculate regional means of xenophobia. Missing values were computed by using linear interpolation (*Xenophobia*) (Supplementary Data). To test H3 on the influence of competitive threat, we account for economic conditions (*GDP per capita*) and size of minority population (*Foreigner Share*). As sudden changes might be more decisive for perceived threat (Meuleman, Davido and Billiet, 2009), we calculated *GDP growth* and change of minority population (*Foreigner Inflow*) to test a dynamic version of competitive threat theory. For these indicators, we applied 1-year lags to account for the time needed to change attitudes. An *East* dummy serves to control for legacies of the German divide. Table 1 provides definitions and descriptive statistics. The TV rating variable was logarithmized, as it proved to be right-skewed.

Empirical Results

Given potentially complex error structures, we used models with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE) that provide more accurate confidence intervals implying more reliable hypothesis testing (Reed and Ye, 2011). Fixed effects were modelled by including dummies for each federal state; random effects were assumed for matches. Following Beck and Katz (2011), a lagged-dependent variable was included to account for auto-correlation resulting from ‘habit persistence’ typical for sport consumption (Simmons, 2006).

Following research conventions, *Out-group Players* was initially treated as monotonous variable. Actually, the multivariate analyses showed a significant negative but low effect for *Out-group Players* and a significant positive interaction between *Out-group Players* and *Trend*. However, in-sample predictions and non-parametrical tests cast doubts about the linearity of the relationship (Supplementary Data). For these reasons, we decided to test for consumer discrimination in a simpler version by using dummy variable for matches with any *Out-group Player Participation* (Table 2).

With one exception (Model 3), the analyses suggest that matches with *Out-group Player Participation* receive significantly lower ratings. The significant positive interaction between *Out-group Player Participation* and *Trend* in Models 2–5 indicates a trend towards less consumer discrimination. However, while we arrived at high levels of explained variance commonly found in aggregate data studies on sports consumption (Kanazawa and Funk, 2001; Aldrich, Arcidiaconoy and Vigdor, 2005), the average marginal effects of *Out-group Player Participation* are rather low (~3 per cent) and not significant. Nevertheless, according to in-sample predictions,

matches with *Out-group Player Participation* receive ratings reduced by ~5.5 per cent (Table 3).

Thus, there is some but limited evidence for consumer discrimination against ethnic out-group players in the national team but also for a trend towards a ‘taste for diversity’, suggesting that the audience gets used to a multi-ethnic team. Moreover, positive (albeit insignificant) coefficients for the interaction of *Out-group Player Participation* and *Tournament* nurture the idea that sportive nationalism prevails over discrimination in case of most relevant matches (Models 2–4).

We find, however, no significant support for our basic idea that sportive nationalism is directly linked to ethnic exclusionism (measured by *Xenophobia*), although identity politics seem to matter. Negative coefficients for *East* indicate a lasting legacy of the German divide. The fact that higher *Foreigner Share* decreases TV ratings suggests a link between German citizenship and watching national team matches. However, findings should be cautiously interpreted, as EU foreigners are excluded from the TV rating sample.¹

Our explanatory hypotheses were tested by creating interaction terms between *Out-group Player Participation* with *Xenophobia*, *GDP per Cap*, *Foreigner Share*, *Foreigner Inflow*, and *GDP Growth*. However, these explanatory efforts have failed. Consumer discrimination does not increase with regional *Xenophobia* (Model 3) or competitive threat in static (Model 4) or more dynamic form (Model 5).

Concerning sporting quality, results support previous findings that TV consumers represent an ‘armchair audience’, who wants to be entertained by a relevant and close competition between top teams (compare Baimbridge, Cameron and Dawson, 1996; Buraimo and Simmons, 2009). Results for *German FIFA-Ranking* and probability of *German Victory* suggest that consumers are distracted from too predictable matches. Moreover, matches during *Prime Time* come with higher opportunity costs for alternative leisure options (Supplementary Data). Finally, while there is substantial habit persistence, TV ratings decline in the long run.

Discussion and Conclusions

Migration has changed the ethnic fabric of Western societies and challenged conceptions of citizenship and national identity. The de-ethnization of nations has become particularly visible in sports, which is deemed to be a highly relevant arena for identity politics. Therefore, we have explored the idea that sportive nationalism and ethnic exclusionism are directly linked. Accordingly, if consumers expect national sport teams to represent ethnic in-group prototypes, the visible de-ethnization of

Table 1 Dependent and independent variables

Name	Definition	Min	Max	Mean	SD
TV ratings ^a	Regional TV ratings for audiences aged >14 years	9.4	96	42.18	18.8
Out-group player	Number of players with most distant immigrant background in line-up	0	4	0.58	0.89
Out-group player participation	Dummy variable for matches with any number of players with most distant immigrant background in line-up	0	1	0.38	0.49
Xenophobia ^b	Regional average of xenophobia score	11.03	17.5	14.4	1.32
GDP per cap ^c	Regional GDP per capita on annual base measured in thousands Euro	13.14	49.64	25.44	7.59
Foreigner share ^d	Regional population share of foreigners	1.01	15.36	7.68	4.44
GDP growth	Annual growth rate of GDP per capita	-6.14	17.9	2.56	2.88
Foreigner inflow	Annual change of rate of foreigners per capita	-0.8	0.97	0.03	0.17
East ^e	Dummy for East German federal state	0	1	0.31	0.46
Trend	Annual variable increasing by one unit per year	0	15	8.18	4.84
Friendly ^f	Dummy variable for friendly matches	0	1	0.46	0.5
Tournament ^g	Dummy variable for matches during World Cup and Euro tournaments	0	1	0.62	0.49
German FIFA-ranking	Germany's FIFA ranking at time of the match	2	22	6.94	5.17
Opponent titles	International titles won by the opponent team	0	17	1.35	3.57
German victory	Probability of a German victory $(Rankdiff_{i,t} - Rankdiff_{i,max}) / (2 \times Rankdiff_{i,max})$, where $Rankdiff_{i,t}$ represents the differences between Germany's FIFA ranking and the opponent team's FIFA ranking for match i at time t	45.05	97.03	59.52	10.47
German winning streak	German winning streak: share of possible points scored by the German team within the past five matches	26.67	100	69.79	16.09
Opponent winning streak	Opponent winning streak: share of possible points scored by the opponent team during the past five matches	0	100	51.28	25.43
Rivalry	Dummy for teams that have ever confronted Germany in an international tournament final	0	1	0.2	0.4
Primetime ^h	Dummy prime time (07:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.)	0	1	0.62	0.49
Weekend ⁱ	Dummy weekend (Saturday and Sunday)	0	1	0.34	0.47

^aData source: Medial Control/AGF/GfK.

^bData source: GESIS (2012), calculated on base of variables V266-V269.

^cData source: Working Committee on Macroeconomic Accounting of the Federal States (Arbeitskreis 'Volkswirtschaftliche Gesamtrechnungen der Länder'), http://www.vgrill.de/Arbeitskreis_VGR/tbbs/WZ2003tab01.asp (last date accessed, April 11, 2012).

^dData source: Regional Database Germany, Table 173-41-4 ('Regionaldatenbank Deutschland'), <https://www.regionalstatistik.de/genesis/online> (last date accessed, April 11, 2012).

^eReference category is West Germany, Berlin has been treated as West German state since before reunification, West Berlin citizens accounted for 62.5% of Berlin's entire population.

^fReference category is all other matches, including Confederation Cup matches, qualification matches, and World Cup and Euro matches.

^gReference category is all other matches, including friendly, Confederation Cup, and qualification matches.

^hReference category is all other time slots.

ⁱReference category is all other weekdays.

Note: N = 3,792, 16 federal states, 237 matches.

Table 2 Regional TV ratings for relevant matches of the national football team

Independent variable	Model 1 basic model	Model 2 important matches	Model 3 xenophobic climate	Model 4 competitive threat (static)	Model 5 competitive threat (dynamic)
<i>Out-group player participation</i>	-0.101* (0.041)	-0.118** (0.045)	-0.076 (0.096)	-0.102* (0.049)	-0.131** (0.048)
Out-group Player Participation interacted with					
× <i>Trend</i>	0.008 (0.004)	0.010* (0.005)	0.009* (0.005)	0.010* (0.005)	0.011* (0.005)
× <i>Tournament</i>		0.117 (0.099)	0.116 (0.099)	0.117 (0.099)	0.100 (0.100)
× <i>Tournament</i> × <i>Trend</i>		-0.008 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.010)
× <i>Xenophobia</i>			-0.003 (0.006)		
× <i>Foreigner Share</i>				0.003 (0.002)	
× <i>GDP per Cap</i>				-0.002 (0.001)	
× <i>Foreigner Inflow</i>					0.111 (0.065)
× <i>GDP Growth</i>					0.092 (0.513)
Contextual factors					
<i>Xenophobia</i>	0.007 (0.008)	0.010 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.009 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)
<i>Foreigner Share</i>	-0.027** (0.009)	-0.023** (0.009)	-0.022** (0.009)	-0.024** (0.009)	-0.025** (0.008)
<i>GDP per Cap</i>	0.000 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)
<i>Foreigner Inflow</i>	-0.018 (0.033)	-0.011 (0.032)	-0.011 (0.032)	-0.010 (0.032)	-0.045 (0.039)
<i>GDP Growth</i>	-0.170 (0.269)	-0.055 (0.263)	-0.056 (0.264)	-0.067 (0.265)	-0.100 (0.311)
<i>East Germany</i>	-0.594*** (0.121)	-0.539*** (0.118)	-0.534*** (0.118)	-0.543*** (0.118)	-0.560*** (0.114)
Trend and habit persistence					
<i>Trend</i>	-0.011*** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.004)
<i>(ln)TV-Ratings_(t-1)</i>	0.133*** (0.029)	0.117*** (0.028)	0.117*** (0.028)	0.117*** (0.028)	0.116*** (0.028)
<i>N</i>	3,776	3,776	3,776	3,776	3,776
<i>R²</i>	0.819	0.824	0.824	0.824	0.824

Note: Dependent variable is (ln)TV Ratings. $N=3,792$, 16 federal states, 237 matches. Standard errors in brackets. Method used is linear regression with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE). The equations here also include dummies for every federal state and match-level control variables Friendly, Tournament, German FIFA-Ranking, Opponent Titles, German Victory, German Winning Streak, Opponent Winning Streak, Rivalry, Primetime, and Weekend. Details on coefficients are provided in Supplementary Data. Individual matches were treated as random effects. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3 Marginal effects and predicted values

Indicators for effect of out-group player participation	Model 1 basic model	Model 2 important matches	Model 3 xenophobic climate	Model 4 competitive threat (static)	Model 5 competitive threat (dynamic)
<i>Out-group Player Dummy</i>					
Average marginal effect	-0.036	-0.031	-0.031	-0.031	-0.03
95 per cent CI	-0.075, 0.003	-0.069, 0.007	-0.069, 0.007	-0.069, 0.007	-0.069, 0.008
<i>In-sample predictions of TV ratings^a</i>					
No out-group players	44.69	44.53	44.52	44.53	44.54
Out-group players	38.84	39.08	39.09	39.09	39.07

^aPredictions in logs were retransformed according to the procedure suggested by Cameron and Trivedi (2010: p. 108).

Note: CI, confidence interval.

the teams should reduce their appeal to discriminating consumers. Because of the strong ethnic roots of German national identity and the national football team's status as national icon, we examined these ideas

by studying TV ratings for Germany's national football team. Moreover, we borrowed approaches from research on discriminatory attitudes to explain consumer discrimination.

Our analyses of regional TV ratings indicate some albeit low consumer discrimination against the presence of players in the national team who do not conform to the national in-group prototype. Thus, (part of) the audience has disapproved of a multi-ethnic team and has been willing to waive occasions to bask in reflected glory and to experience social affiliation. Therefore, results might imply that multi-ethnic societies face difficulties to create images of social cohesion and occasions for experiencing an 'imagined community'. However, there is also evidence for a habituation effect towards a 'taste for diversity'. Thus, German TV consumers seem to have come to accept the team's changed ethnic fabric that has coincided with the modernization of German citizenship law. Yet, such 'taste for diversity' does not necessarily imply that German audiences develop more civic forms of patriotism that could serve to reduce xenophobia. Rather, sportive nationalism might simply prevail over discrimination.

Identity politics seem to play an important role for sport consumption: lower TV ratings in East Germany indicate lasting legacies of the German divide. The negative effect on higher foreign population on TV ratings supports the idea that the national team plays a less important role for immigrants, indicating again potential difficulties for multi-ethnic societies to create images of cohesion. However, the assumption that sportive nationalism and ethnic exclusionism are strongly linked did not receive support. As efforts to explain consumer discrimination by context factors also failed, the study raises more questions than provides answers on how consumer discrimination in sport is related to discriminatory attitudes against immigrants.

This is partly because of limitations of our research design. Although TV ratings represent a valuable data source for studying consumers' choices, they provide little information about reception processes and impact of TV exposure on audiences (Kansteiner, 2004) leaving us to speculate about the individual-level processes resulting in consumer discrimination. Some of these shortcomings could be mitigated by a comparative research design. While difficult data access allowed us only to present a German case study, it would be most interesting to study consumer discrimination against multi-ethnic teams in nations with a more civic citizenship conception where we should expect less consumer discrimination. In addition, while we had good arguments for focusing on football and on a national team as marker of social cohesion, it would be worthwhile to study consumer discrimination in individual sports, as some athletes, such as Muhammad Ali, became icons because they represented increasing self-confidence of minorities. Tracing consumer discrimination against

minority athletes in individual sports could provide further insights on how ethnic in-groups respond to visible challenges of their hegemony.

Nevertheless, more survey and experimental research on the links between sport-, identity-, and discrimination-based is needed. Here, we can only concede that we know little about the links between sport, national affection, and identity construction. Thus, the fact that consumers of European club football seem to have accepted the heavily intensified player migration after 1995 (Wilson and Ying, 2003) could indeed indicate the rise of a new Europe of competing cities and regions disembedded from national contexts (King, 2000) but could also simply mean that sport is of less relevance for identity construction than commonly claimed. Regardless of a trend towards a 'taste for diversity' among German audiences, it is unclear whether the multi-ethnic national football team can serve as vehicle for promoting a more civic German national identity. The links between sport, identity, consumer discrimination, and discriminatory attitudes seem more complex than assumed here.

Note

- 1 Foreign population as measured by official statistics includes EU foreigners and non-EU foreigners.

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