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Populism as New Wine in Old Bottles in the Context of Germany: ‘Symbolic Violence’ as Collective Habitus That Devalues the Human Capital of Turks

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Abstract: Populism in Germany is not a new phenomenon. For a long time, the alleged integration problems of Turkish workers in Germany have been at the center of the dominant discourse and academic studies. This paper demonstrates how ‘symbolic violence’ as collective habitus frames the human capital of Turks as deficient, a phenomenon which has prevailed even prior to the recent populist movements. Drawing on a company case study, interviews, and observations, our empirical investigation operationalises and expands the Bourdieusian conceptual trinity of habitus, capital, and symbolic violence through the lens of ethnicity and how it relates to populism.

Keywords: capitals; habitus; migrant workers; race equality; symbolic violence; populism



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1. Introduction

Germany is the second most popular immigration country after the United States, with a large and steady “influx” of immigrants attributed to the guest worker recruitment programme of the post-war years. Today, over 26.7 (See <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61646/bevoelkerung-mit-migrationshintergrund/> accessed on 24 January 2022) per cent of residents in Germany have a so-called ‘migration background’. In 2015, net migration amounted to 1.14 million, which is the highest net intake of “foreigners” ever recorded in the history of Germany [1]. Notably, this excludes the significant arrivals of refugees into Germany in the same period. During the so-called “long summer of migration” in 2015, thousands of refugees, mostly from war-torn Syria, arrived in Germany via the Balkan route [2,3]. This movement of people was quickly dubbed a ‘refugee crises’ across Europe, mobilising far-right and right-wing-populist groups across Europe and leading to electoral gains for far-right and right-wing-populist political parties during the 2014 European elections [4–7]. According to [8] (p. 73), “Populism thrives on crisis and indeed often depends on fabricating a sense of crisis”.

Right-wing populist movements in Germany experienced a renaissance even before the significant intake of refugees in 2015. Since 2012, three new far-right political parties were founded, including: The Right (Die Rechte), Der Dritte Weg’ (The III. Path or The Third Path), far right and neo-Nazi political parties, and the better known ‘Alternative für Deutschland’ (Alternative for Germany, widely known by its German initials AfD), which is a right-wing populist political party. A far-right protest movement called ‘Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA)’, initially started in Dresden in Eastern Germany in 2014, quickly garnered media and public attention, mobilising thousands of people across Germany and even in broader Europe. In 2015, following the arrival of new refugees, many from Syria, Pegida forged an informal alliance with

the far-right AfD based on similar intentions, rejecting “mass migration”. According to Vorländer et al. [8] (p. 13), “The pictures of a flag-waving crowd, demonstrating in the darkness and chanting offensive slogans were seen around the world and gave rise to fears that, in a kind of catch-up alignment with other western democracies, right-wing populism was now also able to develop political momentum in Germany”.

In this paper, we argue that while such scenes on the streets of Germany might have been recent developments, far-right populist rhetoric and practice has been part of the discourse on immigration for a long time. For example, the so-called ‘Leitkultur’ debate long predates recent populist movements. Until 1998, the dominant notion was that ‘Germany is not a country of immigration’, which even at that time was fictional and only perpetuated the idea of a non-existing national homogeneity. The German Citizenship Law, originated in 1913, was transmitted through *jus sanguinis* (blood lineage or right to blood), rather than transmitted through *jus soli* (citizenship at birth). As a result of this outdated and discriminatory law, children of migrants born in Germany were not eligible for German citizenship. The Citizenship law was later reformed by the red–green coalition of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and Alliance ‘90/The Greens government in 2000.

One of the significant changes in the existing citizenship laws was to dismantle the links between citizenship and *jus sanguinis*. As a result of this shift, the Christian Democratic Union opposition “... accused the government of jeopardising ‘German cultural identity’. What ensued was the *Leitkulturdebatte*’ or ‘culture debate’, raising the ire of both sides of the divide on what Germany’s predominant culture means. What has ensued is the notion of the ‘clash of civilisations’ and the incompatibility of ‘different’ cultures”. This approach “replaced racial belonging with cultural belonging, transforming the *jus sanguinis* into an essentialist *jus cultus*. It also formed part of a conservative attempt to re-establish a ‘normal’ German national consciousness, cleared of the memory of the Holocaust” [9] (p. 39).

Alleged integration problems surrounding Turkish workers in Germany have long been debated in the public discourse and academic studies. Even before the rise of the Pegida movement and the emergence of the AfD, this discourse and discussion has resulted in a neglect of the positive labour market outcomes of Turkish workers. Relatedly, it is only recently that Germany’s majority population has come to recognise that Germany is an immigration country [10]. Underscoring this populist ‘turn’ has been the historical absence of a multicultural policy, making it unsurprising that ideas and related policies and strategies have ignored cultural diversity, multiculturalism, and racial equality in the labour market [11,12]. Instead, race-related issues have focused on the context of social assimilation [13,14], whereby the labour market experience of ethnic minority workers is primarily overlooked [15]. In this paper, we address this empirical lacuna with a study that explores the positioning of ethnic minority Turks in Germany. Moreover, this paper applies Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptions of habitus, symbolic violence, and symbolic capital and examines how these concepts relate to populism.

This paper explores the following question: How does the collective habitus of populism and symbolic violence work to devalue the skills and capitals (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital) of Turkish workers in Germany? To address this, the empirical investigation operationalises and expands the Bourdieuan conceptual trinity of habitus, different forms of capital, and symbolic violence. We draw on a Bourdieuan analysis, which focuses on unmasking symbolic power: that is, the power of ‘world making’ [16]. Several scholars have deployed Bourdieu’s concepts of symbolic power, violence, and capitals. For instance, Randle et al. [17] go beyond simple demographic and essentialist categories by drawing on Bourdieu’s cultural, economic, and social capitals to provide a nuanced analytical framework for understanding the social dynamics of exclusion. In an examination of the links between symbolic violence and charismatic leadership, Robinson and Kerr [18] offer analytical insights for understanding the operationalisation of symbolic violence when used in populist rhetoric and practice, noting that it is actualised in three

distinct and interacting forms, including physical objects, such as buildings, cultural capital objects, including degrees and passports, and in individuals as 'habitus' [18] (p. 880), while Vincent [19] and Carmona et al. [20] draw on Bourdieu's forms of capital and fields of influence to understand the gendered construct of work time and constructions of gender management. respectively. Yamak et al. [21] demonstrate how gender order itself serves as a form of symbolic violence for some individuals and as a resource or form of capital for others, such as for instance, Turkish business elites. For Samaluk [22], symbolic power and violence guide transnational exchange and migrant and minority ethnic worker strategies informing the migrant's decision to migrate, highlighting that those strategies are guided by neo-colonial symbolic power. According to Samaluk, one such strategy is to "... acquire (trans)nationally recognised forms of cultural capital by taking up training and work opportunities within the reputed West and by seeking seemingly reliable intermediary services that could advise them in the acquisition process" [22] (p. 30). Erel [23] shows how migrants do not just bring skills and cultural capital with them. They also acquire skills and turn them into different forms of capital in the destination country of residence, thus acquiring 'migration-specific' capital, which cannot be reduced simply to 'ethnic' capital. Similarly, [24] demonstrate how minority ethnic agency and strategies for capital mobilisation, which remain ignored in the literature, are essential in understanding the migrant experience beyond frames of discrimination and disadvantage, with a sense of choice, resilience, and progress. While only a tiny sample of works is represented here, they draw attention to the importance of Bourdieu in illuminating exclusion and inclusion, as well as populist rhetoric and strategies, in a variety of social and organisational contexts.

1.1. Populism

In recent years the notion of populism has become somewhat of a buzzword amongst scholars, journalists, and politicians worldwide, notably propelled by events such as the Brexit campaign in the UK, the Trump regime's assault on fundamental freedoms and human rights in the USA, the rise of Operation Sovereign Borders in Australia, and European populist movements emerging in the aftermath of significant refugee arrivals in 2015. The outcome of such populist discourses has been unevenly felt across the Global North and Global South. Masood and Nisar [25] suggest populism in the Global North, which valorised the Global North, has marginalised the Global South, positioning it as less relevant. Despite its wide usage, the concept of populism remains contested [26], with scholars having difficulties adopting a single and universally accepted definition because populism manifests differently in different contexts [27]. Tamás [28] (p. 1) even goes so far to suggest that populism is "a massive misnomer, a journalistic cliché, and political epithet that serves more to stigmatise than to analyse". However, Brubaker [29] (p. 1), defending the use of populism as an analytic category, argues that "... we have been living through an extraordinary pan-European and trans-Atlantic populist moment". In this paper, however, we show that populism in the populist anti-immigrant and racist rhetoric has been part of the dominant discourse in Germany for decades. The difference is that anti-immigrant and racist rhetoric has not previously been considered populism. It is now acknowledged as such because it is seen in the light of the broader global international populism movement. In other words, what has been accepted as dominant anti-immigrant and racist discourse and sentiment has now received new clothes, which makes it visible for what it is: anti-immigrant and racist populism.

Populism is often associated with an appeal to the concerns of "the people", who feel that their views are disregarded by the established economic and political order and/or the elite who feel they have been left behind. Populism, in its basic definition, appears as an innocuous demand: simply to access democratic mechanisms and to have silenced voices heard. However, populist discourses are often used by far-right groups to polarise social and political lives [30,31], pitting the majority population against migrants, minority ethnic groups, and other targeted minorities in general. As such, racism, anti-immigrant sentiments, and religious hatred are often used by populists, "... together with an imaginary

of violation, occupation, and displacement by the dangerous, criminalised, and devious others who are threatening the “assumed” majority, its rule and social, economic, and political standing” [32].

According to Mostov [26] (p. 1), “... populism is always gendered and dangerous to women and democracy” however, in this paper, we show that populism is also racialised and ethnicised and dangerous to migrants, refugees, and minority ethnic people, since it results in a devaluation of the social capital they hold. Right wing populism relies on polarising and distinguishing between ‘us’ and ‘them’ by drawing lines along race/ethnonationalism and making belonging exclusive to the majority group [26]. Finally, populism is ordinarily protectionist, since the majority group needs to be protected from the other to ensure the rule and power of the majority [7]. In line with this populist view, minority ethnic people and migrants “... have no appropriate place in social space and no set place in the social classification. Neither citizen nor foreigner, not truly on the side of the Same nor really on the side of the Other, he exists within that ‘bastard’ place, of which Plato also speaks, on the frontier between being and social non-being. Displaced, in the sense of being incongruous and inopportune, he is a source of embarrassment. The difficulty we have in thinking about him—even in science, which often reproduces, without realising it, the presuppositions and omissions of the official vision—recreates the embarrassment created by his burdensome non-existence” [33] (p. 14).

Lastly, Hartwell and Devinney [34] call for more attention to the politics of work, employment, and organisation in the context of rising populism. They caution that populism subverts the original purpose of social, economic, and political institutions of significance. Thus, classical reading of institutions without a more profound understanding of the impact of populism on those institutions would offer a misguided knowledge of such institutions. In this paper, examining a company case study, we responded to this call and explored populism as symbolic violence in the organisational context, and how it subverts and denigrates the economic, social, and political value of minority ethnic workers in Germany.

1.2. Bourdieu's Concepts of Symbolic Violence, Habitus and Capitals

We utilised Bourdieu's concepts to explain how symbolic violence takes form in the context of populism in Germany by asking two propositions: (i) how order and restraint are established and maintained over migrants through indirect cultural mechanisms, as opposed to direct and coercive control [35], and (ii) how these cultural mechanisms influence the development of a shared habitus that produces and reproduces practices: namely patterns of behaviour that (de)value certain types of ethnic/migrant capital. Habitus is defined as the “product of internalisation of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself” [36] (p. 31). It reflects an embodied system of dispositions, which generates and organises practice [37]. Habitus predisposes individuals to behave in such a way, often without conscious realisation, leading to the reproduction of the structures that limit them [38]. For example, racial domination or exclusion and the construction of race represent fields of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is defined as a partly unconscious instrument of domination and an overriding system of symbolism and meaning imposed upon subordinated groups or classes to secure the social reproduction of relations of domination [37]. Symbolic violence occurs so that subordination and exclusion are naturalised and sometimes experienced as legitimate and ethical, not only by the main population but also by (ethnic) minorities. This legitimacy shadows the existing power relations, making them often unrecognisable, sticky, and invisible to individuals who experience them. It is fair to say that individuals become complicit as they consent to the dominant values and the behavioural schema utilised in the field [39]. The internalised violence manifests within the self-consciousness of individuals, as does the shared habitus [37]. Symbolic violence has explanatory power where the majority population denies ethnic discrimination or takes it for granted. Fundamentally, symbolic violence is the imposition of categories: socially constructed classificatory schemes of thought and perception upon dominated social agents who then take as given that the social order is just and ethical. Bourdieu [36] identifies

different forms of capital: economic capital, in the form of, for example, money; social capital, which exists in the form of social networks and connections; cultural capital, which exists in embodied, objectified, and institutionalised states; and lastly symbolic capital, which designates the effects of any form of capital when people do not perceive them as such [40]. Symbolic capital also refers to socially recognised legitimisation.

Bourdieu views symbolic capital as a crucial power source [18,41]. Relatedly, to understand symbolic violence and populism, we need to attend to power relations. Bourdieu describes the power in terms of symbolic capital, the breadth and depth of the net value of resources and the power one has in each context. Symbolic power is utilised “to conserve or transform current classifications in matters of gender, nation, religion, age, and social status, and this through the words used to designate or describe individuals, groups or institutions” [16] (p. 23). We draw on this understanding to illustrate how populist discourses are mobilised as symbolic violence against Turks in Germany, working to normalise and legitimate their labour market marginalisation by devaluing their skills and capitals.

1.3. Populism as Symbolic Violence

Populism in Germany has had significant consequences for the social, economic, and political position of migrants in the country. We posit that the populist discourses in Germany have valorised the indigenous white German experience as the norm and undermined migrant and ethnic minority mobility in the country for a long time. We argue that populism is a form of symbolic violence that continues to create arbitrary hierarchies of value and status between white Germans and migrants to the latter’s disadvantage. The most relevant research to this study is Shan’s [42] work which notes that capital and skills are relational, dynamic, and socially constructed whereby the skills deemed ‘desirable’ can be used to leverage an advantage or equally may result in an ethnic penalty on those groups ‘without ‘desirable’ skills’ [42] (p. 915) making entry into the labour market a problem for ethnic minorities. Such insights into populist discourses of symbolic violence have largely been neglected in studies investigating the labour market positioning of Turkish workers.

We extend on Shan’s [42] work by illustrating how populism, which operates as a form of symbolic violence, is utilised to devalue skills and the different forms of capital held by Turkish workers in Germany and how, at the same time, specific forms of ‘ethnic’ capital and, relatedly, a shared ‘status’ of exclusion, is attributed to them. We show that symbolic violence renders invisible, naturalises, and legitimises the labour market marginalisation of minority Turks. This is achieved through a shared habitus of collective devaluation of ethnic capital by the majority group. In the process of collective symbolic activity [43], the majority group defines the meaning of ‘desirable’ skills and means. This collective activity serves collective intentions and objectives, such as the manipulation and control of ethnic minorities and the preservation of German society’s existing order and structure. This includes symbolic political populist activity, highlighting alliances with the majority population. In teasing out these issues, we also contribute to a deeper understanding of the process and implications of exclusion, stigmatisation, and social and workplace barriers that block particular groups’ participation [24].

This paper not only argues that ethnicity and ‘ethnic capital’ [44] are largely overlooked in Bourdieu’s theorisation, but also provides critical new insights on how symbolic violence devalues different forms of capital (particularly the differentiation between ethnic capital) held by Turkish men and women workers. This positioning is then used to maintain the pre-existing social order and to devalue the labour market positioning of Turks in Germany [13]. This framing is used by and feeds into populist discourse and practice. We draw on Borjas’ [44] definition of ethnic capital to capture the impact of ethnicity on the production and accumulation of human capital. Borjas [44] argues that with the improvement of the ‘overall quality of the ethnic environment’ (status, knowledge, and material resources), the size and scope of ethnic capital and human capital (skills) of the group will also improve. The result is a positive effect on their economic and social mobility in the destination country. For this study, ethnic capital is operationally defined as symbolic

capital afforded to ethnicity, which on the one hand facilitates migrants' access to a limited number of ethnically appropriate positions in the labour market but, on the other hand, serves as an 'ethnic penalty', which may limit labour market choices and possibilities for advancement for Turks in Germany.

Although there has been widespread interest in Turks in Germany, the academic interest has been primarily focused on topics dominating the populist discourse, such as alleged problems of integration, particularly of Turkish women, children, and youth, with little focus on their experience in the labour market [13]. The unemployment and under-employment of Turkish people are solely explained by their alleged lack of cultural and social capital, such as low educational attainment and qualifications, poor language skills, poorly educated parents, and critical cultural differences. While there are studies that explore discrimination in the workplace and structural disadvantage, in particular, labour market sectors [45], the general approach in much of the European literature examining the labour market experience of ethnic minority workers focuses on their skills and resource deficits [46]. It is such an approach that is used to justify their over-representation in unemployment or low-skilled, poorly paid, insecure, and generally undesirable work [47]. Similarly, the populist discourse ignores the existence of discrimination and structural barriers faced by Turks in Germany. In contrast, the focus in UK studies, for instance, acknowledges that black and minority ethnic workers are in an unfavourable labour market position despite, rather than because of their skills, where instead the focus is turned to the pre-existing structural barriers and systemic inequalities which reinforce and reproduce an ethnic penalty [48].

Next, this paper turns to a contextual elaboration of the positioning of Turkish workers in Germany. Following our methodological overview, our empirical outcomes provide evidence of symbolic violence and populist rhetoric and practice in Germany. Concluding, we explain how the case of Turkish workers helps us expand the Bourdieuan theorisation of symbolic capital and how it relates to populism, while also identifying areas for future research.

1.4. The Labour Market Positioning of Turkish Minority Workers in Germany

As Turkey is home to a multi-ethnic population, homogenising 'Turks' as mono-cultural presents a problematic frame. The ethnic mosaic of the 'Turkish' ethnic minority population is reflected in the German population [49]. Furthermore, many people labelled as 'Turks' may well self-identify themselves as another minority ethnic group from Turkey, such as Kurdish, 'German', 'Turkish-German', or 'German-Turkish'. The interviewees in this study described their ethnic identity as 'Turkish'. Furthermore, Turks who migrated from Turkey and even those born in Germany as the second and third generation are historically labelled as migrants or people with a migration background. Therefore, we have decided to use 'Turks' in Germany with this caveat.

Largescale migration of people from Turkey to Germany began with the guest worker recruitment agreements, which lasted from 1961 until 1973 [50]. Within this policy context, immigrants were expected to reside in the destination country for work purposes only temporarily and were not expected to settle. Despite this, many Turkish and Kurdish guest workers who migrated at that time settled in Germany [51]. Today the former guest worker population comprises three generations. The minority population from Turkey consists of 2.8 million people, half of whom were born in Germany and thirty-five per cent of whom reside in Germany as foreigners [1].

Turks are the most problematised ethnic minority group in Germany. The dominant populist discourse focuses on their alleged unwillingness to integrate into German society [52]. While there is little recognition that Turks predominantly occupy the working class in Germany [50], most academic works on Turks use middle-class German life as the 'standard' and benchmark of comparison to evaluate their educational and occupational (under-) achievements. According to a report by the Berlin Institute [53], Turkish people are identified as having the lowest educational outcomes when compared to all other minority

ethnic groups. More than thirty per cent are reported to have no educational attainment. Eight per cent leave school without secondary school qualifications. Only fourteen per cent achieve school qualifications to enter university. The unemployment rate of young Turks is considerably higher than that of other ethnic minority groups. Turks' overall educational outcomes and positioning in the labour market are lagging far behind the majority ethnic German population.

Even though they remain a minority, the dominant populist discourse ignores the existence of highly skilled Turkish men and women workers [54] or positions them as an exception. For instance, Euwals et al. [46] found that the second generation has improved their labour market position relative to their parents, echoing Seifert [55], who notes the social mobility of children of guest workers since the mid-1980s. Of this transformation, Ref. [50] (p. 170) noted that: "As examples of success, they [the children of Turkish immigrants] contribute substantially to changing the long-standing picture of post-war immigrants as being poorly educated, badly skilled, discriminated against, and therefore fit only for positions in the lower stratum of German society." While there have been examples of success, the symbolic transformation has not materialised.

Discrimination, stereotyping, prejudice, and negative attitudes are some of the reasons reported to prevent members of ethnic minorities from participating fully in the labour market. However, these reasons are not mentioned in the populist discourse. In this vein, it is unsurprising that a staggering 193,000 Turkish men and women, mostly born and raised in Germany, left Germany to live permanently in Turkey between 2007 and 2011 [56]. The most frequently cited reasons for this return migration were discrimination and high unemployment in Germany.

2. Materials and Methods

This paper draws on multiple data sources: 30 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, observations, and a company case study. The first author of this paper, who also conducted all interviews for this study, is a stakeholder in Germany's diversity management (DM) field. Drawing on the first author's network in the field, purposive sampling was used to identify the thirty respondents interviewed for this study. Snowball sampling was used, asking participants to provide contact information of other potential respondents. The 30 stakeholders, who are equality and diversity actors working in different areas of the DM field in Germany, were chosen based on their position in diversity and equality.

The aim in the approach undertaken was to recruit a wide range of stakeholders to provide a comprehensive representation of the DM field in Germany. For that purpose, we recruited respondents such as diversity trainers, diversity scholars, members of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, lawyers, politicians, trade union members, and representatives from NGO's promoting anti-discrimination. Out of the thirty participants, fifteen were majority ethnic Germans, and fifteen were minority ethnic men and women, ten of them belonging to the Turkish minority. The other five workers were from different ethnic backgrounds. The first author, who carried out all interviews, was born and raised in Germany with an ethnic minority background. Having an ethnic minority background influenced the choice to include minority ethnic diversity stakeholders in the study to deduce an ethnic minority perspective on the topic, which is often ignored in the German context. The interviews lasted from 45 to 180 min. Each interview was recorded and transcribed in the original language, and only relevant parts to this research were translated into English. For anonymity, respondents have been assigned pseudonyms. Below we provide a Table 1 of respondents profiles.

Table 1. Overview of respondents' profiles.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Ethnic Background	Job Description
Michael	Male	38	German	Associate of a trade union, diversity trainer and consultant. Previously: member PR department of the lower house of parliament. Worked on the development of the German equal treatment law
Elke	Female	55	German	Diversity scholar and trainer
Werner	Male	36	German	Diversity consultant and trainer
Peter	Male	34	German	Head of anti-racism NGO
Takuya	Male	53	Japanese	Diversity scholar and trainer
Irene	Female	57		Diversity scholar, trainer and consultant
Gülseren	Female	44	Turkish	Municipal Integration Delegate
Jasmin	Female	33	Afghan	Head of Mentoring program for female academics with migration background
Sabine	Female	45	Afghan	Representative of the Federal Anti-Discrimination agency
Zoe	Female	31	Cameroon	Member of a diversity management unit at a university
Mustafa	Male	48	Turkish	Member of a governmental department, responsible for ethnic minority issues
Ingeborg	Female	64	German	University Professor of intercultural pedagogy
Murat	Male	35	Turkish	Diversity scholar and politician Green party
Özlem	Female	34	Turkish	Head of antidiscrimination office NGO
Ricardo	Male	46	Spanish	Member of a trade union, project manager of the unit: labour market integration of people with migration background
Cem	Male	55	Turkish	Head of a research centre concerned with race related issues
Brigitte	Female	44	German	Diversity scholar, trainer, and consultant
Ali	Male	38	Turkish	Associate of welfare organisation, integration & migration unit. Politician SPD
Nicole	Female	47		Lawyer, labour law and discrimination specialist
Turgut	Male	64	Turkish	Head of federal integration advisory board and teacher
Tanja	Female	56	German	Member of federal ministry, head of federal unit of the SPD and responsible for integration and migration issues
Gülderen	Female	35	Turkish	Associate of federal chamber of commerce, head of a project concerned with ethnic minority chamber members
Thorsten	Male	42	German	Associate of a research institute, focusing on ethnic minority Turks
Tina	Female	45	German	Associate of a trade union
John	Male	60	American	Diversity scholar, trainer, board member of two networks for diversity and intercultural management
Eleni	Female	53	Greek	Editor of an online platform for diversity management of a political foundation
Betty	Female	56	American	Diversity scholar and head of an NGO and a Diversity Management foundation
Erkan	Male	34	Turkish	Head of a research centre concerned with ethnic minority issues and lawyer
Cengiz	Male	36	Turkish	Founder of an online journal concerned with ethnic minority issues
Silvia	Female	48	German	Diversity, intercultural Trainer, founder of online Diversity Management Group

The case study deployed various methods, such as observations, twelve interviews with key internal staff (such as members of the HR department and managers and employees on different levels), a focus group with the whole HR department, and documentary analysis of company data (policies, annual reports, brochures, as well as employee statistics). All but one respondent (an employee/engineer who was a Turkish minority male) were of majority German ethnicity. Four of the eleven majority German respondents were women (most women were in the HR department), and seven were male. The case study company is a multinational communication service company.

2.1. Interviews

A semi-structured interview approach was used to garner information from the respondents, which covered a list of specific questions organised thematically. The benefit of the semi-structured interview approach is that the respondent drives evidence building to delve deeply into particular areas that resonate, which may not seem as important to other interviewees. Most of the 30 stakeholder interviews were face-to-face interviews; only two were conducted using Skype. All interviews were conducted in German, at a place of convenience to the respondent. The interviews lasted from 45 to 180 min. Each interview was recorded and transcribed in the original language, and only relevant parts to this research were translated into English.

As noted above, all interviews were carried out by the first author, who was born and raised in Germany and had an ethnic minority background. A research diary was kept, aiding the reflexivity of the interviewer in the research process, ensuring that the interviewer was conscious of their epistemological assumptions, their social position, and disposition within the field under study (Nadin and Cassell 2006). The research diary was used to inform methodological and theoretical decisions during the research process and to acknowledge the researcher's embeddedness in managing ethnic diversity in Germany and its broader context, rather than simply claiming objectivity.

2.2. Case Study

The case study deployed various methods, such as observations, 12 interviews with key internal staff (such as members of the HR department and various managers and employees on different levels), a focus group (with the whole HR department) and documentary analysis of company data (policies, annual reports, brochures, as well as employee statistics). All but one respondent (an employee/engineer who was a Turkish minority male) were of majority German ethnicity. Four of the eleven majority German respondents were women (most of the women were in the HR department), and seven were male. The case study company is a multi-national communication service company. Getting access to a company for the case study was difficult. To assist with the process of sourcing a case study, a reputable diversity management consultant firm was enlisted. Over one hundred companies were contacted, and only one agreed to participate in this study. One reason for this difficulty might be the sensitivity of the topic under investigation.

2.3. Observation

Observations can assist in getting an in-depth understanding of phenomena and uncover aspects not known beforehand or previously not thought of. For instance, participant observation can help discover meanings that people attach to their actions. The observation used for this paper took place during a formal meeting, which included a plenary discussion held by six Turkish minority individuals, of which five were male and one female. The discussants mainly consisted of government representatives such as, from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Integration and Migration and the Integration Advisory Board, a member of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) responsible for the party's diversity unit, one academic, and the head of a Turkish academic network. The observation illustrated internalised symbolic violence by individuals of the Turkish minority.

2.4. Data Analysis

Drawing on Bourdieuan theory, we adopted Layder's analytical approach [43]. To this end, we incorporated existing theories and allowed interpretations to emerge from the data. We combined thematic and open coding to identify categories and to analyse the data. While coding data, emergent concepts were compared, merged into new concepts, and renamed and modified following grounded theorising. Data were coded and tabulated using Nvivo software. All other collected data resulting from the case study were coded and tabulated.

3. Results

We present our findings in response to the central research question: how does the habitus of symbolic violence and populism work to devalue the skills and capitals of Turkish workers in Germany? Symbolic violence can be used to undermine the skills, agency, and capitals of the Turkish minority. In the case of Germany, migrants and ethnic minority groups are often represented in a negative and deficient way in the dominant/populist discourse. Indeed, positive reporting is rare [54]. A majority ethnic German expert (female, academic and diversity trainer) explains as follows:

There is still discussion regarding the educational system and the deviant behaviour of people with migrant backgrounds. People with migrant backgrounds are perceived as deviant. However, what is missing, which I think is dramatic, are the success stories and, in this connection, the question of how does successful integration happen?

In a similar vein, a male participant from the Turkish minority, who is a politician and an academic, said the following:

The debate is poor, suboptimal and deficit oriented (after a long pause, he continues with an upset tone of voice). Whether it is about integration or Islam, it is always negative: terrorism and women with a headscarf. The Tagesschau (newscast at ARD, a TV channel governed by public law) is an excellent example of that, where you can see that always. Whenever referring to the topic of integration, you always see a trailer in the background, where a woman with a headscarf is passing by, holding an ALDI plastic bag in her hand. Yes, yes that's how it goes here in Germany.

Similarly, most ethnic German interviewees, even those working in diversity management, described ethnic minorities in deficit terms. The situation was the same with interviewees in the case study organisation. A female majority ethnic German member of the human resources unit explained:

We do not have Turks here because they do not have the qualifications we need.

A male majority ethnic German manager explained further:

I cannot send a Turkish woman with a headscarf to a client.

Most ethnic Germans have internalised the mainly negative populist representation of Turkish minority men and women. In reality, the Turkish minority in Germany is made up of different identities, including those with a strongly secular, liberal, or left-wing worldview. The following extract from the company case study focus group held with the whole HR department provides further evidence of the internalisation of the negative representation of Turks:

Majority German, a female member of the HR department: Children have to speak German before starting school. What do we have to do so that they can speak German? In Germany, the whole debate is about the responsibility of kindergartens to teach these children German, where I think - come on, where do the parents come into the picture here? It is the parent's responsibility that their children speak German.

And this observation from a majority German male member of the HR department: But they do not speak German themselves. However, it is more important to discuss how many non-German speaking children a class can stand.

In response, a majority German, a female member of the HR department states: *Yes, exactly.*

Majority German, a male member of the HR department: *In the end, you will only hear these languages from these countries.*

Majority German, a female member of the HR department: *Yes, yes, exactly.*

Majority German, a male member of the HR department: *Not that one wants to deprive one of their cultures, but if you're going to live here, successfully live, then you have to be able to speak German, and this starts with the upbringing of children, and we have to put some pressure on them in this regard.*

In a similar vein, Brigitte, an academic, diversity management trainer, and consultant (female and native-born German), legitimises the exclusion of ethnic minority academics in the labour market as follows:

What companies are telling me is that nothing can happen without German language skills. There must be a better level than just rudimentary knowledge of the German language, ability to read, and a certain ability to write. That does not mean that a cleaning lady should be able to write novels, but she must be at least able to read a memo, for instance. Thus, this attitude, which we experienced for decades, why should I learn German? I just want to work; that does not work anymore.

However, Murat, a politician and academic (male and of Turkish ethnicity), explains that the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in most organisations with what he calls a German monoculture is the result of a mono-cultural lens:

Intercultural competence is non-existent in institutions because there is a monoculture, a German monoculture, which cannot relate to the inclusion of ethnic minorities.

In contrast, Özlem, head of an anti-discrimination NGO, notes that the homogeneity of the leadership of institutions is a responsible factor in the continuation of the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities:

The culture of organisations is very homogeneous, and change, where differences and diversity are allowed, scares them, and they think that everything is going so well, so why change anything?

Lastly, one participant, Mustafa, who is a member of a governmental department, points out:

There is no context of a shared identity in Germany, and there is also no development in that direction. It is always in the relationship; there is 'us', the natives; and, the 'others', who de facto just turned up and do not belong here. But the primary problem you have with yourself is trying to allocate yourself to a collective identity, which does not exist.

Additionally, Mustafa raises the following issue, which highlights the embeddedness of symbolic violence in governmental policies:

Current regulations and policies concerning immigrants in Germany contain several discriminatory aspects, which prevent migrants from developing a feeling of belongingness.

Cem, the head of a research team (male and of Turkish ethnicity), feels similarly:

I do not belong here 100 per cent, no matter how much I have changed, and the feeling of maybe being a Greek despite the German roots is as strong or weak as for a Turk or an Italian.

Repeated populist rhetoric accentuates alleged insufficient language skills and educational credentials, legitimising distinctions through symbolic systems. This legitimisation process leads to the internalisation of symbolic violence and populist rhetoric. It devalues the skills and different forms of capital held by members of the Turkish minority. In summary, symbolic violence as populist rhetoric is utilised to impose a system of symbolism

and meaning upon individuals of the Turkish minority, which reproduces imbalances in power and class relations. It secures the social reproduction of the racial order and status quo. It also leads to the perception of being in the wrong place and not having a set place in the social classification. In turn, this makes it very difficult for Turks to develop a feeling of belonging, as well as a collective identity as Germans.

4. Discussion

There are numerous examples of negative and deficient representation in Germany's broader social context and populist discourse. One such example can be found in an interview with Thilo Sarrazin (a former Finance Minister of Berlin) about Berlin's economic problems, published in the October 2009 issue of the German cultural magazine *Lettre International*. In this interview, he made several racist and derogatory claims, such as: "A large number of Arabs and Turks in this city, who have increased in number as a result of wrong policies, have no productive function other than the fruit and vegetable trade" [57] (p. 198). Other comments included that immigrants: sponge off the state; are incapable of integrating into German majority society; encourage young girls to wear headscarves; that Turks are conquering Germany through a higher birth rate. Sarrazin has since become a prominent public figure in the integration debate. Although the polemic and populist nature of his statements has been criticised, it was later revealed that many people in Germany agreed with his views, garnering endorsement in popular right-wing press such as *Junge Freiheit*. Concerningly, the more mainstream newspapers such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Welt* and *Bild* also commented that Mr Sarrazin simply describes the 'real problems' [58]. A survey by Emnid for the daily *Bild Zeitung* found that 51 per cent of Germans agreed with Sarrazin while just 39 per cent disagreed [59]. Another survey in the daily *Die Welt* showed that over two-thirds of Germans polled felt that criticising Sarrazin was unjustified. In 2012, Sarrazin repeated such offensive statements in his best-selling book 'Germany Does Itself In', which sparked a controversial debate about migration and Muslims in the country. This was followed by similar statements in 2018 in a follow-up publication.

Resistance to Sarrazin's statements was mainly silenced through a process of symbolic violence, imbued with overwhelming support for his sentiments. A complaint submitted to public prosecutors in Berlin was rejected because the comments were permitted under the freedom of expression law. A formal appeal to this decision remained unsuccessful. However, the Turkish Union in Berlin/Brandenburg (TBB) submitted the case to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which finally concluded that such statements "contain ideas of racial superiority, denying respect as human beings and depicting generalised negative characteristics of the Turkish [and Arab] population, as well as incitement to racial discrimination." Moreover, the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) accused Germany of violating the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination because it failed to conduct an "effective investigation" into the matter. Germany was given a 90 day ultimatum to notify CERD of its measures to address this violation. CERD recommended that the German government review policies and procedures related to alleged racial discrimination and distribute this information widely to prosecutors and judicial bodies. The TBB welcomed this decision, issuing the following statement: "CERD has determined that Sarrazin's comments touch on a feeling of racist superiority or racial hatred and contain elements of incitement to racial discrimination" [58].

The above case of resistance from Turkish minorities is not unique. In a recent study, Yilmaz [60] explores hidden strategies and tactics of resistance against forms of power surrounding the lives of Turks, which manifest in daily life practices, such as eating, reading, shopping, and speaking. One example of resistance through speaking is Turkish German comedy and cabaret. Notable Turkish comedians include Kaya Yanar and Bülent Ceylan, who have recently appealed to audiences with a new approach, inverting integration questions (Bower, 2014). Another example is a book written by Cara [61], which is titled

‘Turkish, but intelligent’ (‘Türke. Aber trotzdem intelligent’). In this book, Cara gives an account of the symbolic violence Turkish minorities experience in Germany and how this influences the perception of the majority German population and illustrates how individuals of the Turkish minority internalise symbolic violence, which translates into diminished self-worth. Lastly, when it comes to work and employment, exit from the German labour market appears as a common choice of resistance [14].

Overall, ethnic minority members are more frequently associated with crime, which has increased since the arrival of refugees in 2015. They are commonly portrayed as foreign bodies, negatively affecting the German way of life while exploiting the social welfare system. Further visual portrayals highlight their language problems, and oppressed migrant and minority ethnic women are constantly portrayed with headscarves [62,63]. Koydl (1999) described that when the Western press is working with clichés regarding Islam, there is a fascination with the headscarf of the Turkish woman. Weber-Menges (2005) argues that those largely negative and caricature-like representations of ethnic minorities merely support the readily available ethnocentric views that construct and propagate negative images of ethnic minorities while encouraging discrimination and hostile behaviours towards them by normalising stereotypes.

5. Conclusions

According to Bourdieu, “social inequality is rooted in objective structures of unequal distribution of types of capital” [64] (p. 145). We formulated our research question in response to Bourdieu’s call for studying social inequality as embedded in the unequal distribution of capitals by asking: how does symbolic violence and populism work to devalue the skills and capitals of Turkish workers in Germany?

Mobilising Bourdieu’s theory to explicate how Turkish workers’ skills and capitals are devalued is not unproblematic. In the context of France, for instance, Bourdieu’s work could not engage with the issue of ethnicity, as ethnic identification has been illegal in France since the post-World War II period. As a result, Bourdieu’s research has not explicitly engaged with ethnic theorisation [65] when developing his concepts of symbolic violence, habitus, and capitals [66]. To address this neglect, we contribute to the literature by demonstrating that an ethnicity lens allows us to develop his theorisation to account for the devaluation of skills and capitals of working men and women of Turkish ethnicity in Germany.

Providing an account of how symbolic violence and populism manifests in response to Turks in Germany, we drew on the work of Bourdieu. We critiqued the effects of symbolic violence and populism. Reflecting on expert interviews, observations, and a case study, we demonstrated how symbolic violence is practised against Turks in Germany, leading to the collective devaluation of their capital in populist discourse.

Specifically, evidence from thirty interviews with stakeholders was vital in identifying the macro-level dynamics which shape the frame of symbolic violence and populism against Turkish minority men and women in the broader societal context of Germany. In drawing on data from the company case study, it has been possible to illustrate how symbolic violence manifests in employment practices that exclude Turkish workers. This manifestation is based on internalised symbolic violence against Turkish people stemming from populist rhetoric in the context of Germany. Failure to employ Turkish workers is legitimised in our study, with internalised arguments referring to Turks being deficient across various job criteria, which mainly affects highly skilled Turkish workers. The internalised symbolic violence and populism translates into a habitus that prevents majority ethnic Germans from employing and advancing Turkish workers. Germany faces labour shortages due to an ageing society, and tapping into unused ethnic minority working potential could ease such shortages.

Notably, the dominant group has the main symbolic power to construct and reproduce the social reality of ethnicity and provide and produce its terms and the popular discourse [67]. Failing to provide suitable (alternative) terms and the silencing of race-

related issues ensures the reproduction of established hierarchies, which helps to ensure that one group dominates another and violates the subordinate group. Insistence on denigrating representations of Turks also serves to entrench the symbolic violence and populism against them, focusing attention away from successful members of this group. Symbolic violence and populism permeate every aspect of work and employment, disallowing more emancipatory and inclusive work policies to be implemented for recognition of skills, attributes and capital/s held by Turks, locking them in ethnically marked career paths and social frames.

Finally, the growing symbolic resistance on the side of Turks in Germany demonstrates that their symbolic power is increasing in a way that may allow for future alteration of the symbolic order, using their collective symbolic activity from below. It also shows that symbolic violence can have emancipatory dimensions, going beyond corrosive implications, whereby the majority group does not hold the monopoly on symbolic violence [68]. Yet, for the emancipatory potential of symbolic violence to materialise, there is a need for a collective awareness among Turks and allies in German society. Such understanding is possible with a modest acceptance of the detrimental effects of symbolic violence and populism on the health and well-being of Germany's social and economic life. We do not have to look back too far historically to see the negative consequences of the collective silence regarding social inequality and ethnic discrimination.

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