Hybrid Stylization in Ethnoheterogeneous Societies: Resistance Against Ethnic Categorizations in a German Rap Song

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Abstract

Social categorization is an essential component of human activity. However, migrants and their descendants can be disadvantageously categorized based on their ethnicity. How can affected individuals deal with such structural conditions in society and resist ethnic categorizations? To answer this question, we first address available strategies in social identity research and find that those strategies are insufficient to resist ethnic categorizations. As an alternative explanatory model, we have developed the concept of hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization, which represents a process of ethnoheterogenesis. By considering a culture of ethnic hybridity, this concept offers innovative strategies to resist disadvantageous ethnic categorizations. We then analyse a German rap song to empirically exemplify a hybrid ethnic-cultural style. Finally, we discuss theoretical implications and make suggestions for further research.

Keywords: migration and integration, hybrid styles, ethnic-cultural empowerment, rap music, anti-racism

Introduction

Apprehending the social world through categories is a fundamental human ability. It helps to structure information and determines intergroup behavior (e.g., Allport 1954; Macrae and Bodenhausen 2000). At the same time, the categorization of individuals gives rise to in- and out-group distinctions and intergroup bias. Every individual can become an object of categorization. Depending on one's group membership, a person experiences advantageous or disadvantageous evaluations (Tajfel and Turner 1986).

In ethnoheterogeneous societies, a person with a migration background[1] can be subjected to negative evaluations by majority group members due to attributed ethnic differences (e.g., Tiesler

ernment agencies use migration background widely to categorize people. However, its exact definition varies. According to the Federal Statistical Office, a 'person has a migration background, if s/he herself/ himself *or* at least one parent was not born with German citizenship' (Federal Statistical Office 2018) – 26.0 percent of German population currently have a migration background (Federal Statistical Office 2020). In this context, individuals without a migration background represent the majority group, whereas individuals with a migration background are the minority group. We use these terms interchangeably. Distinctions that categorize one's migration background are somewhat rough and may suggest homogeneity within these groups, but this is not the case as we are aware that some individuals or groups with migration background can become part of the (white) majority (more) quickly while others cannot. As this article's subject is the exclusion of individuals with a migration background (based on attributed ethnic differences), we will consider this distinction.

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[1] As we focus primarily on the German context, we use the term 'individuals with a migration background' to refer to migrants and their descendants. This label has been established as one of the most salient categories in Germany to describe an individual's migratory origin. Whereas official surveys do not gather a person's ethnicity, the German population and gov-

2018; Schneider and Lang 2014; Rumbaut 2008). Although these individuals can learn and acquire categories directly linked to the majority's perceptions of their ethnicity during the integration process (e.g., language), there are ethnic categories that cannot be attained, such as racial ones, or that are hard to achieve, such as religious ones. These categories represent ethnic boundaries that exclude others by definition (Canan and Simon 2018). If they become salient, individuals with a migration background that differs from the dominant ethnic norm might be excluded from the majority and its privileges – even if they successfully integrate regarding other achievable ethnic-cultural dimensions. This exclusion especially targets groups affected by discursive processes of othering because the conditions facilitating the creation of out-groups are particularly prevalent here (e.g., assumptions of homogeneity or the existence of stereotypes regarding the out-group) (Said 1979). Against this backdrop, the question arises to what extent individuals with a migration background can escape such disadvantageous categorizations and overcome ethnic boundaries.

In order to answer this question, one has to 'consider the interplay between sociocultural characteristics and social structure, as well as intergroup relations in specific settings of power' (Tiesler 2018: 210). We will address available strategies in social identity research on how to avoid categorical processes' negative results for minority group members. Owing to the majority society's dominance within the reciprocal process of categorization, these offered strategies are not sufficient for ethnic out-groups to escape from their disadvantageous position. For this reason, we will present the concept of hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization, which offers an alternative and innovative ethnoheterogeneous approach on how individuals can resist categorical processes' adverse consequences. We will then exemplify hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization through an analysis of a German rap song. In the final section, the concept's potentials and possible pitfalls will be discussed.

Seeking the Right Strategy
Social Identity Re-evaluation

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), an individual's self-concept is connected to the evaluative connotations of those social categories or groups with which they[2] affiliate themselves (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Therefore, individuals strive for positive social identities and group memberships in order to assert a positive self-concept. A consequence of this effort to attain a positive social identity is intergroup bias: Even simple social categorizations lead to decisions and modes of behavior that favor one's own group in comparison to a relevant out-group (Billig and Tajfel 1973; Brewer 1999; Tajfel et al. 1971). SIT names three strategies for achieving a re-evaluation of social identities with regard to status hierarchies (Tajfel 1981: 316-43; Tajfel and Turner 1986). The first is individual mobility: People can achieve (more) positive categories through upward social mobility. The second is by means of social creativity: Members of a group can re-evaluate social categories by inventing new dimensions of group comparison, establishing favorable value assignments to one's own group, or by changing the comparison group. Third, through social competition: Subordinate groups can alter their position within a system of statuses and values by challenging the majority society's stratification system.

Utilizing these three strategies with regard to 'ethnicity' – beyond the fact that both ethnicity and status can be intertwined with each other (Tully 2000) –, it becomes apparent that the first and third strategy may not be sufficient for removing ethnic categories' negative evaluations. If ethnicity is understood – in Max Weber's classical sense – as the belief in a shared ancestry based on culture and physical features (Weber [1922] 2002: 237), then non-achievable or hard-to-achieve categories such as racial or religious

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[2] To achieve a more gender-neutral language in this paper, we use the plural form whenever the gender of a single person is unimportant, e.g., we use 'they' instead of 'he/she' and 'their' instead of 'her/his' in these cases.

ones can determine perceptions of ethnicity within society (Wimmer 2008; Bös 2015).

In order for the first strategy to work, it would require the possibility of changing from one ethnicity to another. However, non-changeable or hard-to-change attributes make it virtually impossible to switch between ethnicities. Although these features' significance might empirically decline in certain segments of the population at specific points in time (Canan and Simon 2018), this does not mean that they vanish entirely. On the contrary, some of them might gain in importance (again) or are simply replaced by others (Appiah 2015; Canan and Foroutan 2016a: 35-37).

Direct competition (the third strategy), in turn, can be an option to achieve parity and equal recognition, but it is a long process with several stages that does not guarantee success (Tully 2000).[3] Therefore, social competition does not immediately result in re-evaluation or complete recognition of the excluded group and one's own social identity – if anything, this would only be possible in the long run.

Ultimately, the only viable strategy appears to be the second one. At first glance, this approach allows for a re-evaluation of a negatively connoted social identity. Nevertheless, scrutinizing this strategy as well as Tajfel's remarks (1981: 285-287) about it reveal obstacles. The efficacy regarding the re-evaluation of one's social iden-

tity via new dimensions of comparison is dependent on the majority group members' acceptance (Tajfel 1981: 287). If they negate the new dimension's legitimacy, the re-evaluation will not work. Likewise, the attribution of positive value judgments in order to achieve a re-evaluation of one's social identity has the same limitation. Again, it depends on the majority group, which can reframe a positive attribution in a different way than minority group members intended, or adopt an opposite standpoint, thereby undermining the minority group's efforts (Boxill 1992: 12). Lastly, the compensatory comparison with another group that is even lower within the hierarchy is only an evasion action. It does not alter the overall system of prevalent group positions and connotations.

To sum up, SIT's strategies to escape unfavorable categorizations do not work for individuals who experience exclusion on the basis of their ascribed ethnic affiliation, as the existing power imbalance between a dominant majority and subordinate minority group(s) impedes any attempt to do so.

Multiple Social Categorization

The initial question remains: How can a positive social identity be attained – an identity that could play a vital role in the long struggle for recognition and, moreover, be persistent enough to endure this process?

Surprisingly, research about social identity has not pursued this question. The idea of Multiple Social Categorization presents a promising approach that allows for various group identities to become salient at the same time, mixing up in- and out-group memberships and thus reducing negative evaluations of the (former) out-group members in many cases (Crisp and Hewstone 2006). However, negative evaluations are usually not dissolved entirely (Crisp and Hewstone 1999). It is even possible that one out-group category (e.g., religious affiliation) can be more salient and dominate other categories (e.g., educational achievement), undermining the potential positive effects of multiple categorizations

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[3] According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), the success of minority groups' collective actions depends mainly on two factors: the groups' perceived illegitimacy and the instability of rigid stratification systems. For example, in the wake of the civil rights movement in the U.S., the black population's access into many areas was opened. This development was, on the one hand, due to civil rights organizations' insistence on pointing out the illegitimacy of black people's exclusion, and, on the other hand, due to the fact that this exclusion did not conform to modern constitutional democracy's values (Franklin and Moss 1988). Nonetheless, achieved successes do not necessarily result in an overall and comprehensive recognition of excluded groups. Instead, systematic differences between groups in different domains of society can still exist as a result of discrimination, which is not always visible at first glance (Nagel 1994; Reeves 2017).

(Canan and Foroutan 2016b). Therefore, ethnic boundaries continue to be prevalent even under conditions of multiple social categorization.

Ethnocentrism

Which other options exist in order to dissolve the binary structure of ethnic in- and out-group(s)? As indicated before, relevant strategies' success is linked to the majority group's dominant position – do the majority group members accept new dimensions of comparison and attribution of values, or do they not? A possible solution must consider that majority group members' responses always have the potential to be negative, and that formerly positive reactions can always be withdrawn. One solution would be to avoid exposure to the majority group members' categorizations altogether. A strategy of segregation combined with or based on ethnocentrism would, as a political tool, be able to accomplish this: Minority group members could stick with their own kind, avoiding any exposure to the majority group's social categorization and forging a positive social identity based on their ethnocentrism.

Upon a closer look, this strategy turns out to be only superficially beneficial in the context of migration and integration. It might even be disadvantageous for individuals with a migration background. Besides segregation's socio-economical downsides for minority groups (Wiley 1967), ethnic boundaries would actually be reinforced, thereby amplifying the logic of social categorization, which ultimately leads to the reciprocal preference for one's own ethnicity and discrimination against the respective out-group(s). In the end, due to its more powerful position, the dominant majority group would come out on top in this contest of categorizations.

As all strategies presented so far do not adequately tackle the issue at hand, we will present an alternative approach called hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization in the following section.

Hybrid Ethnic-Cultural Stylization
Hybridity and the 'Third Space'
One way to dissolve the binary structure of ethnic categorization is the concept of hybridity and the idea of the so-called 'Third Space'. This postcolonial approach by Bhabha (1994) rejects the existence of fixed binaries on the ground of ethnicity or other identitarian categories. Every cultural encounter needs to pass the 'Third Space' – an in-between space of cultural enunciation – where meaning is negotiated and translated constantly. According to Bhabha, the process of hybridity relies on the idea that cultural difference is a social construction, since culture itself is a symbolic activity that is always subject to ambivalence. More concretely, 'the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew' (Bhabha 1994: 37). The 'Third Space' understood in this way is a source of subversive power: The translation of the dominant symbols and representations by the marginalized produces reinterpretation, impurification, and hybridization of the hegemonic signs and meanings (Ha 2015: 68). It undermines natio-ethno-cultural homogeneity (Mecheril 2003). The idea of hybridity illustrates that ethnic categories and boundaries are merely constructions subjected to alterity and ongoing reinterpretation. Nevertheless, individuals with a migration background – especially those with racialized markers – can be confronted with persistent ethnic categorizations in their daily lives because social interactions rather take place in social contexts than in an ideal 'Third Space' (Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Friedman 1997). Given these constraints, hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization represents a feasible concretization or expansion of hybridity, a practice that considers the embeddedness of individuals in social contexts more thoroughly and offers a practical strategy.

The Emergence of Styles
The concept of hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization refines the idea of social creativity. It unfolds the

conditions under which ethnic out-group categories' re-evaluation could work – even if processes of disadvantageous categorization continue to exist in society. In contrast to social creativity as proposed by SIT, hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization enables social identity's re-evaluation with minority groups' own innovative categories independent of majority group members' stance.

The term stylization makes recourse to White's concept of style and designates the formation of collective sensibilities, i.e., shared ways of perceiving and acting in the social world (White 2008: 113-114). In White's network-theoretical approach, a style is 'a dynamic and self-reproducing amalgam of profiles of switchings among distinct network-domains' (White et al. 2007: 197) that 'ties together disparate identities at other levels' and predetermines the 'interpretive tone' in given social situations (Corona and Godart 2009; White et al. 2007). It emerges and is deployed over time through ongoing switchings across social-cultural contexts, thereby encapsulating a set of values (White 1994) and expressing itself through implicit or explicit codes (Godart and White 2010). Style is a scale-invariant social-cultural formation that can occur on different levels (micro-meso-macro) (White 2008: 113). It is a dynamic and stochastic approach induced by the process of ongoing switchings. In this sense, it is a source of change and innovation, even if it itself may not be changed easily (White 2008: 114). For example, a group of painters assembling various painting techniques and subjects can switch among them and create a new style that later receives its own name (e.g., impressionism) (White and White 1993: 114-117).

Ethnoheterogenesis of Hybrid Ethnic-Cultural Styles
Ethno-cultural changes and the emergence of new ethnic-cultural formations are characteristic of ethnoheterogeneous societies (Tiesler 2017; Claussen 2013). Ethnoheterogenesis (EHG) is an analytical framework that deals with these new diversities as well as the multiplicity of ethnic memberships by highlighting both the interde-

pendency and simultaneousness of hetero- and homogenizing forces in the emergence and change of ethnicities (Tiesler 2018: 200, 212). The idea of stylization in the context of migration and integration can be incorporated into the framework of EHG. It stands for switchings between different social-cultural contexts, in which individuals with a migration background learn and get to know their attributed and socially constructed ethnic identities. These ethnic identities are ascribed to them, or they choose them based on perceived differences in practices or physical appearance. They are constructed under conditions of ethnoheterogenesis, where processes of ethno-homogenization (ethnic stereotyping) and ethno-heterogenization (hybrid ethnicity) take place, thereby shifting ethnic boundaries. Hybrid ethnic-cultural styles then encapsulate these processes driven by the individuals' crossover switchings among different ethnic-cultural contexts (e.g., speaking German at school and Turkish at home, see Canan 2015; Schneider and Lang 2014). In other words, a hybrid ethnic-cultural style emerges out of these switchings. The most intriguing expression of this style is probably the usage of different languages in the same conversation employing and generating new translanguaging identities (Li and Zhu 2013). Not only does this process challenge homogeneous constructed identities (Bhabha 1994), but it also creates new creolized forms of ethnic identities (Hannerz 1992).

We use the term hybrid ethnic-cultural style to refer to the social temporal manifestation of this type of hybridization. Under certain social formations and over time, individuals acquire their own sensibility for their ethnic identity. This process can lead to the emergence of new concepts of ethnicity (Canan 2015). In concrete terms, individuals with a migration background – who consider themselves as members of the majority, but differ from autochthonous individuals in terms of perceived phenotypical characteristics – can develop distinct sensibilities for ethnic categorizations resulting in new concepts of ethnicity (e.g., being both German and Turkish at the

same time) (Canan 2015; Schneider and Lang 2014; Schubert 2006).

The question then arises: How can hybrid ethnic-cultural styles contribute positively to one's self-concept when majority group members do not necessarily accept new concepts of ethnicity? The solution lies in the fact that hybrid ethnic-cultural styles come with a set of codes and values (Godart and White 2010; White 1994) and enable individuals to speak out in their own words from their position of in-betweenness (i.e., being settled between multiple ethnic identities; see Hall 1990). Moreover, they promote the formation of a trans-ethnic community where ethnic features used for disadvantage categorization can be positively re-evaluated (see White 2008: 157-60; also Weber [1922] 2002: 235-41).

When the re-evaluation of out-group categories is hybrid in style, it can positively contribute to one's self-concept in two different ways. Firstly, the re-evaluation can be carried out in an autarchic fashion, which is based on the minority group members' own values and codes. The majority group members cannot decode it because of its hybridity – or, to put it differently: They cannot take a definite stance on it. Majority group members may learn hybrid ethnic-cultural codes, but they cannot reproduce the style authentically as they are neither exposed to the same patterns of switchings across social-cultural contexts nor do they experience the same disadvantageous categorizations. However, they can become supporters that identify themselves with that style's values and expressions. It is important to note that this form of re-evaluation is directed at individuals with a migration background who are disadvantageously categorized in the first place. Majority members do not have to decode and consider this re-evaluation in order to exclude those individuals. The hybrid re-evaluation is, thus, an effective strategy to resist disadvantageous categorizations by contributing to one's conception of self even in cases where individuals with a migration background are still experiencing exclusion in certain situations. However,

this style of re-evaluation may affect those situations as well – e.g., excluded individuals who may feel empowered to respond to disadvantageous categorization can resist and confront individuals or norms that uphold ethnic out-grouping (Lamont et al. 2016: 86).

Secondly, hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization can be the ground for social, competitive strategies to challenge ancestry-based concepts of ethnicity since it ties individuals with similar patterns of switchings together and promotes the building of a community with its own codes and values. For example, ancestry-based concepts of ethnicity may already be challenged when individuals publicly report their experiences of being in-between, thereby representing a new form of ethnicity (e.g., Bota 2012). A hybrid ethnic-cultural style can also tie majority and minority group members together due to its position of in-betweeness (e.g., Brettell and Nibbs 2009). This style is characterized by openness rather than by segregation because of its struggles for parity and equal recognition within the majority group context.

Intersectionality

Although our focus is on the emergence of hybrid ethnic-cultural styles, questions of class and gender also play a vital part in society and, subsequently, in the ethnic-cultural stylization of individuals (see Winker and Degele 2009). Certain migrant groups and their descendants are more likely to have unequal access to education and job opportunities because of disadvantageous conditions (e.g., low socio-economic resources) or ethnic discrimination (Geißler and Weber-Menges 2008). In addition to the resulting increased likelihood for those groups to end up in the lower and more precarious segments of society (Tucci 2018), ethnic stereotyping promotes ethnic-homogenization. As a consequence, ethnicity and class blend into each other. In the so-called 'Sarrazin-Debate' (named after its main instigator) in Germany, for example, Muslims with a migration background were stereotyped as 'stupid' and as 'having no motivation to inte-

grate themselves into the mainstream' (Haller 2012). Individuals with a migration background may also experience working-class-typical patterns of switchings between different contexts (e.g., between deprived neighborhoods as well as low-level education and one's place of work).

In a similar way, gender can be intertwined with ethnicity (e.g., 'dangerous Muslim men') (Dietze 2017; Spies 2010). According to Connell (2005), gender relations are determined by masculinities: 'It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable' (Connell 2005: 76). This hegemonic position of masculinity is characterized by the subordination of women (Meuser 2012) and the marginalization of masculinities that do not belong to the dominant group (e.g., marginalized working-class, queer, and/or non-white masculinities; Connell 2005: 80).

Even in modern societies, where patterns of gender relations have changed and hegemonic masculinity is contested, the subordination of women is still existent in various forms (e.g., the gender pay gap; Meuser 2012). Ethnically out-grouped men cannot reach hegemonic masculinity because of their marginalized position. However, they are frequently stereotyped as 'patriarchal'– interweaving ethnicity and gender (Huxel 2014). The marginalized position and ethnic stereotypes therefore determine the masculinity and switchings of those men (e.g., peers and male family members with marginalized masculinities). Confronted with a lack of life chances and external perception about the 'hyper-masculine Other', they may also choose to incorporate the ascribed ethnic stereotypes and embrace patriarchal positions (see Huxel 2014: 260-261). Consequently, women with a migration background can become targets of hegemonic and marginalized masculinities – a situation which imposes role switchings in family-related contexts (e.g., housekeeping and child-raising) (see El-Mafaalani and Toprak 2011) and reinforces respective ethnic stereotypes in the majority society.

All three dimensions (ethnicity, gender, and class) often interact and intertwine with each other (Huxel 2014). Hybrid ethnic-cultural styles, therefore, come with many cross-over layers and references to these categories.

With this in mind, we will illustrate a hybrid ethnic-cultural style utilizing a German rap song called *Chabos wissen wer der Babo ist* ('*Chabos* know who the *Babo* is', own translation)[4] by Aykut Anhan in the next section.[5]

The Hybrid Ethnic-Cultural Stylization of Rapper Aykut Anhan

Rap Music

Rap music originally evolved in the USA in the 1970s during the formation of hip-hop, which was developed by African-American and Afro-Caribbean youth, and consists of graffiti, break-dancing, and rapping (Garofalo 1993: 242; Rose 1994: 2). Hip-hop attempts to negotiate the experiences of marginalization, brutally truncated opportunity, and oppression within the cultural imperatives of African-American and Afro-Caribbean history, identity, and community (Rose 1994: 21). From its onset, rap music has therefore been political and controversial. It reflects a complex relationship in US-American society, but also maintains ambivalent characteristics of the black experience as a whole (Perry 2004: 27). It represents a form of oppositional culture in the face of racial formation and institutional discrimination (Martinez 1997). Violent and misogynist

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[4] If not otherwise specified, italics in quotations (marking translations) are a hybrid or foreign language that cannot be translated into English easily.
[5] The track falls into a category of rap that is often described as gangsta rap as it features violent and graphic content. While we do not want to condone or embrace the glorification of violence, we would like to point out three important aspects why we have still chosen this particular track. (1) We do believe social science should study all domains of society even if they do not adhere to all standards of public morality. (2) Anhan's statements should be, at least partly, read as a reflection of his life in a society that does feature violence, injustices, and inequality. (3) Rap is an art form in which hyperbole and indignities are often used to 'battle' other rappers lyrically. These statements, thus, should not always be taken literally.

lyrics can be a facet of rap, especially of so-called gangsta rap (Armstrong 2001). The music industry also cultivates this problematic way of expressing the ambivalence of the black experience (Weitzer and Kubrin 2009; Dyson 2004).

When hip-hop came to Germany in the 1980s, it had a strong appeal among the marginalized migrant youth (Verlan and Loh 2015). However, the migrant experience played a subordinate role when German rap music became popular in Germany. Instead, inoffensive rap that dealt with middle-class issues dominated the genre in the 1990s (Lütten and Seeliger 2017: 91). This changed in the 2000s: German rap addressing urban marginality successfully moved into the mainstream. In the second phase of this development, in the 2010s, rapper Aykut Anhan (*Haftbefehl*)[6] started explicitly addressing migrant hybrid identities in his songs (Hujer 2013). Other rap artists such as Erol Huseinćehaj and Abderrahim El Ommali (*Celo and Abdi*), Reyhan Şahin (*Lady Bitch Ray*), or Vladislav Balovatsky (*Capital Bra*) also have made use of hybrid ethnic-cultural styles**.**

Besides, rap must be understood in terms of intersectionality, where ethnicity, gender, and class categories interact with each other (Seeliger 2012). However, we are mainly interested in hybrid *ethnic-cultural* styles, which is why we will focus on *how* the lyrics are presented linguistically rather than on *what* is told.

Azzlack Hybrid Style
We have chosen the track '*Chabos* know who the *Babo* is' because of its cultural significance as it introduced the word *babo* to a broader audience and became Germany's youth 'word of the year' in 2013.[7]

Anhan was born in Germany in 1985 as the son of a Zaza-Kurdish father and a Turkish mother,

and he grew up in socio-economically precarious conditions. After experiencing a family tragedy, he quit school and started to sell drugs (Anhan 2014a, b, c). His ethnoheterogeneous background is indicating an upbringing with a potential for a hybrid ethnic-cultural style – a characteristic that is reflected in his diction. He is also imitating other ethnic-cultural identities in his songs by using the corresponding codes (e.g., French language). In addition, we interpret the practice of calling himself an *Azzlack* as a designation of his own ethnic-cultural hybridity. The term *Azzlack* that appears frequently in his songs is also the name of his first record ('*Azzlack Stereotyp*'), and eventually became his label's name. *Azzlack* is composed of the two words '*asozial*' and '*Kanak*'. Both expressions have negative connotations in Germany. The first one is used to label socially marginalized groups (Zifonun 2010), while the second one is a derogatory term for foreign groups, especially those with a Turkish background that came as migrant laborers to Germany in the context of labor force recruitment in the 1960s and 1970s (Niebling 2017).

Anhan points out in an interview that *Azzlack* is the opposite of *dazlak*. According to him, *dazlak* is Turkish and means 'Nazi'. He states that 'an *Azzlack* is a *Kanak* who is against the Nazis' (Anhan 2014b). He re-evaluates two negatively connoted expressions (*asozial* and *Kanak*) by creating a positively connoted new term (*Azzlack*) that stands for resistance against right-wing extremism. This approach is similar to the strategy used by the writer Feridun Zaimoglu, who redefined the word *Kanak* in the 1990s by calling it a 'prideful defiance' (1995: 9; own translation). In his book, Zaimoglu created twenty-four portrayals of individuals with Turkish background by asking them 'How is living in Germany as *Kanak*?'. The interviews reveal a sort of hybrid usage of the German language that he coins '*Kanak Sprak*'[8].

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6   Stage names in brackets.
7   The youth word of the year is a prize 'in which the public and then a jury choose the word that best sums up current youth culture. It is an initiative of the dictionary publisher Langenscheidt in cooperation with a youth forum and two youth-focused magazines' (Early 2013).

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8   This term means '*Kanak* language', but is purposefully spelled and pronounced in an incorrect way. The correct German spelling would be *Kanakensprache*.

'Chabos Know Who the Babo Is' as an Example for a Hybrid Ethnic-Cultural Style

In his track, Anhan uses several different linguistic, historic, and pop-cultural references, which altogether constitute a mixture of ethnic-cultural codes. These references can only be understood in their entirety, thereby forming a context of meaning. In other words, only if one is able to decipher the different ethnic-cultural semiotic systems and put them into relation to each other, the text's unity (i.e., meaning) emerges – a unity that is more than the sum of its particular parts. We have coined such a social formation a hybrid ethnic-cultural style. The artist's polyglot way of speaking incorporates the languages of German, English, French, Italian, Turkish, Kurdish, Zaza[9], and Arab. At the same time, he uses symbols of pop culture, like popular combat styles, which have their origins or, at least, a point of reference mainly in East Asia, but are practiced globally nowadays.

The title '*Chabos* know who the *Babo* is' already establishes a connection between individual languages: Whereas *Chabos* stems from the medieval sociolect *Rotwelsch* and translates to 'lads' in colloquial speech[10], *babo*[11] means 'boss' or, more generally, a respected person in Zaza language (Biermann 2013; Maciej 2015).[12] A couple of German words complete the title,

linking both described terms syntactically. Hence, all three different languages contribute to the title's semantic meaning. These three symbolic systems form an ethnoheterogeneous unity that transcends the boundary of each single linguistic community. In doing so, the meaning becomes apparent: The 'lads' or 'brothers', here are understood as underlings, and know who is the 'superior' or 'boss'. This presented method of juggling different ethnic-cultural symbol systems is replicated throughout the whole track.

In the second line (see Appendix), the artist places the Turkish word *abi* directly behind the abbreviation *Hafti* (short for his stage name *Haftbefehl*, which is German for 'warrant'), thereby juxtaposing himself (represented by his German stage name) and the Turkish language, as both cultures (among others) have influenced his identity. *Abi* refers to either an older gentleman that connotes respect, or an older brother. It is also common to hear young men in Turkey address each other with this expression (Biermann 2013). The rest of the line is, again, composed of German parts, which together with the Turkish word *abi* jointly form the content.

In the track's hook, and similarly to the track's title, Anhan makes use of even more comprehensive ethnic-cultural cross-over switchings. He links three instead of just two ethnic-cultural codes (i.e., distinct languages) in line five. He blends them into a collective whole that is only comprehensible in its entirety and, for the purpose of intelligibility, cannot be reduced to one of its three parts. In order to understand this passage, it is necessary to draw on all three ethnic-cultural semiotic systems: *Attention* is pronounced French, signifying 'caution' or 'danger', while the Turkish *harakets* stands for 'movement' or, colloquially, for 'Do not move!'. In conjunction with the remaining German words and the following line, a demand is voiced towards the imagined counterpart to avoid any movement. Otherwise, the imagined opponent will face harsh consequences. However, as the imagined counterpart will only understand this threat of violence if they are able to connect the

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[9] Zaza language is the 'language of an ethnic group in the eastern part of Turkey in Eastern Anatolia' (Maciej 2015, own translation). Whether Zaza is a Kurdish dialect or represents its own individual language is part of an ongoing political debate. However, academic researchers of Iranology tend to classify it as its own language, setting it apart from Kurdish (Arslan 2016: 2-7).

[10] In one news article, *Chabo* is also translated to a 'pawn on the chessboard of life' (Rapp 2013, own translation).

[11] A slightly different explanation reads as follows: '*Babo* is a local form of *baba*, the standard Turkish word for "father". It [i.e., *babo*] is mainly used in East-Anatolia, where it has already become a slang term for "boss, ruler" among boys and young men [...]. And *baba* means "father" not only in Turkish but also in Arab' (Heine 2013, own translation).

[12] As Turkish people speak Zaza, the word *babo* is sometimes claimed (e.g., by Anhan himself) to be Turkish.

dots, they need to link all three ethnic-cultural codes.

Additionally, Anhan uses references to pop culture throughout the text. These symbols usually point to specific ethnic-cultural traditions that are combined lyrically with each other. One example is *Ong-Bak*, the title of a Thai martial art movie from 2003, in which the characters perform Muay Thai (a combat style originally used in Thailand). Nowadays, it is practiced all over the world. Anhan takes *Ong-Bak* as a symbol to describe how *Vollkontakt* (the German word for 'full contact', as in 'full contact when hitting someone') should be performed. Adding the French expression *à la*, he accomplishes a comparison: full contact 'like' in the movie *Ong-Bak*.

Further connections to martial arts follow in lines 20 and 21, respectively. In both, several ethnic-cultural references are weaved together. Anhan mocks his imagined opponent for having 'Kung Fu' and 'Wing Chun' skills like 'Bruce Lee'[13], whereas he, as Anhan raps in the following line, would be a master in '*Kampfstil Tunceli, altmış iki kurdî*'. *Kampfstil* is the German word for 'combat style'. *Tunceli* is a Kurdish-dominated province in Turkey with the license plate area number sixty-two. This number is called *altmış iki* in Turkish.[14] So, his combat style is like the one Kurdish people (*kurdî*) practice in the area where he – in his own words – 'comes from' (Anhan 2013). Hence, in this polyglot conglomeration of ethnic references and different languages, the artist compares East-Asian combat styles and a Sino-American individual to an imagined combat style *Tunceli*, using German, Kurdish, and Turkish words. Fusing all of these different ethnic-cultural codes, he accomplishes to create a new meaningful totality that is hybrid at its core. He takes these different ethnic-cultural identities, removes them from their original context, and places them in a new context of meaning. In short: He performs with a hybrid ethnic-cultural style.

This hybrid ethnic-cultural style also comprises references to Anhan's perceptions of class and gender. The passage 'Still the same Chabo, bitch, whom you meet at the train station, snorting noses' reflects Anhan's socially precarious childhood with limited educational and economic opportunity. It was during this time that he regularly consumed and sold drugs. As Anhan tells in an interview, this lifestyle was shared with many other individuals with a migration background who struggled to make ends meet (Anhan 2014a). On a more general level, it points to the current precarious situation of many (non-white/racialized) migrants and their descendants coming from historically disadvantaged migrant communities, which emerged in Germany in the context of labor recruitment programs in the 1960 and 1970s. Beyond that, the word 'bitch' in the passage indicates a masculinist imaginary. It is predominantly used by men to denigrate other men as weak or in a derogatory way towards women (see Baldwin 2004). By using this term, Anhan displays elements of the patriarchal migrant masculinity. Lastly, Anhan's overemphasis of material wealth ('Hafti Abi is the one who sits in the Lambo' and Ferrari') stresses the tale 'from rags to riches', or the image of the self-made man coming from a marginalized societal position. It can further be understood as an aspiration to adopt hegemonic masculinity (Seeliger 2012).

It is important to note that Anhan uses ethnic, gender and class references in his raps as many other German rappers do. By contrast to most of those other rappers, his usage of those references maintains an ethnic-cultural hybrid style.

Discussion and Conclusion

Individuals with a migration background who have to deal with disadvantageous ethnic or racialized categorizations in combination with homogenizing notions of identity can develop and strategically deploy new concepts of ethnicity. We have argued that hybrid stylization

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[13] Wing Chun is a form of the Chinese martial art Kung Fu (Oxford Dictionary 2019). Bruce Lee, in turn, was a Hong-Kong and US-American martial artist and actor (among other occupations) trained in Wing Chun (Thomas 2008).
[14] Including the following word *kurdî*, the literal translation would be a '62 Kurd'.

represents such a strategy, effectively blurring the lines of supposedly clear-cut ethnic-cultural boundaries and undermining stereotypical and homogeneous perceptions of culture. Hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization – based on White's network-theoretical concept of style (White 2008) – is the ethnoheterogenous formation of a collective sensibility with its own values and codes. Such a style emerges due to specific patterns of cross-over switchings among distinct ethnic-cultural contexts and is a source for change and innovation, thereby contributing positively to one's sense of self. It expresses itself as ' "relational" to other minority and majority groups, as well as "situative" in specific power relations' (Tiesler 2018: 201). In practice, it enables the proper articulation of individuals' in-betweenness and offers a re-evaluation of ethnic categories used for disadvantageous categorizations by majority group members. Moreover, owing to its in-betweenness, it can create opportunities for social, competitive strategies and diverse alliances by tying together both the affected individuals with a migration background as well as certain members of the majority willing to engage in these issues.[15] Class and gender categories often become intertwined with ethnoheterogenous formations of hybrid ethnic-cultural styles.

In this article, we exemplified a hybrid ethnic-cultural style with the help of a German rap song by rapper Aykut Anhan. His lyrics are an illustration of in-betweenness and latent potentials for change and innovation.

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[15] We should also be aware that an ambivalence exists in the label 'person with a migration background'. On the one hand, it reproduces in- and out-group binaries. On the other hand, it enables us to make group-based processes of exclusion and discrimination visible. Our intended understanding refers to the second purpose. Nevertheless, the category 'migration background' is a construction and a temporal marker that we as researchers need to replace with more fitting categories addressing group-based exclusion and discrimination in the future (Will 2020).

Beyond that, hybrid ethnic-cultural stylization bears some relevant implications for individuals affected by disadvantageous ethnic categorization. Firstly, individuals with a migration background may share a sensibility for specific forms of ethnic categorization and exclusion, but at the same time, they could be unaware of other forms of disadvantageous categorization or may even promote them, e.g., anti-Semitic as well as sexist or homophobic stereotypes stemming from a masculinist imaginary. As a consequence, the purposed re-evaluation of ethnic categories is undermined. For example, Anhan has been criticized for anti-Semitic statements in his songs. In an interview, he admitted that he had grown up in an environment where anti-Semitism had been widespread, which had influenced him and sometimes still did, but that he now valued all religions equally (Anhan 2014c).

Secondly, styles can be conceived of as social, temporal manifestations and undergo constant change. In the context of migration and integration, every generation may have to build their own styles, as social-cultural contexts are constantly changing. For example, descendants of migrants, i.e., second-generation youth, can predominantly switch between different languages in monolingual parental homes and monolingual public schools. Third generation youth may, in turn, switch between a bilingual parental home and a monolingual public school. Fourth-generation youth may switch between an assimilated monolingual parental home and a monolingual public school. At the same time, legal rules and norms may change as well, or disadvantageous ethnic categorization may change from blatant to more latent forms. These examples also suggest that completely assimilated individuals with a migration background who still experience categorical exclusion need to create new cultures of appreciation and develop hybrid ethnic-cultural styles. Otherwise, they might only articulate the re-evaluation of ethnic categories in an assimilated and non-autarchic way, in which case the re-evaluation's success still depends on the majority's goodwill. Parents with a migra-

tion background could, therefore, strategically choose to preserve some ethnic-cultural values and codes to assemble a pool of cultural material out of which their children can create their own styles (see Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Finally, expressions of hybrid ethnic-cultural styles might be copied, imitated, or even become mainstream, thereby risking the loss of their original purpose of re-evaluation (Ha 2005). Anhan's song became so popular that cover versions were created on social media platforms and *babo* was selected to the youth word of the year 2013 in Germany. This popularization could undermine the struggles for recognition that lie behind the usage of hybrid ethnic-cultural codes (see Seeliger and Dietrich 2017). In this regard, one also has to ask whether the self-labeling strategy based on the belief in the re-evaluation of negatively connoted words, such as the 'Kanak' outcast, is the right approach. Those words are reproduced all the time by whoever wishes to do so. Thus, their meanings will never be established and controlled as their creators initially intended. So, could it be better to leave those terms behind us and build new terms based on positively connoted expressions? Or alternatively, should affected individuals completely forgo self-labeling, as complexities of lives cannot be condensed into a single word? These questions, among others, remain to be answered by society in the future, especially if individuals with a migration background intend to overcome the harmful process of ethnic categorization.

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APPENDIX

German Lyrics	English Translation
Lyrics: „Chabos wissen wer der Babo ist" [own transcription]	Lyrics: "Chabos know who the Babo is" [own translation]
1 Chabos wissen, wer der Babo ist	Chabos know who the Babo is
2 Hafti Abi ist der, der im Lambo' und Ferrari sitzt	Hafti Abi is the one who sits in the Lambo' and Ferrari
3 Saudi Arabi Money Rich	Saudi Arabi money rich
4 Wissen, wer der Babo ist	Know who the Babo is
5 Attention, mach' bloß keine harakets	Attention, don't make any harakets
6 Bevor ich komm' und dir deine Nase brech'	Before I come and break your nose
7 Wissen, wer der Babo ist	Know who the Babo is
8 Immer noch derselbe Chabo, bitch	Still the same Chabo, bitch
9 Den du am Bahnhof triffst, wie er grade Nasen snifft	Whom you meet at the train station, snorting noses
10 Wissen, wer der Babo ist	Know who the Babo is
11 W, W, Wissen, wer der Babo ist	Kn, Kn, Know who the Babo is
12 Tokat, Kopf ab, Mortal Kombat	Tokat, head off, mortal combat
13 Vollkontakt à la Ong-Bak, komm ran	Full contact à la Ong-Bak, come closer
14 Opfer, du bist Honda, ich Sagat	Looser, you are Honda, I am Sagat
15 Nicht link von hinten, ich hau' dich frontal, sakat	Not sneaky from behind, I bash you frontally, sakat
16 Dein Yokuzuna-Sumo ficke ich mit 'nem Pushkick	I fuck your Yokuzuna-Sumo with a push kick
17 Was los, du Hurensohn? Komm wieder, wenn du Luft kriegst	What up you son of a bitch? Come back when you recover your breath
18 Pussy, muck bloß nicht uff hier, du Rudi	Pussy, don't act up here, you Rudi
19 Nix mit Hollywood, Frankfurt, Brudi	Not Hollywood, Frankfurt, Bro
20 Du kannst Wing Chun und Kung Fu wie Bruce Lee	You can do Wing Chun and Kung Fu like Bruce Lee
21 Kampfstil Tunceli, altmış iki kurdî	Combat style Tunceli, altmış iki kurdî
22 Magnums und Uzis durchlöcherten den Tatort, oğlum	Magnums and Uzis perforated the crime scene, oğlum
23 Und du liegst danach tot rum, Straßenmorde, Tagesordnung	And you lie around dead afterward, street murders, the order of the day
24 Amina kodum, es geht um schwarze Porsches mit den Magnum Motors	Amina kodum, it is about black Porsches with the Magnum engines
25 Vollgas, Monte Carlo, Touren à la Formula Uno	Put the pedal to the metal, Monte Carlo, tours à la Formula Uno
26 Hafti Abi, Baby, Straßenstar international	Hafti Abi, baby, street star international
27 Biji, biji Kurdistan, ich mach's auf die Babo-Art	Biji, biji Kurdistan, I do it Babo style

German Lyrics	English Translation
28 Chabos wissen, wer der Babo ist	Chabos know who the Babo is
29 Hafti Abi ist der, der im Lambo und Ferrari sitzt	Hafti Abi is the one who sits in the Lambo and Ferrari
30 Saudi Arabi Money Rich	Saudi Arabi money rich
31 Wissen, wer der Babo ist	Know who the Babo is
32 Attention, mach' bloß keine harakets	Attention, don't make any harakets
33 Bevor ich komm' und dir deine Nase brech'	Before I come and break your nose
34 Wissen, wer der Babo ist	Know who the Babo is
35 Immer noch derselbe Chabo, bitch	Still the same Chabo, bitch
36 Den du am Bahnhof triffst, wie er grade Nasen snifft	Whom you meet at the train station, snorting noses
37 Wissen, wer der Babo ist	Know who the Babo is
38 W, W, Wissen, wer der Babo ist	Kn, Kn, Know who the Babo is

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