

Refugee Belonging: How Values and Value Consensus Between Refugees and German Citizens Are Associated with Feeling Welcome and Spending Time Together

Lukas M. Fuchs  and Christian von Scheve

Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Abstract

This article expands on the discussion of social and cultural factors for refugees' feelings of belonging in the receiving society and assesses democratic, civic, and moral values as predictors of belonging. On the one hand, existing research considers shared values between refugees and the receiving society as hallmarks of integration. From this perspective, shared values (or value consensus) are considered predictors of refugees' feelings of belonging and the formation of social bonds with host-country citizens. On the other hand, values are seen as part of refugees' cultural capital. From this perspective, liberal and civic value contents, in particular, may promote feelings of belonging, irrespective of whether these values are widely shared with citizens of the host society. This article investigates these contrasting hypotheses, using data from a representative panel of refugees in Germany.

Corresponding Author:

Lukas M. Fuchs, Institute of Sociology, Freie Universität Berlin, Garystr. 55, 14195 Berlin, Berlin, Germany.

Email: lukas.marian.fuchs@gmail.com

Correction (December 2022): Article updated to correct the placement of the reference, Yuval-Davis N., F. Anthias, and E. Kofman. 2005.

Results show that refugees holding liberal democratic values are more likely to experience feelings of welcome in the receiving society. When operationalizing belonging also in terms of refugees spending time with host-country citizens, shared democratic and secular values become more important. Finally, this article suggests that the effect of value consensus on refugees' feelings of welcome is mediated by how much time refugees spend with host-country citizens members. Taken together, our findings emphasize that in the context of international migration, values are important hallmarks of social integration, although this should not be reduced to popular calls for shared values between immigrants and host-country citizens.

Keywords

belonging, value consensus, integration, refugees, IAB-BAMF-SOEP, Germany

Introduction

Refugee migration to Europe, despite peaking in 2015, remained elevated for several years now, posing novel challenges for integration and social cohesion in many receiving societies (UNHCR 2022). In Germany, substantial flows of transnational migration started in the 1950s with labor migration from Turkey and southern European countries, immigration rose again in the 1990s as a consequence of the Yugoslav Wars. In the wake of several global crises — such as Syria, and Afghanistan — Germany stands out within Europe for receiving about 1.2 million asylum applications in 2015 and 2016 alone (BAMF 2017). With major conflicts and regional instability, civil wars, and intensifying minority persecution as key drivers of global refugee migration, in the Middle East and elsewhere, the group of refugees and asylum-seekers who came to Germany between 2013 and 2016 was notably heterogeneous. The largest group was of Syrian origin (44 percent), followed by Afghan (18 percent), Iraqi (11 percent), Eritrean (8 percent), and Iranian (5 percent) origin (BAMF 2017; Brücker, Kosyakova, and Vallizadeh 2020). In terms of demographics, the high share of males (73 percent), relatively young (69 percent below 35 years), and predominantly Muslim individuals (79 percent) sparked political debate (Vollmer and Karakayali 2018). The overall modest educational attainment and lack of German language skills of newly arrived asylum-seekers further raised political concerns about whether seamless integration could be achieved (Brücker, Rother, and Schupp 2018). Research on refugee integration in Germany since 2013 focused mainly on issues of mental and physical health (Kaltenbach et al. 2017; Walther et al. 2020), identification, and social networks, as well as on issues of culture and cultural differences (SVR 2019). Recent empirical studies of refugees' labor market (Brücker et al. 2019) and structural integration have sparked optimism that current integration policies can be successful (Brücker, Kosyakova, and Vallizadeh 2020).

In addition to these lines of inquiry, sociological research has increasingly accounted for refugees' subjective perceptions of social integration, for instance, in terms of feeling a sense of belonging and feeling welcome in a host society (Fuchs et al. 2021; Hamann and Karakayali 2016). These feelings and perceptions are considered important hallmarks for refugees engaging in social interactions with local communities and, thus, for various dimensions of societal integration (see Ager and Strang 2008; Fuchs et al. 2021). Early feelings of welcome are supposed to support immigrant incorporation through experiences of the receiving society's openness and willingness to engage in social interactions with refugees (Schwartz et al. 2014). These sources of belonging may be particularly relevant for immigrants facing prolonged social and legal liminality who fall under specific legal regimes that may restrict their structural integration, such as citizenship and labor market participation — asylum seekers and refugees in particular (Coutin 2011; Phillimore 2011).¹ Also, feelings of welcome are important because they are presumed to mitigate refugees' acculturative stress stemming from the often sudden and violent loss of familiar social and cultural environments (Hamann and Karakayali 2016).

What, then, promotes refugees' feelings of welcome and belonging? In line with existing research (e.g., Antonsich 2010; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013) we suggest that these feelings are likely contingent on a host of factors pertaining to individual differences, attitudes, and behaviors of the majority populations, political and institutional contexts, and, last but not least, cultural factors. Looking in particular at research on belonging, one line of argument suggests that culture and (perceived) cultural differences are major factors that either promote or obstruct these feelings of welcome and belonging. This literature argues that certain practices, beliefs, worldviews, and values are essential for feelings of welcome, belonging, "fitting in," and "being part of something" to emerge (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013). In this article, we argue that there are two principal ways in which culture, broadly understood, becomes important for refugee belonging, which we translate into two empirically assessable hypotheses.

First, our *contents* hypothesis of values departs from an understanding of culture in its personal and "internalized" manifestation, encompassing beliefs, habits, skills, norms, and values (e.g., Lizardo 2021) and thus having the ability to shape how people see the world and act upon it. This in turn might be more or less conducive to feelings of welcome and belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006). Values, from this perspective, can be considered as a form of cultural capital that guides people's thoughts

¹These (legal) restrictions refer to asylum-seekers' access to labor, housing, or education during the first months and years, impeding their integration in their country of residence. These restrictions can persist because of waiting times for the decision on a refugee status determination application. In Germany, by 2018, the majority of applicants had to wait more than one year for a first decision — on average, 17.6 months (BAMF 2019).

and behaviors and as a major reference point for people's feelings, including feelings of welcome and belonging.

Second, our *consensus* hypothesis of values acknowledges that culture matters in a more social and relational manner in terms of differences and similarities between self and others (i.e., between an individual and the dominant practices, beliefs, and values of a given social context). Thereby, consensus and similarity in values are supposed to affect refugees' feelings of belonging.

Both views are particularly relevant regarding refugee integration, since public and scientific debates have continuously emphasized the role of cultural differences as a potential obstacle to integration (Banulescu-Bogdan and Benton 2017). Many, particularly on the political right, have argued that cultural differences between refugees and members of Western societies are too pronounced to allow for a quick and seamless integration (Tausch 2016a). Such differences are evidenced in existing research on cultural differences across world regions, ranging from social and cultural anthropology (e.g., Appadurai 1988) to sociology (e.g., Schwartz 2012), including comparative studies demonstrating marked differences in value orientations across the globe (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Welzel 2013). More specifically, some studies have suggested that immigrants from Middle Eastern countries, but also from other world regions, tend to have different value structures and hierarchies compared to most Western societies (Norris and Inglehart 2012; Tausch 2016a). Since large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers who lived in Germany by 2020 come from countries that these studies would label "culturally distant," in particular Syria (600,929 people), Afghanistan (175,857), and Iraq (164,825) (UNHCR 2022), from a European standpoint, it could be expected that many refugees' value orientations, for example concerning universalism, conformity, or tradition, differ from those of the German population.

In light of these considerations, refugees' value orientations could have different implications for (the emergence of) their feelings of welcome and belonging in the German receiving society: from the perspective of our "value consensus" hypothesis, it is primarily the similarity of one's own values to those of German society that is supposed to promote feelings of welcome and belonging (Partridge 1971). From the perspective of our "contents of values" hypothesis, certain value orientations might *in themselves* be conducive to feeling welcome and accepted in an unfamiliar and culturally distinct environment (Yuval-Davis 2006). These potential associations between values and feelings of belonging bear important implications for refugee integration and accommodation, refugees' potential self-selection on cultural traits, and various integration policies.

This article, therefore, investigates whether values and differences in values between refugees and the general population in Germany are associated with refugees' feelings of welcome and belonging and the contact they establish with Germans. To this end, we use pooled data from a representative survey of refugees in Germany (IAB-BAMF-SOEP) and the German World Values Survey (WVS) to test two competing hypotheses: the *contents* hypothesis and the *consensus*

hypothesis. We expect that the contents hypothesis will hold when refugees' liberal and civic (e.g., global communitarian) values ease their arrival in an unfamiliar environment and make them feel more welcome at first. Moreover, we expect the consensus hypothesis to hold in situations where sharing values that are particularly salient in a society will facilitate the establishment of interaction with members of the receiving society and, thus, promote refugees' feelings of belonging in the long run.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. First, we review the literature on belonging in the context of forced migration, emphasizing the role of values and cultural differences in the establishment of a sense of belonging amongst refugees. We then formulate and describe the two hypotheses, the data and methods we use, and our operationalization of values and belonging. Finally, we report the results from a series of multivariate regressions and a structural equation model and discuss our findings, also with respect to the broader field of international migration.

Belonging, Forced Migration, and Values

Belonging is a widely used, yet often vaguely defined concept (Antonsich 2010). Psychological research originally described the sense of belonging as the satisfaction of an individual's need for personal involvement with their environment and for being part of a larger social body (e.g., Anant 1966; Hagerty et al. 1992). Experiencing a sense of belonging is considered vital for a person's well-being, and lack thereof is often seen as a potential psychological stressor (Dixon and Durrheim 2004; Hagerty et al. 1992). With regard to migrants and refugees, belonging is most prominently used as an analytical category in human geography (Madsen and Van Naerssen 2003) and sociology (Anthias 2006; Bond 2006; Fortier 2000). Belonging here typically refers to place-related processes of exclusion and inclusion and to general feelings of being at home, being welcome, or fitting in (Fortier 2000; Yuval-Davis 2006). For most of these stances and feelings, social and cultural categories are deemed essential (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013). For example, some existing research has emphasized the importance of legal and socio-cultural factors for belonging, for instance, citizenship (Krzyzanowski and Wodak 2007; Sicakkan and Lithman 2005), nationality (Prabhat 2018), and ethnic identity (Antonsich 2010), whereas other research has emphasized the "politics of belonging" that frame these categories (Yuval-Davis, Anthias, and Kofman 2005).

In an attempt to synthesize the broad conceptual literature on belonging, Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) suggests a view that is well-suited to account for the role of culture and cultural differences in belonging. She conceives of belonging, first and foremost, as an "emotionally charged, ever dynamic social location – that is: a position in social structure, experienced through identification, embeddedness, connectedness, and attachments" (2013, 13). These experiential components, she argues, are related to culture in a number of ways. Attachment to one's environment usually implies having a role, place, or position within this environment in both material and symbolic regard (*ibid.*). Although often reduced to "space" and "place" (Tuan 1977),

attachment relates equally well to cultural practices and worldviews and emerges conjointly with feelings of familiarity regarding the “values, networks and practices” (Anthias 2006, 21) that are common to a specific environment (Antonsich 2010; Dixon and Durrheim 2004).

Although belonging designates an individual affective experience, this experience is necessarily contingent on social connections and relations (Baumeister and Leary 1995). Since belonging is typically negotiated interpersonally (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013, 13), the networks and social structures into which individuals are embedded systematically affect belonging, not only by way of structuring (enabling or preventing) social interactions, but also by way of the culture that is inherently linked to structure and networks (Fuhse 2022) and the experience of “affectively positive or pleasant” (Baumeister and Leary 1995, 520) interactions. Belonging is, thus, contingent on social embeddedness that arises from “valued involvement” in and within an environment (Hagerty et al. 1992). The prevalent culture of social engagement, in this way, becomes a benchmark against which one’s involvement is evaluated, by the self and by others (Fortier 1999).

Finally, in the literature on belonging, the concept of “identification” captures personal perceptions of “fit” with one’s environment (Hagerty et al. 1992). These perceptions arise when the role of a person’s self within the environment is aligned with one’s self-image or the location envisaged for oneself in a given environment (Antonsich 2010; Probyn 1996). The degree of identification is linked to positive evaluations of one’s own involvement in social and cultural affairs, which is, in turn, informed by cultural reference points, in particular dominant value orientations (Yuval-Davis 2006). This view is complemented by approaches arguing that a sense of belonging stems from the congruence between one’s current social and geographical location and one’s life history and its cultural meanings (Savage, Bagnall, and Longhurst 2004). Attachments, embeddedness, and identification are not static entities but ongoing relational processes involving the constant definition and re-definition of the self in relation to a changing environment (Probyn 1996).

Therefore, from this perspective, belonging is likely to be challenged in situations of detachment from the socially and culturally familiar in the context of flight and migration. Forced migrants are, often involuntarily, uprooted from their cultural or geographical objects of attachment and identification (Strang and Ager 2010). They are at risk of thinning out existing networks with groups and individuals to whom they feel connected and who provide experiences of being valued and embedded (Fuchs et al. 2021). These risk factors can lead to social, as well as psychological, distress, which, in turn, negatively affects refugees’ feelings of fitting in and of welcome in a host-country (Nibbs 2014). For forced migrants’ and refugees’, sudden and often-violent displacement can be accompanied by an inability to re-orient towards new objects of belonging, since new environments are unfamiliar and bear structural and institutional barriers (Fozdar and Hartley 2014). These factors can, thus, substantially impair refugees’ attachment processes, leading to feelings of not being welcome, not belonging, and being excluded from a host-country society (Fozdar and Hartley 2014).

Values and Belonging — Two Perspectives

Having provided insights into how culture might matter for belonging, we argue that values and value orientations are elements of culture which are particularly important for belonging. We draw on Yuval-Davis (2006, 203), who suggests that belonging “is not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments but also about the ways these are valued and judged.” As such, values are essential reference points for individuals’ attachment to social and cultural environments. They attract or prevent connectedness and embeddedness via social contact and are sources of or barriers to collective identification (Schwartz 1992, 2012). Value orientations, thus, influence individuals’ responses to an environment, circumscribe the individually desirable modes and objects of belonging, and may explain why individuals experience feelings of welcome and belonging or lack these experiences. In this sense, values can be of two-fold importance regarding feelings of belonging for migrants and refugees. First, following Yuval-Davis (2006), one can argue that it is specific personal values *in themselves* that enable, or hinder, the emergence of feelings of welcome and attachment to a new environment, since they differentially inform how migrants and refugees spontaneously evaluate and assess new environments, locations, and practices (*Contents Hypothesis*). Second, values can directly induce feelings of belonging and identification when refugees *share* values that are dominant in a new environment (i.e., the receiving society) (Ager and Strang 2008; Anthias 2006) as well as indirectly, where such sharing of host-society values and ideals fosters inter-ethnic contact (Hartmann and Steinmann 2020) (*Consensus Hypothesis*).

The Contents Hypothesis

On the one hand, values inform how migrants and refugees see and act upon the world; they inform the valuation of social locations and identities and provide the groundwork for assessing various aspects of a social environment (Comte, in Schwartz 1992; Schwartz and Sagie 2000). According to Yuval-Davis (2006, 203), the appraisal of individual and collective identities, as well as one’s perception of social embeddedness and attachment, hinges on value orientations. This assumption speaks to research that increasingly recognizes specific cultural traits — for instance, attitudes, worldviews, and values — as relevant for integration processes in the context of flight and migration or potential integration obstacles (Banulescu-Bogdan and Benton 2017). As “conceptions of the desirable” (Kluckhohn 1951, 395), values are supposed to motivate concrete action (Miles 2015) and prompt people to invest personal resources to match their actions with what they consider productive from a societal viewpoint (Lancee and Dronkers 2008). From this perspective, values’ propositional elements — that is, their contents — are essential hallmarks for social life and cultural practices. When individuals are confronted with new environments, social and material locations, and cultural practices, values that promote the acceptance of difference and diversity,

such as “openness to change” and “self-transcendence” in Schwartz’s (2012) terminology, should be particularly conducive to get along in a new social and cultural environment and, at the same time, influence whether this new environment is perceived as welcoming.

From social and cultural psychology, we know that feelings of welcome and the receiving society’s context of reception strongly mediate the early acculturation processes of refugees and other groups of immigrants (Schwartz et al. 2014). The context and quality of reception has important effects on refugees’ spontaneous, though enduring, attitudes toward a host society (Portes and Böröcz 1989). Arriving in a welcoming society is known to support immigrant and refugee integration through the emotional experience of openness and acceptance by way of symbolic actions and expressions (Hamann and Karakayali 2016; Luthra, Soehl, and Waldinger 2018). Refugees’ feelings of welcome, hence, serve as first important catalysts for reducing barriers to integration on the interpersonal level and may, in the long run, inform immigrants’ identification with the receiving society (Jones-Correa et al. 2018). Assuming that refugees’ individual values play a part in how they perceive the receiving society upon arrival and knowing that feelings of welcome become important elements of belonging in the long run, we formulate our *contents* hypothesis of values:

Specific value contents, particularly liberal and civic values, are positively associated with feelings of welcome among refugees, irrespective of whether these values are widely shared with members of the receiving society.

The Consensus Hypothesis

On the other hand, values are a defining element of a particular environment; they significantly inform the dominant practices and worldviews in that environment and govern social relationships within it (Schwartz 2012). In this sense, the similarity or dissimilarity between these dominant values and those held by refugees (i.e., the ensuing perceived “cultural distance” (Berry 1980; Kunz 1981)) can affect refugees’ feelings of belonging.

This idea is rooted in classical theories of value consensus (Parsons 1968; Partridge 1971; Schwartz and Sagie 2000) — normative theories of social integration that call for “concurrence among members of a society concerning their values” (Comte, in Schwartz and Sagie 2000, 469). Cross-cultural values research largely rests on the basic assumption that there is more similarity or consensus in people’s adherence to a set of core values *within* nation-states and geographical regions than across them (Hofstede 2001; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Tausch 2016b; Welzel 2013), with most notable differences documented between so-called “Western” and “non-Western” societies. This research likewise assumes that differences in values impair integration and fuel social conflicts (Norris and Inglehart 2012; Tausch 2016a). Part of the explanation for this conjecture is that conflicting values entail disturbances to the otherwise “taken for granted” nature of social

reality and of everyday societal interaction, promoting communication breakdowns and making conflict more likely (Caselli and Coleman 2013). Value consensus has also been prominently discussed as a facilitator of social cohesion, defined as “an ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, challenges, and opportunities based on shared trust” (Bruhn 2014, 64; see also Dragolov et al. 2016).

In terms of belonging, value consensus can be expected to play two decisive roles. First, value consensus can have a *direct* positive effect on feelings of welcome and belonging. The experience of sharing the values of the host-community may engender feelings of connectedness, which, in turn, facilitates positive attitudes, identification, and solidarity towards the host-country amongst refugees (Miller 2004). Sharing values thus arguably supports refugees’ feelings of embeddedness in the sense of valued involvement, whereas value differences might lead to alienation and feelings of exclusion and not fitting in (Anthias 2006; Rosenthal and Köttig 2009).

Second, shared values may have an *indirect* positive effect on refugees’ feelings of welcome and belonging, because they facilitate interaction with members of the receiving society. The inter-ethnic contact literature suggests that the strongest potential for immigrants’ sense of belonging (Hellgren 2019) and for reducing mutual rejection and prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006) lies in refugees building relations with the new environment and the individuals living in this environment. Contact’s salutary effects on feelings of welcome and belonging will be strongest when both immigrants and receiving-society members perceive their encounters as valuable and productive (Kotzur, Tropp, and Wagner 2018; Tropp et al. 2018). In terms of value consensus theory, sharing values is expected to reduce the likelihood of conflict between refugees and host-country citizens and to mediate conflicting interests or confine potential areas of conflict (Partridge 1971). Lacking value consensus, in turn, prevents the salutary effects of inter-ethnic contacts, as “adherents of different religions and persons originating from different ethnic cultures can more easily collide about values and norms, thus making it less likely that conditions for optimal contact ... are met” (Lancee and Dronkers 2011, 615). Recent research from Germany demonstrates that similarity in gender equality makes it more likely that female refugees establish social relationships with host-country citizens (Hartmann and Steinmann 2020). In this case, shared values seem to exert an indirect conducive effect on refugees’ feelings of welcome and belonging, through facilitating interaction with members of the receiving society. Our *consensus* hypothesis of values, therefore, states:

Shared values between refugees and the receiving society, independent of the contents of these values, promote refugees’ feelings of welcome and belonging directly as well as indirectly by facilitating refugees’ social interaction with members of the receiving society.

In the following, we empirically test the two hypotheses by investigating how values are associated with refugees’ feelings of welcome and belonging and their contact with German citizens. Additionally, we will assess value consensus’ indirect effect on feelings of welcome mediated by its effects on social interactions.

Data and Methods

To test our hypotheses, we use data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees in Germany (Kroh et al. 2017; Socio-Economic Panel 2018)², a representative panel of 4,527 refugees who arrived in Germany between January 2013 and January 2016. As a reference group, we use 1,756 individuals from the sixth wave of the German WVS³, a representative national sample (Inglehart et al. 2014). Respondents with systematically missing data on our outcome or main explanatory variables were excluded, as is recommended in cross-cultural and potentially sensitive surveys because it is unclear whether answers were not understood, misunderstood, or intentionally skipped (Couper and De Leeuw 2003). Values for variables that were missing at random were imputed using multivariate imputation via chained equations (Van Buuren and Groothuis-Oudshoorn 2011). We also excluded 26 respondents whose status at the time was “Application Dismissed, Have to Leave Germany,” since being strongly legally disadvantaged is expected to affect the response behavior (Wimmer and Soehl 2014), leaving the final sample of refugees at 2,044 respondents. Table 1 reports numerous key characteristics of the sample, such as origin country, age, sex, educational attainment, and legal status in Germany.

The sample mirrors the overall composition of refugees who came to Germany between 2013 and 2016 (BAMF 2017; Brücker, Kosyakova, and Vallizadeh 2020) — mainly Syrian, male, and relatively young (34.2 years on average). Respondents’ overall educational level was comparably mixed. On the one hand, many individuals did not have any formal or only primary education; on the other hand, a considerable share of individuals was highly educated. Two things speak to the reliability of our sample. First, the overall distribution on origin country, age, and sex does not strongly diverge from the overall IAB-BAMF-SOEP sample (see Brücker, Kosyakova, and Vallizadeh 2020). Second, besides the previously excluded group of respondents whose status was dismissed and who have to leave Germany, our sample includes respondents with all remaining potential legal statuses — from secure (recognized refugee) to insecure (not decided) — which indicates no clear patterns in item non-response.

Measures

Explanatory variables. Our main explanatory variables are refugees’ agreement scores with fourteen value statements on scales from 0 to 10 included in both

² Accessible through the institutions’ data centers: IAB: https://fdz.iab.de/en/FDZ_Individual_Data/iab-bamf-soep.aspx; BAMF: <https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/ProjekteReportagen/EN/Forschung/Integration/iab-bamf-soep-befragung-gefluechtete.html?nn=447028>; DIW: https://www.diw.de/en/diw_01.c.538695.en/research_advice/iab_bamf_soep_survey_of_refugees_in_germany.html.

³ Accessible through: <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>.

Table 1. Sample Description and Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Sample.

	Syria	Iraq	Afghanistan	Eritrea	Other	Total
Respondents (N)	1181	268	230	87	278	2044
Female (N)	403	91	76	34	99	703
Male (N)	778	177	154	53	179	1341
Age (\bar{X})	35.0	34.3	32.5	28.2	33.9	34.2
Education (%)						
No/primary	28	46	57	51	27	35
Incomplete secondary	22	23	15	23	19	21
Secondary	24	15	16	18	29	22
Tertiary	26	16	12	8	25	22
Legal status (%)						
Not decided	21	47	62	16	64	35
Status of tolerance	1	2	5	1	6	2
Recognized asylum	13	8	7	14	5	11
Recognized refugee	59	38	23	68	20	47
Other form of protection	6	5	3	1	5	5

IAB-BAMF-SOEP and WVS. The selection of items is contingent on the availability of equivalent items in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP and WVS surveys (please refer to “Preliminary analyses” for an assessment of the individual items across the surveys). The individual items pertain to four distinct value orientations that are prominently used by many comparative studies as so-called “Western”⁴ values (e.g., Inglehart and Baker 2000; Tausch 2016b; Welzel 2013). To test our two hypotheses pertaining to the influence of values on feelings of welcome and belonging, we, first, include two value dimensions that we assume have an impact on the relationship between refugees and the general population. First, liberal democratic values are assessed, using four items measuring support for certain characteristics of a democratic system — namely, taxation for welfare equality, free elections, civil rights, and gender equality (see Welzel 2013, 310 for validation and in-depth analysis). Second, civic and social values were measured, using four items that refer to the acceptability of free-riding, stealing, taking bribes, and fraudulently claiming welfare support (see Halman, Sieben, and Van Zundert 2011). To also contrast the *contents* and the *consensus* hypotheses, we include two additional value dimensions on which refugees and Germans are supposed to differ notably according to wide parts of the public discourse (Banulescu-Bogdan and

⁴The term “Western” values here refers to a dominant conception in comparative values research according to which many industrialized societies of the western hemisphere, due to the decline of religious influence in the public sphere, have adopted more liberal societal values, a more secular legal framework as well as more egalitarian gender roles than many other societies, for example in Asia or the Middle-East (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2012; Tausch 2016b).

Benton 2017). The third value dimension accounts for sexual-ethical values (see Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart and Welzel 2005), which are often defined as conflictual with regard to refugee integration in the host society (SVR 2019; Tausch 2016b), measured by five items assessing the acceptance of homosexuality, prostitution, sex before marriage, spouse separation, and abortion. Finally, we look at secular values, assessed by the support for clerical rule in legal and judicial matters. Table 2 shows the full wording of all items, compares the average agreement levels of refugees and German respondents, and provides *t*-tests. Some initial trends are notable. First, refugees expressed significantly higher agreement with liberal democratic values items than German respondents. This somewhat counterintuitive finding mirrors the results of previous (Brücker, Rother, and Schupp 2016; Fuchs et al. 2021), which are mainly explained by cultural self-selection, the experience of forced displacement and fleeing of violent conflict, all of which might bolster liberal democratic values. Second, refugees expressed low acceptance for sexual-ethical values items and significantly lower acceptance than German respondents. Third, both groups expressed strong support for civic and social values. Finally, German respondents expressed a significantly higher desire for the separation of state and religion.

Outcome variables. We use three outcome variables that measure different elements of belonging to test both of our hypotheses. First, we include a measure of the feeling of being welcome in Germany upon arrival⁵ (0 not at all–4 totally), which indicates respondents' initial emotional and affective responses to a new environment. Second, as a robustness check, we assess respondents' feeling of being welcome in Germany at the time of the survey, i.e., six months to four years after arriving in Germany⁶ (0 not at all–4 totally), to probe whether the association of values and feelings of welcome is stable across time (Jones-Correa et al. 2018). Third, we use the amount of time a respondent spends with Germans⁷ (0 never–5 daily) to assess interaction with members of the receiving society, i.e., inter-ethnic contact. All three variables are reported on non-continuous, ordered levels.

Control variables. We include a set of control variables that are likely to affect feelings of welcome and contact with the majority population. First, we include refugees' legal status, which is known to be associated with feelings of security or insecurity, belonging and welcome (Yuval-Davis, Anthias, and Kofman 2005).⁸ Moreover, we include how many years respondents had been in Germany, whether they had a job or were in school (yes/no), and whether they had a partner or spouse that lived with

⁵Did you feel that you were welcome when you arrived in Germany?

⁶And how is it now: Do you feel welcome in Germany now?

⁷How often do you spend time with German people?

⁸Options: Not decided yet; Dismissed — status of tolerance; Recognized entitlement to asylum; Recognized as refugee; Recognized other form of protection.

Table 2. Item Wording, Mean Comparison from 0 to 10 and *p*-Values for Independent *t*-Tests Between Refugees and Germans.

Individual Value Items Support for/Acceptance of:	Average Refugees	Average Germans	<i>t</i> -Test (<i>p</i> -values)
The government taxes the rich and supports the poor ^a	8.2	6.8	< .001
The people choose their government in free elections ^a	9.7	9.2	< .001
Civil rights protect the people from government oppression ^a	9.4	8.0	< .001
Women have the same rights as men ^a	9.4	9.2	< .001
Homosexuality ^b	1.9	5.7	< .001
Prostitution ^b	1.0	3.6	< .001
Sex before marriage ^b	2.3	7.6	< .001
Abortion ^b	1.3	4.2	< .001
Separation ^b	2.3	6.2	< .001
Avoiding a fare on public transport (reverse coded) ^b	9.8	9.1	< .001
Stealing property (reverse coded) ^b	9.9	9.8	= .01
Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties (reverse coded) ^b	9.9	9.3	< .001
Claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled (reverse coded) ^b	9.3	9.1	= .002
Religious leaders ultimately determine the interpretation of laws (reverse coded) ^a	8.1	8.8	< .001

^aThe questions were introduced as follows: IAB-BAMF-SOEP: "Do you think that the following things are what should happen in a democracy or not?"; WVVS: "Many things are desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Please tell me for each of the following things how essential you think it is as a characteristic of democracy."

^bThe questions were introduced in the WVVS as well as the IAB-BAMF-SOEP as follows: "Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between:"

them in Germany (yes/no). Additionally, we include numerous socio-demographic variables known to be linked to a broad range of acculturation processes (e.g., Wimmer and Soehl 2014): religious affiliation, age, sex, and education measured by the International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED (UNESCO 2012). Finally, in the model on respondents' feeling of welcome at the time of the survey, we include four variables pertaining to social connectedness in Germany (correlation between all variables is low, ranging from 0.07 to a maximum of 0.48): (1) amount of time spent with Germans (0 never–5 daily), (2) amount of time spent with individuals from the same origin country⁹

⁹How often do you spend time with people from your country of origin who are not related to you?

(0 never–5 daily), (3) how many Germans the respondent met and maintained regular contact with since arrival in Germany,¹⁰ and (4) how many individuals from the same origin country the respondent met and maintained regular contact with since arrival in Germany.¹¹

Preliminary Analyses

We first computed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine whether the fourteen individual values actually mapped onto the assumed latent constructs of liberal democratic, sexual-ethical, civic-social, and religious/secular value orientations. Table 3 reports the EFA results, indicating that the items we selected loaded on four latent variables, each constituting one of our value dimensions.¹² The item, acceptance of spouse separation, does not show adequate loadings on either factor and was excluded from further analyses.

We then computed three additive indices for the dimensions assessed by multiple items and used the single item measuring secular values, each ranging from 0 to 10. Table 3 also provides an overview of the ranges, means, and standard deviation for each index. To operationalize the degree of consensus for each value dimension, we calculated individual distance scores for each item that represents the difference between respondents' value orientations and the mean of all German respondents (see Wimmer and Soehl 2014).¹³

To use the individual value contents scores, as well as the value distance scores, to test our two hypotheses, the scores should not be highly correlated. This assumption requires (a) a high variance in individual scores and (b) that there are some refugees who agree more, less, and just as much compared to German respondents. The mean scores and standard deviations (SD) in Table 3 suggest that the conditions are optimal only for liberal democratic values, which show notable variation in individual scores

¹⁰How many German people have you met since your arrival in Germany with whom you have regular contact?

¹¹How many people from your country of origin have you met since your arrival in Germany with whom you have regular contact?

¹²The latent factor structure was confirmed for refugee respondents in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey and German respondents in the WVS separately (see Table A3 in the Online Appendix).

¹³We considered computing group means and group distance scores for refugees according to age and sex in the German population as well as according to the area of residence. However, two things spoke against using these group means for computing distance scores: First, from a conceptual viewpoint, the overall public and political discourse in Germany is the relevant reference point for refugees' sense of belonging, rather than the mean of a distinct group to which refugee respondents may (or may not) have had more exposure. Second, when conducting sensitivity analyses for age-, sex- and region-specific means, we found only marginal or no differences at all (see Tables A1 and A2 in the Online Appendix).

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis on IAB-BAMF-SOEP and WVS Respondents; Reported Factor Loadings, CFI and RMSEA; Lower Part Displays Indices Mean Scores and *p*-Values for *t*-Tests.

Individual Items (Support/Acceptance of...)		Liberal-Democratic Values	Sexual-Ethical Values	Civic-Social Values	Secularism
Tax the rich, support the poor		0.4	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Free elections		0.6	-0.0	0.0	0.1
Civil rights		0.4	-0.0	0.0	0.1
Women and men have same rights		0.6	-0.0	0.0	0.0
Homosexuality		0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0
Prostitution		0.0	0.8	-0.0	0.0
Sex before marriage		0.0	0.5	-0.0	0.0
Abortion		0.0	0.5	-0.1	0.0
Separation		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Free-riding		-0.1	-0.1	0.7	-0.0
Stealing		0.1	0.0	0.7	0.0
Taking bribes		0.0	0.0	0.6	-0.0
Falsely claiming state support		-0.0	0.1	0.5	0.1
Religious leaders interpret the law		0.0	-0.0	0.0	0.7
CFI: 0.99		RMSEA: 0.01			
Index no. of items		4	4	4	1
Average refugees	0-10 (SD)	9.2 (1.3)	1.6 (2.2)	9.8 (0.7)	8.1 (3.2)
Average Germans	0-10 (SD)	8.3 (1.5)	5.3 (2.5)	9.3 (1.1)	8.8 (2.3)
<i>t</i> -Test (<i>p</i> -values)		<i>p</i> < .001	<i>p</i> < .001	<i>p</i> < .001	<i>p</i> < .001

(SD = 1.3) and a small correlation between value contents and consensus scores ($r \approx 0.2$). Since both refugees and Germans expressed unanimously high support for civic and social values, variance is comparably low (SD = 0.7), and there is a high correlation between contents and consensus ($r \approx 0.9$). With regard to sexual-ethical values, there is a high variance (SD = 2.2) but also rather a high correlation ($r \approx 0.8$). The situation is similar for the secularism scores, which show a high variance (SD = 3.2) but an equally high correlation ($r \approx 0.9$). The impairing characteristic of the civic-social, sexual-ethical, and secular values scores is that refugee respondents' deviation from the German mainstream is too uniform, either mostly positive (civic-social) or mostly negative (sexual-ethical, secularism). Thus, while testing each hypothesis using all four values dimensions, we expect the most notable results from liberal democratic values.

Results

Main Analyses — Values Direct Effects

To test our two hypotheses, we first computed a series of ordinal regression models. Ordinal regression was chosen because the response variables are not continuous and follow a nonnormal distribution (for a discussion please refer to Figures A4–A6 in the Online Appendix). First, we assessed whether either individual value contents (Model 1) or value consensus (Model 2) predicted respondents' feelings of welcome upon arrival in Germany (Table 4). As a robustness check, we also investigate whether the influence of values changes over time when we asked for respondents' feelings of welcome at the time of the survey and added various indicators for social connectedness (Models 1 and 2 in Table 5). We then test whether individual value contents or value consensus also predicted the amount of time respondents spent with Germans (Models 3 and 4 in Table 5). In each model, we used either absolute values scores (*contents*) or the distance scores that reflected respondents' deviation in value orientations from the means of the German population (*consensus*) as main explanatory variables. We report coefficients, *p*-values, and odds ratios for interpretation. Better model fit is indicated by a lower Akaike information criterion (AIC). An additional indication of robustness is the coefficient stability of the control variables across *contents* and the *consensus* models. Finally, we investigate the value consensus indirect effect on feelings of belonging through the interaction with members of the receiving society (see "*Main analyses — values indirect effects*" for details).

Feelings of welcome upon arrival. The results in Table 4 indicate that Model 1 including the individual value contents as main explanatory variables predicts whether respondents' felt welcome in Germany upon arrival better (AIC = 3393.8) than the model including the value distance scores (AIC = 3413.2). Support for liberal democratic values is strongly and positively associated with

an individual's perception of being welcome in German society ($OR = 1.18$). For a one unit increase in the individual liberal democratic values score, the odds of feeling more welcome are multiplied by 1.18 (i.e., increase by 18 percent), controlling for all other variables. Civic and social values were moderately positively associated with feelings of welcome, with a one unit increase in an individual's score increasing the odds of feeling welcome by 14 percent ($OR = 1.14$). Contrary to our expectations, secularism was negatively associated with feeling welcome upon arrival ($OR = 0.95$).

Table 4. Ordinal Regression on Feelings of Welcome upon Arrival; Coefficients, p -Values and OR.

Outcome Variable	Feeling Welcome Upon Arrival			
	Model (1) Value Contents		Model (2) Value Consensus	
	B (p -values)	OR	B (p -values)	OR
Values				
Liberal democratic values	.169 ***	1.18		
- value distance			.083	1.09
Sexual-ethical values	.013	1.01		
- value distance			-.009	0.99
Civic-social values	.132 *	1.14		
- value distance			-.115	0.89
Secular values	-.048 **	0.95		
- value distance			.059 **	1.06
Years in Germany	-.136 **	0.88	-.128 **	0.88
Employed in Germany	-.267 *	0.77	-.246	0.78
Partner/spouse in Germany	.146	1.16	.167	1.18
Current legal status (Ref. recognized refugee)				
Status of tolerance	-.248	0.78	-.358	0.70
Not decided	-.292 *	0.75	-.364 **	0.69
Recognized for asylum	-.337 *	0.71	-.395 *	0.67
Other protection status	-.418 *	0.66	-.414 *	0.66
Education	-.243 ***	0.78	-.232 ***	0.79
Sex (Ref. female)	.160	1.17	.147	1.16
Age	.021 ***	1.02	.022 ***	1.02
Religion (Ref. Muslim)				
None	.243	1.27	.243	1.28
Christian	-.042	0.96	-.060	0.94
Other	.221	1.25	.229	1.26
AIC	3393.8		3413.2	
N	2044		2044	

Sig. codes (p -values): *** $<.001$, ** $<.01$, * $<.1$.

Table 5. Ordinal Regression Results on (a) Feelings of Welcome now and (b) Time Spent with Germans; Coefficients, *p*-Values, and OR.

Outcome Variable	(a) Feeling Welcome Now				(b) Time Spent With Germans			
	Model (1) Value Contents		Model (2) Value Consensus		Model (3) Value Contents		Model (4) Value Consensus	
	B (<i>p</i>)	OR	B (<i>p</i>)	OR	B (<i>p</i>)	OR	B (<i>p</i>)	OR
Values								
Liberal democratic values	.132***	1.14			.030	1.03		
- value distance			.011	1.01			-.143**	0.87
Sexual-ethical values	.002	1.00			.027	1.03		
- value distance			.014	1.01			-.018	0.98
Civic-social values	.083	1.09			-.049	0.95		
- value distance			-.054	0.95			.071	1.07
Secular values	-.049**	0.95			.038	1.04		
- value distance			0.064**	1.078			-.037**	0.96
Time spent with:								
Germans	.152***	1.16	.152***	1.16				
People from origin country	.014	1.01	.016	1.02				
Met and maintained contact with people from:								
Germany	.004	1.00	.006	1.01				
Origin country	.014	1.01	.013	1.01				
Years in Germany	-.133**	0.88	-.140**	0.87	.163***	1.18	.163***	1.18
Employed in Germany	.118	1.12	.122	1.13	1.422***	4.14	1.428***	4.17
Partner/spouse in Germany	.273*	1.31	.281**	1.33	.244**	1.28	.245	1.28
Current legal status (Ref. recognized refugee)								
Status of tolerance	-.609*	0.54	-.700*	0.50	.380	1.46	.384	1.46
Not decided	-.258*	0.77	-.314**	0.73	.237*	1.27	.225*	1.25
Recognized for asylum	-.351*	0.70	-.387*	0.68	-.153	0.86	-.165	0.85
Other protection status	-.643**	0.54	-.643**	0.53	.152	1.16	.162	1.17

(continued)

Table 5. (continued)

Outcome Variable	(a) Feeling Welcome Now				(b) Time Spent With Germans			
	Model (1) Value Contents		Model (2) Value Consensus		Model (3) Value Contents		Model (4) Value Consensus	
	B (p)	OR	B (p)	OR	B (p)	OR	B (p)	OR
Education	-.228***	0.80	-.219***	0.80	.149***	1.16	.142***	1.15
Sex (Ref. female)	-.174*	0.84	-.172	0.84	.328***	1.39	.333***	1.39
Age	.023***	1.02	.024***	1.02	-.018***	0.98	-.017***	0.98
Religion (Ref. Muslim)								
None	.180	1.20	.202	1.22	.037	1.04	.074	1.07
Christian	-.098	0.91	-.102	0.90	-.096	0.91	-.087	0.92
Other	.045	1.05	.063	1.07	-.403**	0.67	-.409**	0.66
AIC	3796.91		3808.04		6612.22		6606.16	
N	2044		2044		2044		2044	

Sig. codes (p-values): ***<.001, **<.01, *<.1.

The control variables' effects are in line with our expectations and stable across both models. First, it is evident that older respondents as well as individuals who arrived in Germany later were likely to have felt more welcome upon arrival. In contrast, education was strongly negatively associated with feeling welcome upon arrival. Finally, respondents with a status less secure than a recognized refugee status were less likely to feel welcome in Germany. Please note that at this point, no indicators for contact with either Germans or peers from the same country of origin were included in the analysis, as the outcome variable measures feeling welcome upon arrival, when more pronounced social contacts cannot yet be expected.

Feeling of welcome at time of survey. In contrast to the models on feelings of welcome upon arrival, the models assessing respondents' feelings of welcome in Germany at the time of the survey included four explanatory variables relating to respondents' social connectedness (Models 1 and 2 in Table 5). Again, Model 1 including the value contents variables displays the better model fit compared to Model 2. With regard to the value variables, the findings are similar to the models in Table 4. An increase in the individual liberal democratic values score increased the odds of feeling welcome by 14 percent, controlling for all other variables ($OR = 1.14$), while secularism was negatively associated with feeling welcome upon arrival ($OR = 0.95$).

With regard to the social connectedness variables, the most notable finding is that spending time with Germans was highly significantly associated with feeling more welcome in Germany ($OR = 1.16$). Thus, spending time with Germans, for instance, "every week," increased the odds of feeling welcome in Germany by 16 percent compared to only spending time with Germans "every month."

Most control variable effects are comparable to those in the models on feeling welcome upon arrival. One notable difference is that having a partner or spouse that lived with the respondent in Germany increased the odds of feeling welcome by the time of the survey compared to not having a partner or spouse at all or in the country of origin.

Time spent with Germans. Since spending time with Germans stands out as the most important social variable in the models on feelings of welcome and because we know that social contact is a crucial driver of belonging in its own right, we finally test whether value contents or consensus predict how often refugees spent time with Germans (Models 3 and 4 in Table 5). Interestingly, Model 4 including the value distance scores as main explanatory variables yields the better model fit ($AIC = 6606.16$) compared to Model 3 containing value contents ($AIC = 6612.22$). Thus, contrary to the models on feelings of welcome, the models on time spent with Germans speak to the *consensus* hypothesis.

Differences in agreement with liberal democratic values between a respondent and the German population were significantly negatively associated with spending time

with Germans ($OR = 0.87$), indicating that one score higher value distance between the respondent and German respondents decreased the odds of contact by 13 percent. The same holds for differences in secularism ($OR = 0.96$), where a higher value distance was associated with a 4 percent decrease in odds to spend more time with Germans. No significant effects were found for differences in civic and social or sexual and ethical values.

The control variables indicate that male, younger and better educated refugees tended to be more likely to spend time with Germans than female, older and less educated refugees. Being in Germany for a longer time as well as being employed or in school in Germany are also positively related to spending time with Germans. The coefficients and odds ratios on the controls were stable across both models.

Main Analyses — Values Indirect Effects

The previous results revealed three main findings. First, respondents' individual value contents were associated with feelings of welcome in Germany. Second, value consensus with the German population was associated with spending time with Germans. Third, spending time with Germans was associated with feeling more welcome. Recalling the theoretically informed hypothesis that shared values between refugees and the receiving society enhance belonging by promoting social contact, the question arises whether there is an indirect effect of value consensus on feelings of welcome *through* value consensus's association with spending time with Germans. Hence, we computed a Structural Equation Model (SEM), designed to capture whether there is a mediated association between value distance and belonging (Gunzler et al. 2013). The SEM model displayed in Figure 1 as a path diagram is statistically significant at a p -value of .004 and shows a decent fit ($RMSEA = 0.042$).

Mediation analysis. As expected, and in line with the previous regression models, there is a significant negative direct effect of value distance on spending time with Germans ($B = -0.31$, $p < .001$) and a significant positive direct effect of spending time with Germans on feeling welcome in Germany ($B = 0.12$, $p < .001$). The SEM results indicate that there is indeed a modest negative indirect effect of value distance on feeling welcome ($B = -0.037$, $p < .01$). In other words, value distance systematically predicts refugees' feelings of welcome through the mediator of spending time with Germans. This finding, however, must be interpreted in light of the limited R^2 effect-sizes. While time spent with Germans is decently explained by value consensus ($R^2 = 0.1$), the indirect effect of value distance explains only a small share of the variance of feeling welcome ($R^2 = 0.014$).

Discussion and Conclusion

This article investigated whether values and differences in values between refugees and the native German population are associated with refugees' feelings of welcome

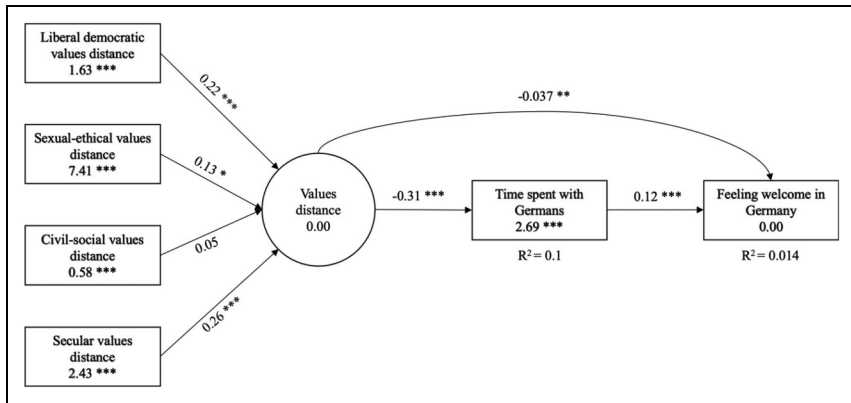


Figure 1. Structural Equation Mediation Model with Standardized Estimates and *p*-Values. Sig. Codes (*p*-Values). *** <.001, ** <.01, * <.1.

and belonging as well as contact with the host country populations. Belonging, and challenges to belonging, are widely considered important elements of the migratory process, and belonging has been argued to be an essential part and facilitator of transnational migrants' integration (Fortier 2000; Nibbs 2014). Although research on belonging is a vibrant field (see Antonsich 2010; Hovil 2016), comparably little attention has been paid to the role of values for refugee belonging. Based on the extant literature on values and belonging, we tested two competing hypotheses on the relationship between values and belonging, using a representative sample of refugees who arrived in Germany between January 2013 and January 2016. First, we tested the "contents hypothesis" stating that specific value contents, such as liberal and civic values, are associated with feelings of welcome among refugees, irrespective of whether these values are widely shared with members of the receiving society, and, thus, support belonging. Second, we tested the "consensus hypothesis" suggesting that the sharing of values between refugees and the receiving society is positively associated with refugees' belonging directly as well as indirectly through the promotion of interaction with members of the receiving society, above and beyond the contents of these values.

Using data from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees in Germany and the WVS, we first computed a number of individual value and value distance scores for refugee respondents and subsequently estimated the number of ordinal regression models to test the association of values (and differences in values) and belonging, which we operationalized as the experience of feelings of welcome and contact with the host country population. Finally, we estimated a structural equation model to trace values' indirect effects on refugees' belonging through increasing interaction with members of the receiving society. Our results speak to the theoretical proposition that values play a role in refugee belonging. However, depending on how

belonging is defined and operationalized, value consensus and value contents have different implications.

Assessing belonging as feelings of welcome toward the receiving society upon arrival, which implies a spontaneous evaluation of the context of reception, the contents of specific values are associated with how welcoming refugees perceive German society. The specific *contents* of values — that is, their functioning as a form of cultural capital and an indicator of what a person generally deems “desirable” (Kluckhohn 1951, 395) — seems to be important for how refugees perceived a new and unfamiliar environment in affective terms. Especially liberal democratic values and secular values are important. The results are similar when looking at feelings of welcome at a later point in time — namely, at the time the survey was conducted. Here, indicators for social interaction with host-society members and with people from the same origin country were factored in, yet the significant effects of the *contents* of individual liberal democratic and secular values persist. We, therefore, conclude that value contents are not only related to spontaneous reactions to a novel environment, but also relate to how well people can establish themselves in a new environment.

When focusing on social interactions and relations as hallmarks of belonging (Baumeister and Leary 1995), operationalized as the frequency of contact with members of the receiving society, our results indicate that value *consensus* becomes more important than specific value *contents*. In particular, the consensus in liberal democratic and secular values is associated with increased contact with members of the receiving society. This finding suggests that shared values promote social interactions and the establishment of social bonds between refugees and members of the receiving society because sharing values may diminish the risk of dissonant encounters and render conflict less likely (see Partridge 1971). Finally, the results of the structural equation model suggest that there is a notable indirect effect of refugees’ value consensus on their long-term feeling of welcome, which is mediated by the time they spent with Germans.

Given these implications of value contents and consensus for belonging, in terms of both feelings of welcome and contact, it seems worthwhile to examine and discuss the effects of each specific value dimension. Liberal democratic and secular values proved most relevant in terms of value contents and consensus. Our results show that the contents of liberal democratic values are strongly positively associated with feelings of welcome (i.e., more liberal respondents tended to feel more welcome upon arrival, as well as after residing in Germany for a while). This finding is likely related to feelings of confidence in the German constitutional system among respondents who valued democratic ideals, which in turn promoted feelings of safety and security. As Inglehart notes (2000, 225), there is a specific link between the perceived legitimacy of democratic institutions and personal well-being across societies. In particular, during the early stages of arrival, these associations and ideas about German society may trigger attachment and identification with the host society, while consensus regarding liberal democratic values is not relevant.

When it comes to establishing contact with Germans, however, consensus in liberal democratic values becomes an important reference point whereas value contents are less important. Hence, in line with value consensus theory, the absence of potential conflict arising from value differences, rather than individual ideals or convictions, may motivate contact with Germans.

In the same vein, disagreement over secular values obstructs contact between refugees and Germans, suggesting that secularism can be a salient topic in social encounters in Germany and affects the readiness of refugees and Germans to establish social relationships. In spite of secular values' social relevance, consensus on secular values does not engender refugees' feelings of welcome upon arrival in Germany. In fact, respondents who supported secularism were likely to feel less welcome in Germany. This finding seems counterintuitive at first, but may be explained by the high involvement of religious institutions in refugee reception upon arrival in Germany (Nagel 2019). On the one hand, Christian welfare organizations like "Caritas," "Diakonie," or the "Red Cross" continue to dominate the provision of goods and services for refugees (Galera, Giannetto, and Noya 2018, 11). On the other hand, Muslim charities or mosques are important providers of social services and social capital to Muslim refugees that secular refugees lack (Halm and Sauer 2015; Nagel 2019). This imbalance may have created a negatively biased image of German society and its support system among more secular refugees. Moreover, research on contact between refugees and host-society members in Germany recently found that religiosity in itself is a facilitating factor for establishing social bonds between devoted individuals (Steinmann 2020).

The contents of civic values play a much smaller, yet still positive role in refugees' feelings of welcome in Germany. The positive effect may be explained by the fact that most items of the civic values index relate to trust (stealing, bribing, free-riding), which should promote refugees' impression of being welcome. In contrast, sexual-ethical values do not play a role in respondents' feelings of belonging, neither in terms of consensus or contents nor in terms of feeling welcome or spending time with Germans. This negative finding suggests that sexual-ethical values are a negligible part of refugees' cultural capital at the earlier stages of integration.

The findings at hand may inform policy debates on refugee integration and inclusion. Those values that are shared by refugees and Germans (liberal democratic, civic/social, and secular) are strongly and positively associated with refugees' feelings of belonging, while those values that refugees and Germans tend to disagree on (i.e., sexual-ethical values) are hardly linked to feelings of welcome or spending time with Germans at all: Capitalizing on those values that attract high levels of agreement between refugees and Germans, rather than stressing differences, may therefore promote a more inclusive atmosphere, a sense of shared perspective and belonging, and, hence, a basis for cohesion.

Though not this article's primary focus, the results also hold insights into the control variables. Male, educated, and young individuals did significantly better in terms of contact with German locals. Integration initiatives and projects should,

therefore, try to attract not only women but also older refugees, as establishing contacts with Germans seems more challenging for them. On a different note, education is negatively associated with feelings of belonging, which could be explained by higher expectations as well as feelings of relative deprivation among better-educated refugees — a phenomenon known as the integration paradox (e.g., Verkuyten 2016, 584).

Finally, two important limitations of this article need to be addressed. First, in international comparison, Germany is a relatively liberal society, which points at the methodological challenge that disagreement over certain values (that is, lack of consensus on these values) tends to be limited range. Although this is an important finding in itself, the fact that refugees and the German native population do not show substantial differences in civic and social values hamper the rigor with which the consensus hypothesis can be tested. With regard to secular and sexual-ethical values, the methodological problem is that refugee respondents were overwhelmingly less liberal, meaning that the deviation from the German mainstream is rather unidirectional (i.e., negative). The prevalence of negative over positive deviation leads to value contents and consensus variables being highly correlated, which impairs their comparison. Hence, we only deem the results on liberal democratic values as robust against this bias. Further tests with more diverse populations are recommended for future research. Second, the measurement of values among immigrant populations is a challenge in itself. Acculturation scholars argue that understanding and adjusting to the receiving country's beliefs and values does not automatically lead refugees to adopt these values (Schwartz et al. 2010). Respondents to surveys may be well aware of what is considered appropriate by the receiving society and answer accordingly, while still holding the values of their countries of origin. This issue of social desirability could be critical in the normatively charged field of values research and is hard to address methodologically (Fisher and Katz 2000). Future research, therefore, needs to address these limitations to more thoroughly investigate the relevance of values and value differences for refugee integration, for which the present article offers some initial evidence.


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ORCID iD

Lukas M. Fuchs  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6180-1376>

Supplemental Material

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