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**Indigenes' Responses to Immigrants' Consumer Acculturation: A Relational  
Configuration Analysis**

MARIUS K. LUEDICKE

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Accepted manuscript version.

Marius K. Luedicke (m.luedicke@city.ac.uk) is senior lecturer of marketing at Cass Business School, City University London, 106 Bunhill Row, London, United Kingdom. The author gratefully acknowledges the constructive feedback of Ann McGill, Eileen Fischer, Søren Askegaard, and the reviewers. In addition, he thanks Eric Arnould, Fleura Bardhi, David Crockett, Giana Eckhardt, Kai-Uwe Hellmann, Ashlee Humphreys, Sidney Levy, Hans Mühlbacher, Lisa Peñaloza, Elisabeth Pichler-Luedicke, and Craig Thompson for their valuable comments, and the Swarovski KG for their financial support.

Consumer research commonly conceptualizes consumer acculturation as a project that immigrants pursue when adjusting their consumer identities and practices to unfamiliar sociocultural environments. This article broadens this prevailing view by conceptualizing consumer acculturation as a relational, interactive adaptation process that involves not only immigrant consumption practices but also indigenes who interpret and adjust to these practices, thereby shaping the paths of possibility for mutual adaptation. Based on a Fiskenian relational configuration analysis, the study explains how indigenes in a rural European town interpret certain immigrant consumption practices as manifestations of a gradual sell-out of the indigenous community, a crumbling of their authority, a violation of equality rules, and of indigenes being torn between contradictory micro- and macro-social morals. The article contributes a broader conceptualization of consumer acculturation, highlights four sources of ethnic group conflict in a consumer acculturation context, and demonstrates the epistemic value of Fiskenian relational configuration analysis for consumer culture theory.

*"Ultimately immigrants' fate is our own" (Peñaloza 1995, 92)*

During the last five decades, considerable waves of human migration have changed the sociocultural fabric of many Western societies. The influx of migrants has not only brought about countless new forms of constructive collaboration and creolization among immigrants and indigenes but also contributed to considerable discrimination, exploitation, and ethnic group conflict (Appadurai 1996; Bauman 2004; Davis 2006; Hannerz 1996; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006; Pettigrew 1998; Pieterse 2011; Sassen 1999; Tomlinson 1999).

Each migrant who crosses national or cultural borders in pursuit of a better life abroad embarks on an often arduous journey of "acculturating" to foreign social, material, economic, and cultural conditions (Berry 1997; Redfield, Linton, and Herskovitz 1936). A sizable part of this acculturation process involves acquiring the relevant "skills and knowledge" (Peñaloza 1989, 110) to competently consume in the foreign country (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005; Oswald 1999; Peñaloza 1994; Üstüner and Holt 2007). In the prevailing theoretical view, the outcomes of such "consumer acculturation" (O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber 1986, 579) processes depend predominantly on each immigrant's ability to make expedient consumption decisions (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983); to adopt, adapt, ignore, or reject available elements from home, host, and transnational cultures (Askegaard et al. 2005; Oswald 1999); and to cope with indigenous ideologies and social structures that are often not conducive to integration (Béji-Bécheur, Özçağlar-Toulouse, and Zouaghi 2011; Costa and Bamossy 1995; Jafari and Goulding 2008; Lindridge, Hogg, and Shah 2004; Peñaloza 1994; Üstüner and Holt 2007).

However, recent right-wing political victories in England, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden, and a surge of anti-immigrant demonstrations in Germany—as well as a number of influential academic writings on ethnic discrimination (Pettigrew 1998; Semyonov,

Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006), ethnic segregation (Davis 2006; Lipsitz 2007), consumer racism (Ouellet 2007), far-right political populism (Yilmaz 2012), anti-immigrant extremism (Boettcher 2011; Pfahl-Traugher 2012), and wasted lives (Bauman 2004) in Western societies—remind us that immigration is more than merely a challenge for immigrant consumers. Immigration also requires adaptation of established social relations, cultural practices, and individual expectations of indigenous citizens who have long inhabited, defended, and socioculturally shaped the places at which immigrant consumers arrive (Sack 1993; Tseng and Yoshikawa 2008).

From this broader perspective, consumer acculturation not only exists as a process of adaptation on the part of the immigrants but also manifests as experiences, interpretations, and practices through which immigrant and indigenous groups adjust to one another's consumption choices, behaviors, ideologies, and status ambitions. Consumer research has begun to address problems that can arise in such contexts of relational acculturation by showing, for example, how immigrant consumers proactively adjust their consumption choices to avoid defamation and stigmatization of, and discrimination against, indigenous consumers (Béji-Bécheur et al. 2011; Jafari and Goulding 2008; Sandıkcı and Ger 2010; Üstüner and Holt 2007). However, these studies neither ask nor answer the question of why indigenous consumers respond to immigrant consumption practices with such hostility in the first place, thereby contributing to the fueling of social conflicts—i.e., interactive encounters of difference (Levy and Zaltman 1975)—between ethnic groups.

This article addresses this question by investigating how indigenous consumers interpret and respond to immigrants who acculturate to their local cultures through the consumption of local brands, stores, neighborhoods, traditions, and places. Prior research has used identity analysis to reveal how immigrants adapt to foreign consumer cultures (Berry 1997). In contrast, this article draws on Fiske's relational configuration analysis to show how indigenous consumers experience and interpret the acculturative consumption practices of

immigrants in their town as manifestations of four uninvited, yet influential, shifts in their relationship with the immigrants, and how indigenes adapt their own consumption practices accordingly (Fiske 1991).

I present the findings from this study in the following order: First, I review the consumer acculturation literature focusing on relational adaptation between immigrants and indigenes. Then I revisit sociological and anthropological writings that provide a more general understanding of the drivers of conflict in ethnic group relationships. Next, I describe the research context and methods followed by a presentation of key empirical findings. I conclude with a discussion of this article's contributions to consumer acculturation, ethnic group conflict, and consumer relationship theory, as well as a reflection on the continual importance of local places, the role of gradual change, and the moral intricacies of evaluating immigrants in economic terms.

## **CONSUMER ACCULTURATION**

Consumer acculturation is a concept commonly used for addressing those aspects of the acculturation process that concern the "acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to engaging in consumer behavior in one culture by members of another culture" (Peñaloza 1989, 110). Research on consumer acculturation emerged in the early 1980s from an interest in understanding whether and, if so, how the consumption patterns of immigrant consumer groups differ from those of other ethnic groups, and what these differences reveal about an immigrant group's level of "assimilation" to the national majority culture (Desphande, Hoyer, and Donthu 1986; Hirschman 1981; Mehta and Belk 1991; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983). In these studies, the "host culture" (O'Guinn et al. 1986, 113) operates as an empirical reference point set by the average consumption decisions of indigenes living in similar regions and earning similar incomes. Assessing the distances between immigrant and host consumption

patterns revealed, for example, how Mexican immigrants to the United States tended to "over-assimilate" to an internalized Anglo-American cultural style (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983, 300), and how Indian immigrants used special Indian possessions for "hyperidentification" with their native cultural context (Lee 1988; Mehta and Belk 1991, 408).

With Peñaloza's (1994) influential ethnography on Mexican immigrants in the U.S., consumer acculturation theory began to address the complex and socioculturally situated processes of immigrant identity construction (Bouchet 1996; Lindridge et al. 2004; Oswald 1999). In this new, "postassimilationist" (Askegaard et al. 2005, 161) branch of consumer acculturation theory, immigrant identity is considered a deliberate amalgamation of home, host, and transnational cultural elements that can, almost like a piece of clothing, be "purchased, sold or discarded, or traded as the situation demands" (Askegaard et al. 2005; Oswald 1999, 314). These studies show, for example, how immigrant consumers selectively use and resist these repositories of meaning, cultural scripts, and (non-human) acculturation agents to construct "hybrid" consumer identities (Üstüner and Holt 2007, 42).

From their ethnographic research on Turkish migrants in a squatter camp outside of Ankara, Üstüner and Holt (2007) introduce a third, important extension to the postassimilationist acculturation model. Unlike earlier scholars who focused on individual factors, Üstüner and Holt (2007) explore how and to what extent migrant consumer acculturation patterns depend on the sociocultural structures in which they occur. They conclude that under sociocultural conditions in which an ideological conflict, a modern consumer culture, and a lack of capital prevail, migrant consumers more often than not end up with a "shattered identity project" (Üstüner and Holt 2007, 41).

Across all stages of theory development, consumer acculturation theorists have offered insight, albeit unsystematically, into indigenous consumers' influences on immigrants and their consumer acculturation projects. Peñaloza, for example, notes that Mexican



immigrants in the United States had to learn how little they were valued in their new host country and where their "place in society" was in terms of membership and acceptance in certain social categories (Peñaloza 1994, 47). Jafari and Goulding (2008) show that Iranian immigrant women in the United Kingdom often feel forced to conform to majority cultural norms and remove their headscarves, for example, to avoid being labeled as belonging to a devalued group. Similarly, Béji-Bécheur, Özçağlar-Toulouse, and Zouaghi (2011, 508) document how many immigrants in France markedly struggle with circumventing the consequences of being associated with negative ethnic group clichés.

Together, these studies document the ways in which indigenous societies shape the sociocultural, structural, and normative conditions under which immigrant consumers acculturate. Thus far, however, the literature has not empirically explored whether the hostile indigenous responses that these studies have noted originate solely from pre-existing, or even "naturally occurring" (Fischer, Hanke, and Sibley 2012, 438), ethnic stereotypes and racist ideologies, or whether indigenes' situated interpretations of immigrant consumption practices as manifestations of relational reconfigurations also play a role in producing ethnic group conflict (Allport 1953; Bobo 1999; Bouchet 1996; Tseng and Yoshikawa 2008)?

Exploring an intricate nexus of consumption practices, interpretations, mutual adaptations, and ethnic group relationships requires two notable extensions to the present consumer acculturation framework. First, it requires a conceptualization of consumer acculturation that not only accounts for individual learning and identity construction, but also for relational adaptation. Therefore, in this article, I use the term "consumer acculturation" for those phenomena that occur when consumers (immigrants or indigenes) adjust their established consumption practices, brand relationships, territorial claims, status hierarchies, and (collective) identities to their evolving relationships with consumers from unfamiliar national, social, or cultural backgrounds.

Second, exploring such a nexus requires adopting an analytical lens suited for studying changing configurations of ethnic group relationships, rather than individual identity projects. In the next section, I introduce Fiske's (1991) relational models theory as such an analytical lens, and use it to review the literature on relational sources of ethnic group conflict.

## **SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ETHNIC GROUP CONFLICT**

Ethnic groups are commonly conceptualized as socially constructed devices for social association, coordination, and discrimination (Barth 1969; Glazer, Moynihan, and Schelling 1975). As a device for association and coordination, ethnic groups help humans to recognize and relate to other people as similar or foreign based on often arbitrary physical, behavioral, or linguistic markers (Barth 1969; Blom 1969). As a device for discrimination, ethnic groups allow individuals to build hierarchical and positional arrangements that legitimize the exclusion of others from accessing key material, cultural, and symbolic resources (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1999; Hall 2000).

Whether a particular ethnic group is respected in a society, or merely tolerated and discriminated, depends not only on "bad ideas," a "biased reading of relevant social information," and a "noxious socialization" of the indigenes (Bobo 1999, 468), but also largely on how ethnic groups interpret and coordinate their relations with one another (Burton 2009; Essed 1991; Miles and Brown 2003; Weiß 2013).

Alan Page Fiske's (1991) influential relational models theory provides a particularly useful lens for analyzing situated, empirical configurations of ethnic group relationships (Belk 2005, 2010; McGraw, Schwartz, and Tetlock 2012). From his ethnographic work in Burkina Faso, as well as his extensive review of classic social theory, Fiske posits that people do more than merely observe, categorize, remember, and make inferences about other people.

People also proactively structure their interactions with others based on certain conceptions and relational rules that they assume (or hope) to be shared. People consciously or implicitly use these conceptions and rules "as shared goals, ideals, or standards in guiding their initiatives and responses" (Fiske 1991, 19).

Fiske (1992) argues that most, if not all, human interactions are based on four fundamental relational models, which he labels "communal sharing," "authority ranking," "equality matching," and "market pricing." He explains that when people exchange goods or services they can give them as a gift without expecting anything specific in return (i.e. communal sharing); they can give them to show loyalty to a superior or, inversely, pay a favor to a subordinate (authority ranking); they can give them as part of a balanced quid pro quo exchange (equality matching); or they can sell or purchase them at market rates (market pricing) (Fiske and Haslam 2005).

According to Fiske, people develop situated and context-dependent "implementation rules" to define the specific terms of these relationships. These rules specify who is a legitimate member of a local community, who possesses legitimate authority, what constitutes a balanced tit-for-tat relationship, and which goods and services are valued in a specific social setting (Fiske 1992, 690). Such cultural rules are key to Fiske's theory, because people may use the same four models across all contexts but develop drastically different rules for what constitutes belonging, legitimate authority, balance, and market value in each social setting (Askegaard and Linnet 2011). Because the success of a relationship depends on each participant's idea of which relational models and implementation rules govern their interactions, conflicts tend to arise when ideas and practices do not align.

Conflicts in Communal Sharing Relationships

In situations when ethnic groups coordinate with a focus on what they have in common and what distinguishes them from others, they tend to use the communal sharing model (Fiske 1991). Communal sharing typically originates from a desire to belong, to care, and to be cared for by a family, community, ethnic group, or nation (Anderson 1983). Ethnic groups that interact based on communal sharing consider it natural to be kind and altruistic to those whom they consider insiders and often emphasize a shared fate among their members (Bobo 1999; Fiske 1992).

Consumers engage in communal sharing, for example, when interacting as families (Belk 2010; Epp and Price 2008), brand communities (Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001; Schau, Muñiz, and Arnould 2009), subcultures (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), or members of online problem-solving communities (Mathwick, Wiertz, and de Ruyter 2008).

In communal sharing relationships, ethnic group conflicts arise when members of one ethnic group violate implementation rules, values, objects, or territorial boundaries that are key to the identity and practices of another ethnic group (Hirsch 1983; Rieder 1985; Sugrue 2005). Conflicts also arise in cultural settings where indigenous communities have few experiences with immigrants and therefore lack the necessary cultural scripts for channeling their initial fears of and anxieties about foreigners into productive relationships (Chin 2001; Hellmann 1998; McLemore 1970). Furthermore, cultural and physical distances tend to play an important role in propagating conflicts between communal sharing groups (Berry 2006). Greater cultural distance between ethnic groups tends to produce a stronger sense of insecurity and unpredictability with regards to the other's actions. Physical proximity, in turn, enhances exposure to such insecurities (Barth 1969).

Conflicts in Authority Ranking Relationships

In situations when ethnic groups coordinate with a focus on hierarchical differences between them, they draw on the authority ranking model. In authority ranking relationships, every individual and ethnic group is assigned to a distinct place within an ordered social field (Bobo 1999; Fiske 1991; Weiß 2013). Groups that rank higher tend to command a larger share of resources and are expected to protect their inferiors (Connelly and Folger 2004). In ethnic group relationships, however, the authority position of a person depends less on the individual's desire to gain prestige, status, and attention (McClelland 1975), and more on the hierarchical position of the ethnic group to which the individual is ascribed (Barth 1969; Bobo 1999).

Consumers rely on authority ranking coordination, for example, when constructing and defending hierarchical differences between core and peripheral members of a subculture (Chalmers Thomas, Price, and Schau 2013; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), moral and amoral consumption practices (Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2010), and legitimate and illegitimate brand meanings (Arsel and Thompson 2004).

Between ethnic groups, authority ranking relationships emerge in a wide range of forms. Particularly powerful, as well as problematic, are "symbolically dominated" authority ranking relationships (Bourdieu 1991; Essed 1991, 42). In such relationships the dominant ethnic group defines the legitimate views of reality and the terms of their relationship with a dominated group that accepts these views and terms as inevitable or even natural (Weiß 2013). Unfortunately, even the most well-meaning majority groups sometimes end up symbolically dominating other groups without necessarily being "aware of the ways in which the system is so structured that it is in their interests" (Essed 1991, 42).

Conflicts arise in ethnic groups' authority ranking relationships when the involved parties disagree about who possesses rightful power over whom, under what circumstances, and on what grounds (Fiske 1991). In such situations, the more powerful ethnic group often creates frustration and anger among less powerful groups by asserting illegitimate power

through everyday interactions, as well as through laws, organizations, and regulations (Essed 1991; Strasser 2013). Dominant ethnic groups, in turn, tend to struggle with authority ranking when losing their ability to unite their own group against a dominated one (Essed 1991; Heitmeyer 1994a). A lack of solidarity among members of the dominant group can foster anxieties that previously dominated immigrant groups may take over the wheel (Bobo 1999), even though neither "mass invasion" nor ethnic takeovers have previously occurred in Western Europe (Sassen 1999, 2).

### Conflicts in Equality Matching Relationships

In situations when ethnic groups interpret and coordinate their relationships in terms of balanced reciprocity and distributive justice, they tend to use the equality matching model. In this mode of coordination, each group is seen as entitled to the same amount of desirable goods and services, such as dinner invitations, rides to work, or state benefits. Therefore, the direction and magnitude of emerging imbalances constitute an important measure in these relationships (Fiske 1992, 691). Coordination through equality matching is typically driven by a need for fairness, equality, balanced reciprocity (Sahlins 1972), and distributive justice between groups of similar status (Connelley and Folger 2004; Lerner 1977).

Consumers draw on equality matching most directly in their sharing and gift-giving interactions (Belk 2010; Giesler 2006). They also use it when accessing commercial services, to avoid the reciprocity demands inherent to this model (Marcoux 2009).

Conflicts arise from equality matching relationships when groups fail to resolve emerging imbalances or disagree on the rules that constitute balance. When imbalances arise, the principle of equal retaliation can—as world news reports illustrate almost every day—turn into eye-for-an-eye vengeance that keeps neighborhood, tribal, religious, or national conflicts running for decades (Fiske 1991). Among ethnic groups, equality matching

coordination tends to induce conflict when indigenes begin viewing immigrants as social parasites that exploit the indigenous welfare state and fail to give back to the society that supports them (Dustmann and Preston 2004; Sassen 1999).

### Conflicts in Market Pricing Relationships

In situations when ethnic groups interact according to what they are willing to pay or receive in return for something else, they use the market pricing model (Fiske 1991). Market pricing coordination is based on a human desire for "making decisions and mobilizing resources in the most effective way," as well as for "maximizing outcome ratios" (Fiske 1991, 108; Murray 1938).

Conflicts arise from market pricing coordination when, for example, the model is used for legitimizing the exploitation and enslaving of people, selling people as commodities, or forcing people to work or even procreate for their owners' profit (Fiske 1991, 133).

In ethnic group relationships, market pricing coordination is held to be beneficial when both groups are more interested in making financial profits than in protecting their community boundaries or authority positions against one another (Connelly and Folger 2004). Conflicts tend to arise, however, when indigenes use their superior market position to exclude immigrant workers, citizens, businesses, or consumers from full market participation (Ouellet 2007; Pager and Shepherd 2008). Conflicts also tend to arise from perceptions of ethnic group competition that induce a sense of "danger and dispossession" within dominant groups (Horowitz 1985; Rieder 1985, 9; Sugrue 2005).

This brief review of the literature on ethnic group conflict reveals a particular absence of research on the role of consumption in ethnic group conflict. The studies that explicitly deal with consumption tend to focus either on high involvement consumption acts (e.g., a black family buying a house in a white-dominated U.S. neighborhood and experiencing

violent resistance from white families) (Rieder 1985; Sugrue 2005), or on majority discrimination against ethnic minority businesses (Ouellet 2007), consumers (Chin 2001), or advertising campaigns as consumerist expressions of racist stereotypes and ideologies (de Run 2007), rather than ethnic group relationships. However, the existing literature does not yet provide sufficient empirically based theoretical explanations for the multiple and complex ways in which interpretations of consumption practices—including the more mundane and progressively integrative practices of immigrant consumers—can affect ethnic group relationships.

## METHODS AND CONTEXT

In fall 2007, I set out to explore how indigenous consumers interpret and respond to immigrants who acculturate to their local cultures through the consumption of local brands, stores, neighborhoods, traditions, and places in Telfs, a small town in Western Austria. Telfs constituted an ideal context for such a project for four reasons.

First, 80% of the 15,000 citizens of Telfs are part of Austrian families that have resided in the town for at least two generations—including the "old families" (Elias and Scotson 1965/1994, 154) that have "always" (emic terms) lived in this town and control most of the town's material, cultural, economic, and political resources. To most accurately reflect the meaning of the emic term "Einheimische" (i.e., those who are at home at a given place) that Austrians use when distinguishing themselves from the "Zugereiste" (i.e., those who have arrived from abroad or elsewhere in Austria) I refer to these consumers as "indigenes" rather than locals, autochthons, natives, established citizens, or the majority.

The remaining 20% of Telfs' population immigrated to the town from 15 other countries (Statistik Austria 2012). Of these immigrants, 85% were born either in Turkey or into families with Turkish cultural roots. These immigrants—"Turks," in emic terms—



constitute the fastest growing ethnic group in Telfs. Indeed, Turkish mothers give birth to about one third of all children born in Telfs each year (Heinz 2009; Potkanski 2010).

National statistics suggest that the boundaries between these two communities continue to be strong. For example, 70% of Austrian residents of Turkish descent claim to feel more attached to Turkey than to Austria (Potkanski 2010), 75% report negative experiences with the majority society, 53% criticize the Austrian government for discrimination against Muslims (Ullram 2009), and 46% criticize a lack of opportunity for upward social mobility (Potkanski 2010; Ullram 2009). These data suggest the existence of two distinct ethnic groups that inevitably (but often reluctantly) interact with one another in Telfian consumption spheres.

Second, Austrians and Turks share a rich and troubled history involving 500 years of armed conflict over Habsburgian and Ottoman territories. Between 1526 and 1791, the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire attempted eight times to seize authority over Austro-Hungarian territories, including two unsuccessful sieges (in 1529 and 1683) of the nation's capital Vienna. Before the 1791 Treaty of Sistova ultimately marked a new era of peaceful diplomatic relations between the Habsburgian and Ottoman Empires, Western national and religious leaders continuously instigated fears of a Turkish invasion. The imminent Ottoman takeover of Constantinople (now Istanbul) in 1453, for example, helped Pope Pius II, known as the "Supreme Captain of all Infantry and Cavalry Divisions of the Christian Empires and Nations against the Osmons and other Infidels" (Neck 1983, 3), unite his allies and rejuvenate the long-forgotten idea of a united Europe. Religious leaders Martin Luther (1483-1549) and Erasmus of Rotterdam (ca. 1466-1536) also called for "Devotions Against the Turks" (Delumeau and Hübner 1989, 409), to avert an Ottoman takeover, which they framed as God's imminent punishment for their people's unrighteousness.

In Austria, the "Turkish menace" thus gradually turned into a cultural myth that continues to echo in the country's culture and public discourse. Every four years, for

example, the indigenous citizens of Telfs reenact their victory over the Ottomans in the "Schleicherlaufen" carnival (a UNESCO Cultural Heritage), in which indigenes ritualistically capture and chain up a character called "the Turk." These territorial conflicts between the two nations not only produced anxieties and negative myths about Turks but also resulted in some positive appreciation of Turkish culture. For example, Ottoman culture inspired the creation of the popular, crescent-shaped pastry known as "Kipferl," the rise of Austrian coffeehouse culture, the oriental roof style of the Belvedere presidential palace, and Mozart's Rondo al Turca. For the purpose of a study on relational consumer acculturation, this history of anxiety and admiration, authority struggle, and cultural creolization, promised a rich and complex data set.

A third reason for choosing this context was that the relationship of Turkish immigrants and Austrian indigenes has changed significantly since Turkish guest workers first came to the town in the 1960s. In 2006, the tensions that had been building up over decades erupted in a dramatic public controversy, in which Austrians viciously attacked the Turkish group for wanting to build a minaret next to their inconspicuous local mosque (Fürstlinger 2010). National television stations aired interviews with agitated indigenes who expressed how much they disliked the Turks and thus framed Telfs as a defiantly "closed" (Popper 1945/1994) rural town that struggles with acculturation (Fürstlinger 2010). This reputation rendered Telfs a potentially rich site for studying relational consumer acculturation and conflict.

Fourth, I selected Telfs in the hope that research in such a context would contribute to a better understanding of the consumer acculturation experiences of approximately 3.4 million Austrians and 200 million Europeans who also live in rural social settings, side by side with more or less welcome immigrant consumers (Statistik Austria 2012; United Nations 2012).

I collected data in and around Telfs between 2007 and 2014, using four different methods. The centerpiece of my data set comprises 18 in-depth interviews with 14 majority consumers and four Turkish immigrant consumers who live and work in Telfs (see table 1), covering 31 hours of recorded interview material. I recruited informants through personal networks, through the informants' personal networks, through online links to local clubs, companies and authorities, and directly on site. I approached participants by asking to interview them about the different social groups in their town and how these groups relate to one another in terms of consumption practices. While following Üstüner and Holt's (2007) and Saatcioglu and Ozanne's (2013) general approach to data collection, I focused on how consumers in Telfs understand and describe their relationships with other (ethnic) consumer groups, particularly how indigenous consumers "struggle to achieve control and assert their status" (Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013, 693) in the face of immigrant consumer acculturation.

I conducted interviews in the informants' homes, a Turkish teahouse, a local shopping mall, two restaurants on the main street, and university offices. I had no personal relationships with the informants prior to arranging the interviews. Following McCracken's (1988) guidelines, I began the interviews with grand tour questions about the informants' personal backgrounds, professions, hobbies, and family lives before beginning questions specifically directed towards the different groups in the town, their particular consumption styles and practices, and their relationships to one another.

To situate and triangulate the interpretive insights from these interviews, I collected about 120 reports from major Austrian print media sources, websites, and online discussions containing the search terms "Türke" (Turk), "türkisch" (Turkish), "Moschee" (mosque) and "Minarett" (minaret) (Kozinets 2002b). To gain a first-hand impression of the relationships and consumption practices discussed in the interviews, I spent about 30 hours in the local shopping mall, marketplace, mosque, and other public places in Telfs (Jorgensen 1989). Finally, to evaluate the level of context-specificity for my primary data, I conducted 15

interviews that varied in length from 15 to 150 minutes with indigenous and immigrant consumers living in Austrian, German, and Swiss urban contexts.

To analyze this data, I performed a Fiskeian relational configuration analysis. According to Fiske (1991), such an analysis does not require a two-sided empirical account. Instead, it allows for garnering insightful data about the configuration of, and conflicts within, a given relationship from in-depth understandings of how one group interprets its relationship with another group. I therefore analyzed the data in an iterative, part-to-whole process of hermeneutic interpretation (Thompson 1997), focusing particularly on violations of implementation rules that indigenes believe (should) govern their relationships to Turks in Telfs. The relational conflicts that I discuss below emerged from this analysis as notable misalignments between indigenes' relational expectations and relational realities that they saw manifesting in Turkish consumer acculturation practices.

For better analytical contrast, I compared indigenous retrospective reflections and archival data about Turkish-Austrian relationships and consumption practices in the period from 1963 to 1975, with indigenous reflections and archival data on relationships and consumption practices from 1975 onwards. This analytical contrast both provided a better understanding of the relational configurations that governed ethnic group relationships during each of the two time periods, and revealed the key sources of the relational conflicts that emerged once the initial relational configuration began to change. Follow-up conversations with three key informants confirmed the accuracy of the interpretive account, which is the focus of the following section.

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Insert table 1 about here

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## **FINDINGS**

To best present the findings of my relational configuration analysis, I first sketch out the relationships between Turkish guest workers and indigenous Austrians between 1963 and 1975, and between 1975 and 2014, respectively. Then, I present excerpts from my interviews with indigenous informants Anna, Christa, Johanna, and Franz (all pseudonyms), as well as one anonymous email that illustrate how indigenes interpret certain immigrant consumer acculturation practices as manifestations of unsettling changes in their relationship with the immigrant group. All data excerpts cited below represent the personal views of informants expressed during interviews or through digital media.

### The Evolution of Ethnic Group Relationships from Domination to Destabilization

The relationship of Turkish and Austrian ethnic groups in Telfs began to form in 1963. During this post-World War II era, the newly thriving yet still war-strained textile industry of Telfs was unable to satisfy its surging demand for labor from the reduced ranks of the Austrian workforce (Potkanski 2010). Therefore, and in an "act of despair" (Schmidt 2011), Austrian companies and worker unions passed the Raab-Olah treaty, which allowed Austrian employers to recruit foreign guest workers for a one-year tenure and then return and exchange them. This practice became known as the rotation principle. Within 10 years, about 227,000 foreigners came to work in Austria, 11.8% of whom were of Turkish descent (Potkanski 2010).

Media reports from this time suggest that Turkish guest workers were pleased with the opportunity to earn more money and thus improve the situation of their families back in Turkey. Austrian companies were pleased about increasing their profits with a highly flexible Turkish workforce. And indigenes appeared content with earning three times their usual income by renting out dormitories, basements, and nearly unlivable barns to twelve Turkish guest workers instead of four German tourists (Burtscher 2009). When reflecting on these

early years, indigenous informants consistently recount that "everybody was happy" (Christa), and that the guest workers "did the work for which they were needed" (Anna). As manifested in the rotation principle, indigenes also agreed that they "didn't want [the Turkish guest workers] permanently," but that they "were only supposed to work and be well-behaved" (Christa).

The configuration of this initial relationship of Turks and Austrians was thus firmly based on market pricing coordination. Guest workers and indigenes came together only to profit from one another and therefore were willing to temporarily sacrifice some of their usual comforts in the pursuit of more lasting financial gains.

In the streets of Telfs, Turkish guest workers virtually did not exist as consumers. They dressed and ate as cheaply as possible, purchasing only those goods that would improve their lives in Turkey (Spiegel Online 1963). As Christa explains, the young "Turkish men arrived in their best blue suits, and it [would] be that same suit they'd be wearing when they're put into their coffins."

A 1963 issue of the German magazine *Der Spiegel* offers a glimpse at the terms of communal sharing and equality matching coordination during that time. The magazine states, for example, that there "was no open hostility [in the factories], but also no friendships. People worked together—but in the canteen, people sat separately" (Spiegel Online 1963). While there was little sense of communal sharing between the groups, companies used equality matching rules for ensuring a fair treatment of the guest workers, thus safeguarding their precious market pricing relationships.

The data from this period show no sign of indigenes ceding authority to the Turkish guest workers. In rougher situations, the temporal limitation of their relationship allowed immigrants to direct their thoughts towards their future lives back home. Indigenes, in turn, appreciated the limitation of the agreement because it allowed them to construct themselves as benevolent hosts who treat their guests well and fairly without having to feel guilty over

keeping their personal and community ranks firmly closed. Given that both ethnic groups were more interested in monetary gains than in communal relationships, their broad cultural distance and close physical proximity also seemed largely irrelevant (Barth 1969; Berry 2006).

As a consequence of this initial relational configuration, the indigene-guest worker relationship showed very few signs of ethnic group conflict but all the signs of symbolic domination (Bourdieu 1991). Indigenes—in their roles as employers and landlords—dictated the terms of the relationship, and guest workers accepted these terms as an inevitable part of their agreement.

The world economic crisis of 1973-1975 triggered some influential changes in the Turkish-Austrian relationship in Telfs. The crisis slowed economic growth and resulted in a great number of worker layoffs, forcing indigenes and guest workers to rethink their initial agreement. Struck by the downturn, Austrian companies sent thousands of guest workers home while also lobbying for permission to retain their most skilled Turkish workers (Potkanski 2010). The selected Turks welcomed the opportunity to stay longer and to increase their savings. Eventually, the guest workers were permitted to bring their families and set up a more permanent residency in Austria.

However, for indigenes who did not employ foreign workers, observing the Turkish guests acquiring a permanent immigrant status felt like a breach of the relational contract under which they had invited the Turkish workers to Austria (Bauböck 1996). It was particularly difficult for these indigenes to accept that despite continuous efforts to cap immigration levels and raise the bar for naturalization, immigrants from a distant, unfamiliar, and myth-enshrouded oriental nation (Said 1979) would eventually become a permanent sight in their stores, shopping malls, high streets, neighborhoods, and cherished mountains. Moreover, that their ancestors had fought eight bloody territorial wars against the Turks did not contribute to a more positive reception of these changes.

As market conditions changed, more and more Turkish and Austrian workers lost their jobs in the factories. Turkish immigrants began to open their own restaurants or telecom businesses, pursuing higher education degrees, and entering a range of middle-class professions. However, thanks to the "Austro-Keynesian" economic policy (Schulmeister 2005, 3), the economic downturn during the 1970s manifested rather slowly, staving off the steep economic downfalls that had contributed to igniting American racial unrest in the 1960s and 1970s (Rieder 1985; Sugrue 2005).

By 2014, the Turkish-Austrian relationship was no longer symbolically dominated, nor did it bear any similarities to the guest/host relational configuration that had initially governed it. Instead, the relationship of these two groups had grown unstable and contested, acquiring most of the properties known for producing ethnic group conflicts.

Indigenes reluctantly realized that they would eventually be forced to rework their relational expectations and implementation rules to account for new entrepreneurs, politicians, citizens, home owners, and family members "with a Turkish immigration background" (emic term). As I show in the next four sections, one factor that contributed to destabilizing the immigrant-indigene relationship was that Turkish guest workers turned not only into citizens, but also into consumers.

#### Indigene's Conflict-Generating Responses to Immigrant Consumer Acculturation

When immigrants acculturate to a foreign country, some of their consumption practices turn into routinized "Praktik," whereas others occur for the first time or as a one-time "Praxis" (Reckwitz 2002, 249) even after decades in the country. My relational configuration analysis reveals that indigenes interpret certain routinized and one-time immigrant consumption practices (in etic terms) as manifestations of their impression that (1) the indigenous community has begun to sell itself out to immigrant customers, (2) that the



indigenous authority dominance is crumbling, (3) that immigrant consumers are violating key equality rules, and (4) that indigenes are being torn between contradictory micro- and macro-social morals

In the following sections, I describe these four relational conflicts moving from the most tangible, micro-level to the most intangible, meta-level conflicts. I use excerpts from my interview data to illustrate how indigenes experience, interpret, and respond to these emerging relational conflicts, and draw on archival data to document how broader sociocultural and political forces affect their relationships.

*Conflict 1: The Perceived “Sell-Out” of the Indigenous Community.* The first type of relational conflict arises from two of the most tangible immigrant consumption practices, i.e., immigrants beginning to acquire real estate in Telfs, and beginning to frequent indigenous middle-class stores, thus becoming recognized as a valuable target group.

Data from my interview with Johanna illustrate, how indigenes interpret Turkish real estate consumption practices in situ. Johanna is a 65-year-old retired restaurant owner who lived and worked in Telfs when the Turkish guest workers arrived in the 1960s. Decades later, she opened her own restaurant and employed several Turkish immigrants. She recounts her friendly, professional relations with the Turkish men and her joy in mentoring her young, female Turkish employees. At the dining table in her large house located in a newly developed estate outside of Telfs, she explains:

*The Turks have bought a lot of property here in the last 10 years. Every old house that is sold in Telfs is purchased by a Turk. The flats all go to Turks. At the time when I sold our [downtown] flat, we lived there with four doctors, three architects and two nurses. One of the doctors had built himself a house and wanted to sell his flat. But no one paid his asking price, except the Turks. So the doctor sold to a Turk. And that was the beginning of the damaged image of the block. When we moved out, six of the 20*

*inhabitants were already Turks. I did not feel comfortable there any more. The indigenes asked me, "Johanna, make sure you sell to an indigene!!" And I said that I'll try. I have waited a long time, but after all I had to sell to a Turk too. Now there are seven. The others are looking into selling too. They say, "We don't want to be here any more. It stinks there now." The Turks have different schedules than our people. They come home at night and make noise. That never happened before but is normal now. They do not follow our rules. I have to say, I have not worked 40 years of my life to deal with this now. I don't hold anything against the Turks. I always got along with them well, but I don't have to live with them.*

Johanna's story portrays an indigenous community that is aggravated by having to live in close proximity to Turkish immigrants but is unable to mobilize sufficient solidarity to protect its most sacrosanct consumption objects. These indigenes' insistence on rejecting Turkish neighbors results in a substantial devaluation of their own properties and inherent retirement savings the moment the first Turkish consumer moves in (Sugrue 2005). Yet despite their knowledge of this effect, indigenes retain and widely spread their contempt, making references to Turkish wives who "pursue no sport" and appear "shapeless and lifeless" (emic terms).

As homes and the (consumption) cultures that surround them are an integral part of these indigenes' inalienable wealth and identity, indigenes expect other indigenes to exclude them from market exchange because they speak "to and for a group identity [...and sacralize] felt differences between members of one group and another" (Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004, 610). The act of an indigenous neighbor selling his flat to a Turkish buyer, despite the lingering owners' desperate calls for ethnic boundary defense, thus constitutes a "taboo tradeoff" (Aggrawal 2004; Fiske and Tedlock 1997; McGraw et al. 2012). For Johanna's former neighbors, such tradeoffs manifest the realization that their indigenous community is vulnerable to change. Little by little, indigenes sacrifice the ethnic and cultural homogeneity

of their community, thereby contributing to its disintegration ("I said that I'll try [...] but after all I had to sell to a Turk too").

Adding to their sense of community erosion, these indigenes also begin to notice a shift in authority ranking following the real estate sales. Immigrant neighbors who do not follow established Austrian rules of consuming a home are seen as imposing cultural changes upon indigenes, changes that cannot be averted by morally acceptable means. This situation stands in stark contrast to the indigenes' symbolically dominant position in the 1960s, when they banded together to exploit Turkish workers and thus largely avoid any acculturation to Turkish culture (Bauböck 1996).

Johanna's description of the influx of Turkish neighbors brings Sugrue's (2005) work on the origins of Detroit's urban crisis to mind. In his influential book *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Sugrue describes how in February 1950 "an 'ethnic' amalgam of [White] working class Catholics" attacked black worker James Waterman, who had just acquired a home in their exclusively white neighborhood. The white attackers "stoned [the man's] house, slashed his car tires, and burned a cross on his front lawn" (Sugrue 2005, 241) to protect a residential color line and protest the drastic economic downturn, along with job losses and other macro-social forces over which these workers had little control (Hirsch 1983; Rieder 1985; Sugrue 2005).

My data indicates that indigenes from Telfs did not commit similar acts of physical violence, nor did they justify their responses with ideologies of generalized racial supremacy (White 1997). Instead, they expressed a certain amount of indifference towards the Turkish ethnic group per se ("I don't hold anything against the Turks"), often adding a positive note when talking about Turkish immigrant workers ("I always got along with them well"). Their responses to perceived disturbances of their indigenous consumption practices ("I don't have to live with them") also manifest less as physical violence and more as consumption.

For example, Margarete recounts in our conversation how she and her indigenous

neighbors bullied a Turkish family that had just moved into their house and began barbecuing in the shared building's unused courtyard. When the Turks started up their grill, she explains, she and her friends would sometimes go outside into the garden in their smallest bikinis, lazing around directly next to the covered Turkish women, thereby eventually forcing the Muslim family out of their house. Through such offensive consumption behaviors indigenes are sometimes able to regain control over their home territories and reestablish a sense of cultural stability (Hellmann 1998), knowing that their fight for their local "olive tree" (Friedman 1999) provides only temporary relief from an unstoppable influx of foreign consumer cultures (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006; Hannerz 1996).

My relational analysis further reveals that indigenes can respond in conflict-inducing ways to immigrant consumer acculturation practices not only when they involve inalienable goods of the highest emotional, cultural, and financial value (Belk 1988; Sugrue 2005) but also when they involve rather profane, everyday consumption practices. My second informant, Franz, who illustrates this finding, is 44 years old. He had been working at the town hall in Telfs for four years and lives with his family in Telfs. He recounts some of his first-hand experiences with Austrian-Turkish relationships in Telfs:

*A while ago, Nöm [an Austrian dairy producer] began to also label its products in Turkish. That caused an outcry [emphasizes]! It drew poison-pen letters to the CEOs. Why? Nöm obviously realized that there is a new clientele that they have to address. Maybe there would be products from Turkey coming in otherwise. So they labeled their products in Turkish, too. And that was when a line was crossed. [He imitates an aggravated Austrian voice]: "That is our [emphasizes] mountain milk that they [emphasizes] consume" and "One cannot label products in the Austrian market in Turkish language. This stuff belongs to someone! That is our [emphasizes] milk, and our products, and our cows" [laughs].*

Franz's ironic, yet slightly concerned reflections help to explain why indigenous

consumers feel betrayed by indigenous marketers who try to accommodate Turkish customer needs by making a product label readable also to first generation Turkish buyers. An influential rule for communal sharing in Telfs involves the expectation that while Turkish immigrants must "integrate themselves" (emic terms) into the indigenous society—an emic idea that corresponds to the theoretical notion of "assimilation" (Berry 1997)—Austrians must not (and should not be forced to) acculturate to Turkish consumers, voters, or believers. Due to this firmly established rule for protecting community boundaries, Nöm's proactive recognition of Turkish customers struck indigenes as the crossing of a line and as a violation of an important relational contract (Aggrawal 2004).

Yet whereas indigenous consumers complain about the company's "marketer acculturation" (Peñaloza and Gilly 1999), Franz, with his professional background in business administration, rather acknowledges the market rationality for the company's initiative (a "clientele that they had to address") and how the company's action may serve as a precaution against Turkish producers entering Austrian markets. These opposing interpretations of Nöm's move as benefiting versus jeopardizing indigenous communal interests illustrate the intricacies that consumers face when evaluating local market exchanges that are somewhat nebulously connected to global market forces (Friedman 1999). In such mundane forms as Turkish-language words on their milk carton, global cultures and market influences come "up close" (Hannerz 1996, 25) to indigenes, manifesting the idea that the local producer puts on the "golden straitjacket" (Friedman 1999, 101) of liberal market capitalism rather than abiding by the rules of its indigenous community.

In summary, this section illustrates how indigenous interpretations of concrete, tangible immigrant consumption practices produce tensions in the indigenous community, particularly when they involve indigenes—reluctantly or proactively—breaching communal sharing rules for the sake of individual or corporate profit. Johanna's selling her home to a Turk or Nöm's printing Turkish words on its milk cartons apparently continue a 50-year tradition of

beneficial market exchanges between Austrian and Turkish citizens. However, contrary to their 1960s relationships, these contemporary exchanges are no longer solely based on market pricing. Instead, they also affect communal sharing and, as I will now show, authority ranking relationships.

*Conflict 2: Reconfiguration of Authority Ranking Relationships.* The second type of ethnic group conflict emerges from indigenous responses to immigrant consumption practices that challenge an established consumer hierarchy. Because consumer acculturation research has not yet empirically addressed indigenous acculturation dynamics, it tends to assume that the "host" society (as the label implies) operates from a relatively uncontested authority position. In this dominant position, indigenes are able to treat immigrants poorly (Peñaloza 1994), look down on them (Üstüner and Holt 2007), and discriminate against them (Béji-Bécheur et al. 2011; Jafari and Goulding 2008) without fear of negative ramifications to their own status and consumption practices.

From the broader data set, my interview with Anna best illustrates how, to the contrary, indigenous interpretations of immigrant consumer acculturation practices affect Telfian authority relationships in three notable ways. Anna, a 50-year-old mother of two children, works as an assistant in her husband's dental practice. She comes from a well-established family in Telfs that has lived there for four generations.

*The Turks buy a lot of BMWs. We Telfians buy more Audis and Volkswagens, or just normal Fords or Peugeots. They never drive a dirty car. The Turks always stick together. The mother collects all their money at home and allocates it. With this, they buy one car that everybody can drive. Super cars. Good brands. They have BMWs, Mercedes and Audis. Like status symbols. When the chrome shines it is typically [giggles, pauses] a Turk. These are family cars. Nice, expensive brands. Not Fiat or something like that. We talked about this a lot. Among us, everybody has a car that they*

*can afford. I have [pauses] a 12-year-old Volkswagen Golf [Rabbit]. A Golf 3. For me, there is no freedom behind their cars. When I have to ask someone if I may have the car? For me, that is constraint.*

Anna's narrative reveals how the immigrants' consumption of expensive status vehicles challenges an existing consumer status hierarchy in Telfs. In Telfs, as in most societies, ownership of an expensive car conveys a sense of outstanding economic achievement, power, and status. Anna and her peers notice that Turkish consumers often drive large and expensive cars, whereas indigenes like herself choose smaller, cheaper vehicles. In this constellation, Turkish consumers appear to outperform Austrian consumers and position themselves symbolically above indigenous drivers.

To regain their sense of legitimate authority status, indigenes rework the cultural rules on what constitutes high status for car owners in Telfs. In particular, indigenes collectively reject the Turkish practice of luxury car ownership as a status marker by claiming that these owners did not individually earn the vehicles and lack the necessary "freedom" to consume them independently. Through this relational acculturation practice of creating ethnicity-based doppelgänger brand images (Thompson and Arsel 2004), indigenes ensure that Turkish BMW owners are unable to garner status benefits from their cars (Bourdieu 1984; Cashmore 2008; Chin 2001; Üstüner and Holt 2010). However, this practice also renders an entire range of BMW models (i.e., "Türkenautos") unattractive to indigenous buyers.

Surprisingly, my analysis not only reveals such common practices of symbolic reconfiguration but also shows that Turkish consumption practices can induce a subtle sense of envy. For example, in our interview Anna explains that sometimes, when she watches Turkish families getting out of their BMWs and enjoying the fruits of their hard labor together ("family cars"), she cannot help but realize that her own children have long left the family home in pursuit of individual careers, while she is "now alone," and forced to "fill this gap [in her life] with other things." It is this onward sense of isolation that Johanna also

addresses when she watches Turkish grandmothers caring for their grandchildren at the playground next to her house, wondering: "Have you ever seen one of the older Turks in a nursing home? They are all being taken care of by their families!"

To indigenes like Anna and Johanna, these practices show that Turkish consumers have already claimed parts of the moral high ground from indigenous consumers, who have abandoned their families and local communities in pursuit of solitary consumerist pleasures (Bauman 2004; Cross 2000). Although often tempted by right-wing politicians, the indigenes whom I interviewed tend to attribute such cultural shifts not to Turkish consumers but to the emergence of the indigenes' increasing interest in pursuing more urban, professional, mobile, and non-religious lifestyles.

Anna's reflections also reveal a second notable way in which immigrant consumption practices affect authority ranking relationships in Telfs. The following data excerpt illustrates how Anna interprets the case of Turkish immigrants applying for, and eventually building, a small minaret next to their local mosque. The mosque is a spacious, religiously decorated room hidden in a former office building. From the outside, it initially bore no resemblance to a Muslim religious site.

*Anna: The whole thing with the minaret, that was like [immigrants saying], "We're getting what we want, whether people want this or not." I think it would have been more diplomatic if they had given up on it. Maybe our people would have changed their minds on their own then. Maybe that scared people off because they saw this as a demonstration of power. Like, "We [indigenes] don't have a say in the town anymore. Now the others make the rules."*

*I: And did the Turkish group actually gain influence in the town after the minaret decision?*

*Anna: [thinks for a while] If it's strong enough, a small group can shake up a large group. And they can make a lot of changes. But we haven't had a slave revolt yet*



*[laughs, pauses, and becomes thoughtful again]. They do actually have the same rights as us. They are human beings, too. It's crazy what's already started to happen here.*

In this excerpt, Anna explains why she believes the Turkish immigrants' insistence on building a minaret caused a furious backlash among indigenes. For Anna the erection of the minaret was the first incident in which the Turkish immigrant group overtly claimed and eventually asserted a legitimate citizen right against the indigenous group. Indigenes, however, did not interpret this claim as an attempt for cultural integration but as a deliberate provocation, a "demonstration of power," and a "visual sign of conquest" (Baumann 2014). Together with other indigenous observations that involve Turkish authority gains (e.g., buying status cars, acquiring real estate, showing family solidarity), the minaret controversy fostered the notion that the Turks are no longer a symbolically dominated ethnic group that can be tucked away in factory workshops, but legitimate citizens of Telfs who consume, pray, vote, and claim equal rights (Schiffauer 1997).

That Anna, Gerhard, and Johanna all used the term "slave revolt" independently indicates an indigenous notion of the Turkish-Austrian relationship that departs substantially from the initial guest/host configuration. Instead, their choice of metaphor suggests that these indigenes also perpetuate the image of a master/slave exploitation relationship that is eroding, but not yet replaced by, a more productive relational configuration. Anna's "we haven't had a slave revolt yet" and "they are human beings too" reveal not only a sustained claim of indigenous dominance, but also fears of an imminent—in terms of equality matching morally legitimate—Turkish takeover that includes the possibility for violent revenge (Delumeau and Hübner 1989, 409; Elias and Scotson 1994; Sassen 1999; Schiffauer 1997). Recent changes in the local political arena only fuel such indigenous anxieties. For example, in 2010, Mr. Güven Tekcan became the first elected Telfian politician of Turkish descent. Although he is a loyal member of the conservative *Österreichische Volkspartei* and continues to promise that he will "always (be) there for everybody" (Paumgarten 2013), indigenes often gossip about

his founding his own Turkish faction and thus politically empowering Turkish immigrants.

Anna's third story vividly illustrates how one immigrant consumption practice can bring about an eruption of latent fears of authority inversion. She reflects on her experiences during the 2008 European soccer championship, when Turks and Austrians watched the games on a big screen in Telfs' central public square:

*During the soccer championship the Turkish team was playing. The whole area in front of city hall was full of Turks, all dressed up [with Turkish tricots and flags]. And after winning their game, they all paraded through the village the whole night, screaming and howling. The whole bunch of them. That was threatening. Like the Turks invading Vienna [giggles]. The Austrians didn't do that when their Austrian team was playing. You could tell then that the Turks feel more connected to Turkey than to Austria. And also they didn't cheer for us when our Austrian team was playing. You just had the feeling that a Turkish nation is really strongly represented here and then marches through the town. I thought the Turks in Turkey were different when I visited Istanbul. Maybe we just see them differently when they are here.*

Anna's voice sounds puzzled and disappointed when she recounts how the Turkish immigrants watched the games at the Telfian marketplace without ever cheering for the Austrian team. Anna and her peers believe that indigenes can legitimately expect unfettered loyalty or even gratitude from the Turkish immigrants whom they invited to Austria and whom they protected and tolerated for more than five decades (as Johanna said, "live peacefully next to each other"). Instead, they find immigrants supporting only the Turkish soccer team, thereby contributing to the notion of indigenes hosting a potentially hostile Turkish sub-nation on Austrian turf ("the Turkish nation is really strongly represented here") (Strasser 2013).

Anna's interpretation of this consumption practice as a deliberate act of segregation also amplifies her frustration with Turkish resistance against indigenous calls for assimilation.

Although she giggles when drawing the historical comparison with "Turks invading Vienna," her voice and wording betray her genuine concern for an inverting authority relationship. Indigenes no longer feel like a dominant group in Telfs, instead feeling besieged by a united, fast-growing group of Turkish nationals who do not feel attached to, or even care for, the indigenous culture or society ("A small group can shake up a large group"). This fatalistic vision shapes Anna's thinking when she considers the Turks "marching" through Telfs, with their screaming, celebrating, and waving of the Turkish flag, as an ultimate completion of the Ottoman takeover (Baumann 2014; Delumeau and Hübner 1989).

In this subsection, I have shown how indigenous interpretations of certain immigrant consumption practices contribute to destabilizing social hierarchies and power relationships between immigrants and indigenes. As the relational effects of these meso-level practices are less immediate than, for example, the micro-level practice of Turks acquiring a flat next door, they involve more speculation and interpretive work on the part of the indigenes. Overall, indigenes do not interpret Turkish consumer acculturation practices as signs of successful integration or hybrid identity construction but as impetuses for an uninvited acculturative reconfiguration of indigenous rules for status recognition; for reflecting on the social costs of their individualist consumer culture; and for coping with fears of ethnic takeover and violent revenge (Elias and Scotson 1994).

*Conflict 3: Violation of Equality Matching Rules.* The third type of conflict that arises from the particular configuration of ethnic group relationships in Telfs involves misaligned expectations of fairness and balance (Fiske 1991). Whereas the previous two conflicts arose from indigenes' responses to immigrants gaining immediate access to consumption resources (micro-level) and local authority positions (meso-level), this third, macro-level conflict is a result of indigenes comparing indigenes' and immigrants' overall economic and sociocultural contributions to the town's and nation's current wealth. Unlike Johanna, who shares detailed

information about the roots of this type of conflict in the next excerpt, indigenes typically do not have access to realistic data about Turkish immigrants' contributions to and benefits taken from the Austrian welfare system. Indigenes therefore tend to rely on visible immigrant consumption practices as a proxy for their evaluation.

*I quickly realized how this [accumulation of wealth among the Turkish group] worked in the early years. I initially worked in an accountant's office. Between 1964 and 1969, the Turks came in droves. I processed their applications for child support and submitted them to the tax office. At some point I realized that one guy had children born in March and June 1958. So, I walked over to my boss and said "There is something wrong here." He laughed and said, "No, that is correct. He adopted his brother's children and now claims child support for them here." That was legal at the time [but changed a few years later]. They got 150 Schillings for each child, and that times eight. As a bookkeeper, I earned 1200 Schillings. And they earned twice as much with this child support and their work in the factory.*

This interview excerpt illustrates how indigenes use equality matching practices to evaluate their relationship with Turkish immigrants. In my data, indigenes rarely use equality rules for interpreting micro-level market interactions or meso-level status relationships. Instead, they use them for evaluating the more intangible, inaccessible macro-level aspects of their relationship with the immigrants (e.g., politics, national defense, tax payments, public benefits, or access to public education). Johanna explains how first-generation Turkish workers used Austrian law to claim state benefits for adopted children living in Turkey, and how this consumption practice effortlessly doubled their income. While this case may be exceptional, it illustrates the kinds of considerations in which indigenes engage when speculating about the legitimacy of Turkish income that buys expensive cars and downtown properties (Gerhard says, "That is often held against them by our people: 'How can they afford a Mercedes?").

Johanna's narrative illustrates four ways in which Turkish consumers violate indigenous equality rules. First, Johanna thinks it unfair that she had to pursue a costly, lengthy education to obtain access to a decent income in Telfs. In contrast, Turkish workers earned "twice as much" without any of these qualifications, simply by claiming state benefits. Second, Johanna found herself in the ostensibly unfair situation of paying taxes not only for fellow Austrians and immigrants but also for adopted children living in Turkey.

Third, Johanna's frustration with immigrants violating fairness rules is amplified because the indigenes had invited the Turks to Austria as "guest" workers. In most cultures, guests enjoy particular social benefits and status (Simmel 1908) but do not have the right to exploit their hosts in such organized ways. For Johanna and other indigenes, such overt violations of equality matching rules bolstered the notion that Turkish immigrants were interested not in a balanced contribution to the Austrian welfare state but in profiting from it (ironically, indigenes pursued the same goal when inviting the Turks to Austria). Adding to her disappointment is the impression that both her employer and her government betrayed and ridiculed their own community by reinforcing legislation that encouraged immigrant behaviors that systematically disadvantaged indigenes ("He laughed and said, 'No, that's correct'").

Johanna's child support story also reveals a fourth, highly influential indigenous rule for assessing balance in the relationship of the ethnic groups. The following email, which illustrates this rule in more detail, was sent to the headquarters of a local Tyrolean supermarket chain, *MPreis*, after the company had announced in a television interview its intentions to cater more directly to Turkish consumers. Similar to the Turkish print on Nöm's milk cartons, the contentious point in this case was that *MPreis* displayed a Turkish-language magazine in the back of some of its supermarkets. The email read thusly:

*For decades, we have been the most loyal customers of Therese MÖlk [MPreis' founder] and later of MPreis. In the 1960s and 70s, I was raised by my parents with*

*the idea that buying at Mölk, Konsum and Praxmarer [competitors] strengthens the local economy. Because MPreis is the only brand of these left, and because it carries many Tyrolean products, we continue to be loyal MPreis customers who make 80% of their monthly purchases in your stores. Today, when I heard on TV of your new strategy to use Turkish-language advertisements and assortments, I lost a part of my bond to my homeland [i.e. patriotism, orig. "Heimatverbundenheit"] through MPreis. I am utterly disappointed and will, from now on and against my own will, make all my purchases at Merkur and Spar [competitors]. It is saddening that a traditional Tyrolean company with strong homeland roots obviously no longer cares about us Tyroleans, who have helped to grow your company. Instead, you choose to make offers that no Tyrolean would ever receive in Turkey. I am aware that many people with Turkish roots and other nationalities live in Austria, but we are Austria, and it was the Austrians who built and raised this country. Therefore, I think that we should preserve our pride, just like the Turks do in Turkey.*

The author of this email—joined by dozens of others who sent emails to MPreis after the television show—vividly affirms his or her close relationship with this Tyrolean company and his or her understanding of the role of Turkish customers. The author appears to be engaged in a "committed partnership," or even an exclusive "marriage" with the brand (Fournier 1998, 362), a relationship that also involves community boundaries, a shared fate, and a "consciousness of kind" among Tyroleans (Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001, 413). Because MPreis caters to Turkish customers, the email writer believes that the company "no longer cares" about the indigenous community and therefore overtly betrays the indigenes with immigrant consumers ("I am utterly disappointed").

This email is particularly illuminating because it sheds light on the interpretive mechanism through which indigenes legitimize their sense of indigeneity privilege ("Etabliertenrechte," Heitmeyer 1994b, 31). The email illustrates that indigenes believe they

have earned a higher status relative to immigrants because they have discovered, cultivated, shaped, and defended the Telfian territories long before the Turkish immigrants arrived ("it was the Austrians who built and raised this country"). Given their considerably larger social, cultural, and economic investments, indigenes believe that they deserve not only the greater share of the town's political, social, cultural and economic resources but also a privileged status in their relationships with brands such as MPreis ("us Tyroleans who have helped to support your company").

This situated, Telfian sense of historically accumulated, earned privileges contrasts starkly with beliefs of unearned, universal, natural, or even God-given ethnic group privileges that consumers perpetuate in United States contexts (Anderson 1983; Fischer et al. 2012; Lipsitz 2009; Ouellet 2007). This difference is significant because when dominant indigenous groups legitimize their claims of privilege based on equality of contribution, rather than quality of blood, immigrants are theoretically able to "earn" an equal status by becoming committed community members, respected politicians, job creators, taxpayers, or otherwise valued citizens. The Czech and Slovakian immigrants to Vienna, for example, are often considered part of the indigenous Austrian society through their hard work and continuous cultural contribution (Bauböck 1996; Hintermann 2000). However, when indigenous privilege is built on racist ideology, the paths to equal status recognition seem even rockier, if not entirely blocked (Essed 1991).

While the notion of indigeneity privilege bears some relationship to the concept of political nativism (Higham 2002), it differs by not requiring indigenes to view immigrants across-the-board as hostile or unassimilable. In Telfs, individual predispositions towards political nativism, as well as ethnocentrism, ethnic chauvinism, social dominance orientation, or xenophobia, may play a role in shaping relationships (Essed 1991). Yet equality imbalances in terms of each group's contribution to the local community appear sufficient enough for indigenes to legitimize discrimination against, and exclusion of, immigrant

consumer as rebalancing acts.

In this subsection, I have shown how indigenes' interpretations of unequal contributions to the national community constitute a third, and macro-level, source of conflict between ethnic groups in Telfs. Among indigenes, Turkish immigrants' consumption practices, such as claiming benefits for adopted children, not cheering for the Austrian soccer team, or being treated equally by Austrian retailers, tend to induce a sense of unearned privilege, that, in turn, supports indigenes in legitimizing discriminatory consumption practices.

*Conflict 4: The Micro-Macro Moral Dilemma.* The fourth, and overarching, meta-level type of relational conflict arises from a set of ostensibly insoluble contradictions between micro- and macro-social norms in the indigenous society. The analysis shows that in their local, micro-social interactions as a "Gemeinschaft" (community) (Tönnies 1957), indigenes do not consider Turks as equal citizens to which their usual "internal morals" apply ("Binnenmoral," Weber 1923, 304). The reason is that in these local relationships indigenes see themselves as unable to rely on predictable relational configurations, a shared history, a loyalty without alternatives, or a certain consciousness of kind. Instead, they treat immigrants as outsiders whom they handle according to the norms of external morals ("Außenmoral") for which "every foreigner is initially an enemy, to which no ethical barriers apply" (Weber 1923, 304). However, in their national, macro-social interactions as citizens of the democratic Austrian "Gesellschaft" (society) indigenes build relationships with immigrants based on shared norms of human equality, democracy, and a social market economy. These institutions are (ideally) blind to ethnic groups and local privileges (Weiß 2013).

I have traced the key micro- and meso-level relational norms and expectations that Telfian indigenes use to interpret and respond to immigrant consumption practices in the sections above. The macro-social relational norms, in contrast, are most visibly articulated in formal government publications. The leaflet "Welcome to Austria," for example, which the



Austrian Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs gives each year to new arrivals, highlights the nation's cultural expectations of how immigrants and indigenes should relate to one another:

*Human Rights apply for all people in Austria. No person enjoys any special privileges because of his or her gender, religion, views or origin. Living together in Austria day-by-day is made easier through politeness, mutual consideration and respect. Should there be any differences in opinions, most people in Austria will try to find a solution that is acceptable for all* (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2012, 13).

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union articulates similar expectations for how its citizens should configure their human relationships:

*Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice* (European Union 2000, 8).

For indigenes such as Johanna, Anna, and Franz, these macro-social norms of equality, solidarity, democracy, and mutual respect stand firm and unquestioned. They are aware that these humanistic values are the uncontested moral base on which the social, cultural, and economic prosperity of their country and the European Union rests. Shared public memories of the Austrian unification with Nazi Germany (1938—1945) and the atrocities that followed remind them of the devastating consequences that nationalistic pride, ideologies of racial supremacy, and anti-Semitic or anti-immigrant propaganda can have for their society.

Nonetheless, adhering to these humanistic principles in their everyday relationships with Turks in Telfs appears not only difficult but also morally objectionable for these indigenes. As their consumption stories reveal, indigenes perpetuate a sense of (consumer) privilege vis-à-vis the new arrivals, and therefore rarely, if ever, consider immigrants equal

members of the established community (Elias and Scotson 1994). The indigenes' struggles with resolving this micro-macro moral dilemma are apparent throughout my interviews. In my conversation with Anna, for example, she first presents the Turks' consumption of the Turkish soccer game as a sign of an imminent slave revolt, which is a drastic expression of inequality. Only one sentence later, however, she reminds herself that immigrants "are human beings, too" who "actually have the same rights" as indigenes and that she finds it "crazy what's already started to happen here."

Thus my indigenous informants continuously oscillated between the moral poles of universal equality and situated inequality, respect versus rejection, and curiosity versus anxiety. Due to their fraught history, indigenes purposely refrain from racist and nationalistic thinking and instead sincerely endorse the idea of human equality, praise the cultural achievements of Turks in Turkey, and remind themselves of their moral responsibility towards the Turkish families whom they invited to Austria (Bauböck 1996; Potkanski 2010). From their own moral considerations, indigenes garner a good sense of the moral debts that they are accumulating against the Turks through their continuous exclusion and discrimination, and therefore anticipate that their macro-socially unethical behavior may eventually take its toll. Yet despite this awareness, indigenes have not yet found the means for interpreting and shaping their community, market, authority, and equality relationships with Turkish citizens in ways that encourage a truly welcoming, integrating, and respectful community for Turkish immigrants. Instead, indigenes, like most of the Austrian media, discuss their relationships to immigrants in terms of "tolerance," which is based on inequality, rather than "respect," which is based on equality.

*Consumer Acculturation as Reconfiguration of Ethnic Group Relationships.* My relational configuration analysis demonstrates that, and how, indigenes' understandings of their relationship with Turkish immigrants changed when Turkish guest workers turned into

immigrants, and immigrants turned into consumers. It particularly illustrates how the symbolically dominated relational configuration that prevailed in Telfs between 1963 and 1975, encouraged consumption practices that aligned with the relational expectations of both groups. In contrast, the destabilized relational configuration that exists today encourages interactive consumption practices through which immigrants strive for equality and status and indigenes defend their local market privileges, community boundaries, and power dominance.

Such relational adjustments made by indigenous consumers in response to their interpretations of immigrant consumption practices are evidence of what I call "indigenous consumer acculturation." As I have shown, indigenous consumer acculturation involves the continuous adaptation of individual and collective consumer identities and practices to evolving relationships to immigrant groups—rather than a mere execution of pre-configured "acculturation strategies" (Berry 2001, 621). It also involves indigenous consumption practices that deliberately affect these others' consumption practices and acculturation prospects. These indigenous consumer responses, in turn, bring about new impetuses for adaptation on the part of immigrant consumers (Béji-Bécheur et al. 2011; Jafari and Goulding 2008), thereby making consumer acculturation a more relational, interactive process than has been previously suggested.

From the interactive, relational consumer acculturation practices in Telfs emerges what is best described as an "acculturation culture." An acculturation culture is a contextually embedded amalgamation of expectable experiences, behaviors, objects, ideas, and relational understandings that emerge between ethnic groups and encourage the formation of certain consumer identities and relationships while inhibiting others. The acculturation culture that I found in Telfs is one in which indigenes fight a losing battle for preserving their consumerist privileges (even though such behaviors violate their own macro-social norms) and where immigrants, despite the indigenes' overt resistance, persistently work and consume their way

up the social status ladder (Baumann 2014; White 1997, 765).

## DISCUSSION

This article presents the findings from a multi-year interpretive study aimed at exploring how indigenous consumers interpret and respond to immigrant consumer acculturation practices in a rural Austrian town. A Fiskeian relational configurations analysis reveals how indigenous consumers interpret certain immigrant consumer acculturation practices as manifestations of uninvited changes in their community, authority, and equality relationships to the immigrants and how they often respond with discrimination. The findings from this study contribute several new theoretical insights to the literature on consumer acculturation, ethnic group conflict, consumer racism, and consumer relationships.

*Contributions to Consumer Acculturation Theory.* The existing literature conceptualizes consumer acculturation as a process in which immigrants engage after entering foreign territory. It therefore focuses on explaining how immigrants adjust their consumption choices to existing host cultural conditions and form new, hybrid identities (Luedicke 2011). This article extends this important literature by reconceptualizing consumer acculturation as those phenomena that occur when consumers (immigrants or indigenes) adjust their established consumption practices, brand relationships, territorial claims, status hierarchies, and (collective) identities to their evolving relationships to consumers from unfamiliar national, social, or cultural backgrounds.

Based on this more relational conceptualization, this article analyzes the changing, socioculturally situated configurations of immigrant-indigene relationships in a rural Austrian context and shows, as a result, how these relational configurations shape (and are shaped by) the ways in which indigenes (a) interpret the influence of immigrant consumption

practices on their ethnic group relationships, (b) respond to these interpretations, and (c) make sense of the broader sociocultural forces that also affect their relationships with immigrants.

(a) Due in part to their particular relational rules and expectations, indigenes perceive immigrants as relentlessly consuming their way into their indigenous consumption spheres, coming closer to even their most inalienable places, objects, and brands with every purchase made (conflict 1). To their dismay, indigenes see this process as accelerated by immigrant consumers violating local equality rules by earning themselves an unfair financial advantage over indigenes (conflict 3), as well as by indigenous home owners, brand managers, and administrative staff betraying their own indigenous community (conflicts 1 and 3). However, for indigenes, observing how immigrants consume luxurious cars as family units rather than as isolated individuals, acquire houses from pooled family incomes rather than from expensive bank credits, and collectively care for their children and grandparents rather than relying on markets for such services also makes them realize that their own cherished families and communities are falling prey to the pursuit of more individualistic (consumer) lifestyles (conflict 1 and 2) (Marcoux 2009).

(b) As a result of local relational configurations and broader sociocultural forces, indigenes respond to these particular interpretations of immigrant consumer acculturation practices by abandoning brands and places, reworking local status rules, bullying immigrants away from their consumption spheres, and protesting against local brands that accommodate immigrant needs. From a micro-social moral perspective, indigenes tend to believe that such discrimination practices are legitimate because most immigrants have yet to earn their place in the established society (conflict 3). However, from a macro-social moral perspective, indigenes are equally aware that such discrimination is illegitimate because human prospects must not depend on nationality, origin, or skin color (conflict 4) (Elias and Scotson 1994; Weber 1923).

(c) The indigenes' interpretations of relational changes and consumption practices also shape (and are shaped by) how indigenes experience the broader sociocultural forces that affect their relationships with immigrants. Indigenes know, for example, that their children leave their hometown and families not because of the immigrants' presence, but because of their rising interest in more urban lifestyles, challenging professions, and international careers. Indigenes also realize that their political influence is decreasing because they have chosen to bear fewer children and become less engaged in local politics (conflict 2) (Sassen 1999). Because of these broader sociocultural forces, indigenes tend to judge immigrant consumption practices not in isolation but as additional manifestations of an indigenous culture in decline (conflicts 1 and 2).

*Contributions to Ethnic Group Conflict Theory.* Both the sociological and anthropological literatures offer valuable insights into several relational conditions under which ethnic group conflicts tend to arise. The influential U.S. American studies of Sugrue (2005), Rieder (1985), and Hirsch (1983), for example, explain how conditions of institutionalized racial inequality, steep economic downfalls, and harsh competition have sparked some of the most appalling racial conflicts in the United States. However, insights from these U.S. American contexts cannot be readily adopted in a study of ethnic group conflicts in Europe. In Austria, contemporary ethnic group relationships draw less from cultural memories of indigenes enslaving, selling, and exploiting other ethnic groups, and more from recent experiences of indigenes inviting, contracting, and paying (temporary) migrants for their contribution to their nation's economic welfare. These different starting positions resulted in different types of ethnic group relationships.

For example, indigenes in this study also feel privileged vis-à-vis immigrants and discriminate against them in multiple offensive ways. However, they do not ascribe lesser human qualities, weaker work ethics, or higher propensities for violence to the Turkish

immigrants. Instead, Austrians spend their holidays in Turkey, admiring the mosques in Istanbul, and sometimes envying the hard working, resilient descendants of their former enemy who live in Telfs. Ethnic group relationships in contexts like Austria therefore appear slightly more open to productive reconfigurations than the much longer standing and more firmly institutionalized racial relations in the United States.

As to the role of consumption for ethnic group conflict, this study confirms existing theory through a relational, contextualized explanation of why high profile immigrant consumption practices such as buying a house can evoke ethnic group conflicts in rural Europe. However, the article also extends the literature by showing that even mundane immigrant consumption practices such as going shopping or driving a BMW can contribute to ethnic group conflicts when interpreted as part of larger relational shifts.

*Contributions to Consumer Racism Theory.* The literature on consumer racism documents the startling extent to which indigenes discriminate against ethnic sellers (Ouellet 2007), diminish immigrants' prospects in marriage, job, housing, or credit markets (Pager and Shepherd 2008), reject ethnic minority-targeted advertising and associations (de Run 2007), and perpetuate derogatory stereotypes that discredit (in particular) black minority consumers as "buppies," sneaker murderers, or status seekers who are overly "preoccupied with conspicuous consumption" in an ever-elusive pursuit of integration (Cashmore 2008, 91; Chin 2001). Whereas one part of this literature essentializes racism as an inherent human characteristic (Fischer et al. 2012), another part considers discrimination a response to changing social conditions and relations (Bobo 1999; Weiß 2013). The present article contributes new contextual insight to this second, relational stream of racism studies by explaining how indigenes in Telfs come to legitimize the discrimination of immigrant consumers as rebalancing acts, despite their firm belief in human equality.

*Contributions to Consumer Relationships Theory.* Consumer research has demonstrated how relationship analysis can be used for better understanding a wide range of consumption phenomena, including consumer-brand relationships (Fournier 1998), consumer community relationships (Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001), and family relationships (Epp and Price 2008). This article adds to the development of the relational theoretical lens by demonstrating how a different type of relationship analysis, i.e., Fiskeian relational configuration analysis, can be harnessed for exploring the different ways in which relational configurations shape (and are shaped by) the interactions of consumers, brands, and other market participants. By focusing on relational configurations, consumer (culture) researchers can, for example, analyze the extent to which consumers actually imagine and coordinate heterogeneous consumer communities as communal sharing (Chalmers Thomas et al. 2013), invent alternative forms of market pricing coordination at anti-market festivals (Kozinets 2002a), or use authority ranking and equality matching models to evaluate their relationships with brands (Fournier, Breazeale, and Fetscherin 2012).

## **LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

As an inevitable consequence of this study's situated, interpretive approach, the transferability of its findings to other consumer acculturation contexts is limited. However, insights from its empirical context may nevertheless be useful for better understanding social conflicts that emerge elsewhere in rural Europe, where indigenes and immigrants adjust their consumer habits and identities in the pursuit of a meaningful coexistence. Given this study's focus on a rural Austrian setting, further research is necessary for explaining how ethnic group relationships that form in more urban, culturally creolized, or non-Austrian settings shape indigenous responses to immigrant consumer acculturation. Moreover, given this study's focus on consumer conflict rather than on collaboration, further research is needed for



exploring which kinds of relational configuration foster more open, respectful, and integrative acculturation cultures.

This study's methodological set-up does not allow for making precise predictions of how best to address relational conflicts in contexts such as Telfs. However, the findings from this study provide three useful insights into the continual importance of local places, the role of gradual change, and the moral intricacies of evaluating immigrants in economic terms.

First, the article emphasizes that many consumers continue to value local places as their emotional anchors, identity resources, and "habitat of meaning" (Hannerz 1996, 22). Consumers that, like indigenes in Telfs, are firmly grounded in local culture and nature are not necessarily hardcore conservatives, obstinate racists, or out of touch with global dynamics. Instead, the consumers in my study are embedded in myriad transnational connections that provide them with Italian fashion, Asian smartphones, Russian tourists, virtual memes, and global capital (Friedman 1999). Unlike global nomads and other cosmopolites (Bardhi, Eckhardt, and Arnould 2012), however, these consumers firmly rely on the security and stability of their local home bases when tapping into dynamic global flows (Appadurai 1996; Cayla and Eckhardt 2008; Friedman 1999).

Second, Turkish consumption practices and relational changes per se do not appear to trouble indigenous consumers, but rather the absence of morally legitimized boundaries for change. The growth of the immigrant population, the immigrants' growing influence in markets and politics, the indigenous consumers' lack of solidarity, and a range of influential outside forces foster the indigenes' impression of living in a community that is unable to command the spirits that it has cited. Ethnic group conflicts in such settings can therefore not be mitigated solely through battling ethnic stereotypes and racist ideologies. Mitigation also requires new, democratic mechanisms that enable multicultural populations in places like Telfs to negotiate which elements of their (material) culture they wish to preserve, adjust, or

abandon to integrate foreign (consumer) cultures without fear of a total loss of the local identity and marketable character on which both indigenes and immigrants depend.

Third, the relational analysis highlights the moral intricacies that Western consumers and political leaders face when trying to attract certain types of immigrants while rejecting others. For example, in a global competition for talent, the Austrian National Office for Integration pulls all available strings to convince members of the "qualified foreign labor force" (Expertenrat für Integration 2013, 6) to immigrate to Austria and rejuvenate its aging population. At the same time, however, the Austrian authorities readily deny access to those immigrants who do not serve the "personal interest of the [Austrian] state" (Expertenrat für Integration 2013, 6). As with the micro-macro moral dilemma that indigenous consumers face in Telfs, national politicians are stuck between market morals that appear to demand selective integration, and humanistic morals that demand unbounded solidarity. As part of a current "revival of nationalism" (Rachman 2014), right-wing parties across Europe vie for votes by condemning immigrants (based on their place of birth, not their actual behavior) as welfare scroungers who burden the local economy. Yet their hostile rhetoric not only violates European humanistic ideals but also renders their countries uninteresting for those immigrants on which their future competitiveness seems to depend.

Although the Austrian society has made considerable progress in terms of immigrant consumer integration, many relational conflicts remain unresolved. Through the analysis of specific sources of ethnic group conflict, such as those revealed in this article, we may come to better understand what successful integration means and how we may attain it in our increasingly multicultural societies.

### **DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION**

The author collected and analyzed all data in and around Austria between fall of 2007 and fall of 2014.

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**TABLE 1**  
Profiles of Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Occupation	Cultural Background
<b>Indigenous Consumer Interviews</b>				
Maria	21	female	student	Telfs
Gerhard	55	male	independent consultant	Telfs
Johanna	65	female	retired restaurant owner	Telfs
Paul	27	male	retail entrepreneur	Telfs
Eva	68	female	retired school teacher	Telfs
Margarete	52	female	physical therapist	Telfs
Christa	46	female	stay at home mother	Telfs
Josef	45	male	psychical therapist	Telfs
Anna	50	female	dentist's receptionist	Telfs
Ewald	51	male	retail consultant	Telfs
Thomas	56	male	IT consultant	Telfs
Franz	44	male	administrative manager	Telfs
Elisabeth	22	female	business student	Telfs
Susanne	24	female	tourism administrator	Telfs
<b>Immigrant Consumer Interviews</b>				
Dursun	34	male	auditor	Turkey (2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen.)
Özkan	28	male	welder	Turkey (2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen.)
Ahmet	45	male	Turkish supermarket owner	Turkey (1 <sup>st</sup> Gen.)
Kemal	25	male	welder	Turkey (2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen.)



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#### **1) METHODS AND CONTEXT**

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