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Ideations of social sustainability? Concepts and cleavages of cohesion in Germany

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The UN 2030 Agenda calls for the development and promotion of societies that pursue not only ecological and economic, but also socio-political sustainability goals. Yet, the political as well as academic discourse on that is marginal. Conducting an empirical case study in Germany, this article examines existing political ideations about societal integration and thus cohesion and discusses ideational obstacles to the development of a socially sustainable society. First, the concept of ideations is made accessible for empirical analysis by distinguishing cognitive and affective elements with symbolic, sentimental, programmatical and ideological foundations. The focus is not on the implementation of specific policies, but on the negotiation processes of the ideational foundations of integration governance. The following critical discourse analysis elaborates central aspects of 'constitutional patriotism' and 'Leitkultur.' It traces their emergence and characteristics and thereby reveals how different historical contexts and political interests of the actors influence the emergence and dissemination of ideations. Furthermore, it demonstrates how formerly opposing positions converge, emphasizing the impact of ideational processes on changing governance trends. Subsequently, inherent elements of cultural racism and hegemony, religion and 'values,' and emotion politics are critically discussed as obstacles to developing decolonial ideations about integration. Accordingly, the widespread appreciation of patriotism and national pride as a foundation for successful integration is questioned. The conclusion diagnoses that republican elements are gaining influence with the tendency to individualize, paternalize, and depoliticize integration. Shared cognitive and emotional ideations are intended to ensure support for democracy, but the extent to which these policies themselves exhibit undemocratic tendencies must be critically observed. The two ideations examined are therefore not or only partially suitable for promoting social sustainability.

KEYWORDS

ideations, integration, social sustainability, social cohesion, patriotism and nationalism, emotion politics, discourse analysis

1. Intro: Social sustainability, integration, and ideations

The 2030 Agenda has been calling for the development of sustainable societies since 2015, not only at the ecological and economic but also at the socio-political level. While other UN developmental programs concentrated on the global South, the 2030 Agenda also requests Western states for self-critique and change. Yet, a pertinent political debate is missing. Furthermore, there is "a lack of theoretical and empirical studies regarding social sustainability" (Eizenberg and Jabareen, 2017, p. 1) as well as a wide variety of conceptual

frameworks (Åhman, 2013). It is therefore worthwhile to start by examining which ideations already exist and reviewing the extent to which they have sustainable potential. Guiding ideations about social sustainability named in the Agenda are "peaceful, just, inclusive societies" (UN, 2015). This paper will focus on the last aspect. Regarding inclusive societies, the task is to develop decolonial ideations about integration (DESA, 2009) which enable societal coalescence and the permeability of communities without outsiders on the internal or enemies on the external front (Wintersteiner, 2006, p. 98f.).

However, since the 1990, both, the political and the academic discussions mostly concentrate on social cleavages and disintegration (through diversity, migration, globalization, structural inequalities, etc., Heitmeyer, 1997). In recent years, the thesis that democratic states need a strong shared "social imaginary" (Taylor, 2004) to secure their regimes—especially in the face of global migration movements—has gained strong support. This imaginary is said to evoke a sense of community that overrides "leftist identity politics" (Dyk, 2019, p. 25) and furthermore, prevents radicalization and political violence (Norton and Upal, 2014). Toward this aim, there is an international trend to establish integration through top-down narratives ("metagovernance," Sørensen, 2006, p. 109f.) using policy transfers (Stone, 2012). Unfortunately, empirical studies diagnose that existing political work on social imaginaries in Western countries predominantly reactivates exclusionary national identities (Osler, 2008, 2011; Mouritsen et al., 2019).

One reason for the governance emphasis on the past may be the lack of innovative ideations. Therefore, I use a case study to examine which popular ideations about integration determine the political discourse in Germany, whether they meet the requests of sustainability, and if not, what the obstacles to achieving social sustainability are. I first elaborate the concept of ideations for empirical research. Second, I conduct a critical discourse analysis of the two most prominent top-down narratives that political actors use to frame societal integration: constitutional patriotism and (national) 'Leitkultur' (guiding culture). I trace the emergence, spread and intertwining of the discourses between the historical benchmarks of reunification in 1989/90, the amendment of the citizenship law in 2000, and the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 up to the COVID pandemic. Building on this, I critically discuss the ideational cleavages of cultural racism and hegemony, religion and values, and emotion politics as obstacles to sustainability, and question the ideational agreement on patriotism. I conclude with a summary of the ideational processes, their theoretical implications, and their suitability for promoting a socially sustainable society.

2. Analyzing ideations and discourses

2.1. Ideations as the object of research

Defining ideations as "the capacity for or the act of generation of ideas or images" (Kalev et al. in this issue), suggests an interdisciplinary approach between political sciences and sociology. Both are connected by an interpretative approach, reflected in more recent approaches of political culture research as well as political sociology. In contrast

FIGURE 1
Analytical dimensions of ideations.
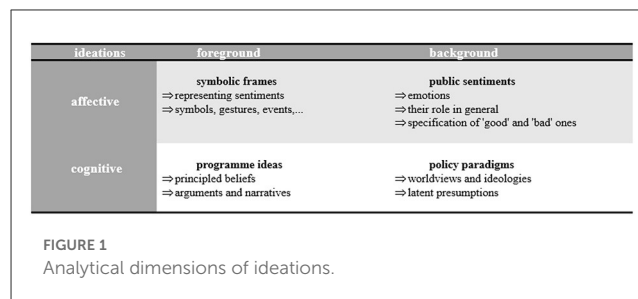
to rational choice or institutionalism approaches, the constructivist approach opens up a view of the diversity in socio-political reality. To this end, ideations are first specified as the object of analysis in order to subsequently derive a discourse-analytical procedure.

Ideations offer ideological frameworks for concrete practices, thus determine the perception and evaluation of problems as well as relevant solutions. Ideations contain visions of the future and utopias that guide political action. At the same time, ideations never exist in isolation, but are involved in various communicative exchange and political negotiation processes. When considering the role of ideations for governance changes, it is therefore not sufficient to draw on selective diagnoses and monocausal explanations in the sense of a cause-and-effect logic. Rather, governance decisions are part of longer-term social discourses and influence them in turn, thus creating a communicative continuum (cf., the "feedback loop" already in Easton, 1965, p. 28). The emergence or revival as well as the distribution of ideas are therefore closely tied to political interests and actors who are in permanent confrontation with competing actors and ideals.

For a better understanding of these dynamics and mechanisms, it is therefore worth looking not only at the results or 'successful' ideations, but taking a step back and analyzing the processes that precede or succeed the (intermediate) results. Especially in the field of integration, not only the 'internal' political process and policy implementation are relevant, but also the interplay between political actors and society. Since public communication includes images, symbols, and events, it is important not to limit the analysis to purely cognitive elements, but to add affective ones. Hence, unconscious elements of ideations have to be included to address their broader epistemological contexts. Following Howlett (2019) levels for justification of politics, the following dimensions can be distinguished for the analysis of ideations (Figure 1).

The distinction between the different components of ideations allows empirical analysis of them. This is indicated by the fact that, unlike political theories, ideations can only be captured to the extent that they emerge as a reality by human action. In this respect, ideations overlap with the category of knowledge, whose role in policy processes has been studied sociologically for some time already (Nullmeier, 1993). Basis for this is a constructivist perspective that focuses on everyday political life, in which political actors create "worlds of meaning" (Zifonun, 2016, p. 285f.). Following Berger and Luckmann (1966/2013), politics, and thus political ideations, fulfill three functions:

1) Legitimization of both the institutional order and individual participation in it: the idea of the polity itself.
2) Externalization: representation of the idea by persons of political life, including its modification as well as innovation with the aim of problem solving.
3) Internalization: confirmation of the idea with the consequence of stability and permanence of the community.

Since the focus is on the ideational processes and creation of a top-down imaginary, the following study concentrates on (2) externalization. However, this model assumes a society in which all members are equally involved in the same communication processes (cf., the corresponding concepts of a unifying culture in e.g., Durkheim, 1897; Parsons, 1971). Characteristics of postmodern societies, though, are the diversity of their members as well as their transgressions of boundaries in spatial, medial and social terms. In this respect, "societally separated sub-sense worlds" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966/2013, p. 90) or "societies within society" (Schütz and Luckmann, 1979–84/2017, p. 427) emerge. This is certainly not new, as postcolonial, feminist, and Marxist works, for example, have always emphasized. However, globalization and migration, among other factors, as well as the dissolution of mass social groups, are leading to an increasing "everydayization of politics" (Hitzler, 2002, p. 27; all translations by KM). Thereby, not only new forms of political action emerge that mostly unfold outside established political institutions, but also distributional struggles about world interpretations and collective identities (Hitzler, 2002, p. 33).

The task of politics is subsequently to provide a comprehensive offer of integration, i.e., to create a symbolic world of meaning for the whole society and all sub-sectors, at least with regard to the nation-state (Zifonun, 2016, p. 293). This aspiration encompasses codified policies as well as expectations of action and feeling and, furthermore, a negotiation about the nature and intensity of political community itself (what is predetermined, where is difference permissible?). Ideations are therefore the central element of political debates. However, they usually do not emerge as entirely new creations, but must build on previous ones and need to be connectable to them. Hence, it is important to also consider the context-bound nature of ideations, i.e., specific knowledge stocks and ideational traditions that may or may not be drawn upon (for this aspect, work on cultural memory is also relevant, e.g., Assmann, 1992, 1999/2009).

2.2. Critical discourse analysis

When and where do which ideations arise, who generates them, and how do they spread? The methodology of the following study should be able to answer these questions. To analyze and compare the different ideations about integration and cohesion in political communication and to include their above-described processuality and historical perspective, discourse analysis is a particularly suitable method. Since normative statements regarding the compatibility of the ideations with the requirements of the 2030 Agenda are to be made as well, a critical approach is appropriate. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is chosen as the basis

for the methodological approach, as it focuses on the relationship between language, knowledge and reality. Normatively, CDA is "fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak, 2001b, p. 2).

There is a wide variety of different approaches available:

> "Since this dialectical relationship between discourse and social reality is quite evidently complex, different researchers in CDS focus on different aspects of this relationship, working at different locations on the continuum that links the "micro" (the linguistic) with the "macro" (the social)" (Hart and Cap, 2014, p. 1).

Hence, one characteristic is the need to adapt the specific methodology to the object and research interest of the study. What they have in common, however, is that "three concepts figure indispensably in all CDA: the concept of power, the concept of history, and the concept of ideology" (Wodak, 2001a, p. 10). Nonhoff (2019, p. 17–19) emphasizes the interventionist character of CDA, its widespread focus on elite actors and aim of enlightenment and emancipation. CDA draws on three types of criticism (Wodak, 2001a, p. 65):

- Text- or discourse-immanent critique: contradictions, paradoxes, dilemmas;
- Social-diagnostic critique: uncovering the power effects of discourses and placing them in social and political relations;
- Prognostic critique: contribution to the transformation and improvement of social relations and communication.

As mentioned above, the focus is on the political macro-level, i.e., actors in politics and media, since they are the "expert legitimators" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966/2013, p. 102) charged with the production and application of the (legitimating) special knowledge. Considering the importance of public communication in this field, newspaper articles are analyzed, supplemented by party programs, public events and campaigns, and comments of the Federal President. For generating the article corpus, I used Nexis database which contains all but two German newspapers. Here, the first step was a keyword analysis with "Verfassungspatriotismus" and 'Leitkultur.' Then, I limited the results to newspaper articles from Germany 1991–2022 and selected periods in which the respective ideation was discussed particularly often for the following qualitative analysis. The results are mapped exemplarily and serve as a "reflected reconstruction" (Diaz-Bone, 2006). The references preferably include titles with overarching perspectives, theoretically particularly trenchant elements, or politically particularly impactful moments. Based on this, I critically discussed ideational cleavages and selected obstacles to social sustainability.

With this approach, it is possible to trace the ideational process of a top-down narrative by examining the parliamentary side of political communication. What is not captured is how the population reacts to the integration concepts, so only one side of the "feedback loop" is covered. The critical perspective leads to less emphasis on positive aspects, which, however, corresponds to the focus on obstacles to social sustainability.

3. Ideations of integration and cohesion in Germany

Brubaker (1992) diagnosed an ethnic understanding of community as predominant in Germany. This concept, which sets the community as presupposed, justified the unification of East and West Germany and the admission of 'Russian Germans' in the early 1990s. In 2000, however, the legal concept changed: now German citizenship could be acquired without a respective 'blood relationship.' The former dichotomy of Germans and foreigners dissolved and questions of integration became more prominent. Not only was the convergence of East and West Germany more problematic than expected and the European integration narrowed the national autonomy, now also the integration of Non-Europeans needed to be handled. Therefore, a space for negotiating integration expectations emerged, particularly stimulated by the fear of the dissolution of the community due to multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural affiliations (Mecheril, 2003). In this context, two competing ideations about integration became prominent: 'Leitkultur' and constitutional patriotism.

3.1. Ideations of shaping integration: 'Leitkultur'

3.1.1. The emergence of 'Leitkultur'

The discourse around 'Leitkultur' originated in 1996 with an essay by the political scientist Bassam Tibi, who diagnosed a crisis of values in Western societies. According to him, Western culture and its claim to universality had been replaced by the "value arbitrariness" of "multi-culti," and a "guiding culture" was rejected (Tibi, 1996a). In an interview, he explained his thesis to a wider audience: "One of the most important prerequisites for inner peace is a consensus of values," which he specified as "secular democracy, human rights, primate of reason, separation of religion and politics" (Tibi, 1996b). The chronologically subsequent article, however, already associates 'Leitkultur' no longer with democracy and political principles, but, instead, with Christianity as the basis of social integration.

The term was then initially used for the legitimization of religious education in schools. Since reunification, religious education has been pressured to be justified, especially in the atheistic Eastern German states. In 1996, the federal state of Brandenburg finally replaced religious education with the school subject "life organization, ethics, religious studies." In response, the German Catholic Bishops' Conference published a brochure which, by referring to the almost 2000-year-old "Christian roots of the occident," demanded that Christianity remains "the authoritative 'Leitkultur' even in a pluralistic society" (Dieckmann, 1997). In the following year, the term was taken up by Berlin's Interior Senator Schönbohm (CDU) and reinterpreted as the preservation of traditions of the dominant population. He associated the term with integration into "German culture," which was also, but not only, shaped by constitutional values. In an interview with the far-right newspaper Junge Freiheit, he called for "a German 'Leitkultur' in a self-confident capital,

the base of a self-confident nation" (Rada, 2000). He argued that this German culture was threatened by multiculturalism and parallel societies and needed to be protected (Schönbohm, 1998). The debate was fueled by the request of a Muslim teacher trainee who wanted to wear a headscarf in school—which was judged to be incompatible with the "spirit of tolerance and concern for the state's duty of neutrality" (Deppendorf, 1998).

3.1.2. 'Leitkultur' as the new integration paradigm

The term became known nationwide in 2000, when opposition leader Friedrich Merz (CDU) used it to demand that "migrants should adapt to the evolved, liberal German 'Leitkultur'" (Merz, 2000). The Red-Green government wanted to recognize and transform Germany into a modern immigration country, among other things by introducing a 'green card' and amending the citizenship law. This was opposed by the CDU (e.g., with the campaign "children instead of Indians"), but was enacted in 2000. For the first time in (West) Germany, the place-of-birth principle *ius soli* joined the descent logic of *ius sanguinis*. It also created the possibility of acquiring German citizenship without proving a blood connection. For the public, this led to the relatively new situation that phenotypically non-'German-looking' people could be legitimate Germans, including the perspective to stay, equal rights and political participation. This eroded the binary division of the population, at least legally, but the assessment that "a liberalized naturalization regime alone [will] do little for the civic integration of immigrants" (Brubaker, 1992, p. 239), was to prove true. The CDU used integration as an election issue, proclaimed that Germany was not a country of immigration, and propagated the idea of a 'Leitkultur.'

'Leitkultur' was opposed to the supposed threat of multiculturalism and promised to protect existing structures. Incompatible to 'Leitkultur' were considered Islamic schools outside German school supervision, female genital mutilation, forced marriages, and sending young people to their parents' home countries (Merz, 2000, in this order). Many party colleagues supported Merz in the key message that German traditions should take precedence over others. Laurenz Meyer (CDU) emphasized national identity concepts: "It's about our country. France has the French guiding culture, Italy the Italian one—why shouldn't we have the German one in our homeland? [...] I am proud to be a German" (Zuwanderungspolitik, 2000). This ignited a months-long debate revolving around identity and national pride, constitutional values, and religion. Jürgen Trittin (Greens) accused Meyer of having "the mentality of a skinhead," the German president was accused of a lack of patriotism and a variety of self-revelations were provoked. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said: "I am proud of people's achievements and of democratic culture. And in this sense, I am a German patriot who is proud of his country"; PDS leader Gabi Zimmer confessed: "I love Germany" (Hops, 2001).

In 2005, Parliamentary President Norbert Lammert reactivated the term. Facing drastic cuts in the social system (Hartz IV reforms), he stated a lack of "acceptance for changes," e.g., with

regard to "education, taxes, social security systems, also for the organization of labor markets" and pleaded for a revival of the debate, because: "without 'Leitkultur' in the sense of such generally accepted orientations and convictions [...], the solutions for our complex problems cannot be made consensual" (Hildebrandt and Schmidt, 2005). The CDU junior politician Philipp Mißfelder also emphasizes the function of 'Leitkultur' in generating consent when he states: "people were afraid" and claims as a cause "we did not emotionalize enough" to "cast reforms in a positive light" (Birnbaum and Eubel, 2005). At the same time, the definition of what is meant by 'Leitkultur' remained controversial. An anthology edited by Lammert brought together essays by various selected "personalities" and was intended to foster an "overdue" "open debate," a "constructive dispute" about the common ground that would do justice to the "vital need [...] for identification" expressed also and especially in the soccer World Cup (Lammert, 2006). Since the anthology was opened up to civil society and artist perspectives, for the first time, women and people with migration backgrounds took part in the discourse. The impetus for critical debate, however, remained without effect. In 2006, an "attitude test" for Muslim applicants was introduced in Baden-Württemberg, since 2008 there has been a standardized national naturalization test (Schrey, 2008).

The CDU and CSU adopted the concept of 'Leitkultur' in their basic programs in 2007. The CDU defines it as "history and historical responsibility, federal and confessional traditions, and the status of the church" (CDU, 2007); the CSU as "language, history, traditions, and Christian-occidental values" (Ohlert, 2015, p. 254). The CSU's 2016 basic program no longer includes "German" but "our" 'Leitkultur' and not just once but nine times (CSU, 2016). The AFD (Alternative for Germany), founded in 2013, and Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident), formed in 2014, adopted the CDU theses of the 1990s that multiculturalism is a threat, that German identity must be defended, and moreover that a positive image of history is needed (AFD, 2016, p. 47f.).

3.1.3. Explaining 'Leitkultur' to refugees

The 'refugee crisis' in 2015 led to another revival of the debate, what demands can be made and what is actually meant by 'Leitkultur.' Several high-ranking politicians published lists of their ideations of being German (Merz, 2000; Lammert, 2006; Maizière, 2017; Merkel, 2017). These usually include references to the constitution and add folkloric and historical items along more or less subtle anti-Muslim elements. Angela Merkel popularly published an "ABC of Germany" in the Bild newspaper and called for societal discussion, which was partially taken up (Höppner, 2017). More impactful, however, was the enumeration by Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière. This included several rules of conduct, including shaking hands and showing one's face ("We are not burqas") and self-attribution: "We are enlightened patriots. An enlightened patriot loves his country and does not hate others [...] Our national flag and national anthem are a natural part of our patriotism." He, too, emphasizes that these are "not prescribed rules," but rather a basis for discussion, which nonetheless aims to be binding in the end: "It can and

should be communicated" and provide "strength," "security," and "tolerance" (Maizière, 2017).

Due to this national debate and the 2018 state election campaign in Bavaria, publications on the topic of 'Leitkultur' reached an all-time high, which, however, already dropped in 2019. In 2020, the CDU junior politician Philipp Amthor reactivated the idea and concept of 'Leitkultur': for purposes of integration, it was necessary to define "our 'house rules'" in order to prevent "parallel societies, criminal family clans and dark side streets" (dpa, 2020). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the debate about 'Leitkultur' has declined sharply and has recently been increasingly used for provocative counter-models from art and civil society (e.g., the "Days of Jewish-Muslim 'Leitkultur,'" Czollek and von Billerbeck, 2020).

3.1.4. 'Leitkultur's' little sister: "Heimat"

The concept of 'Leitkultur' is increasingly supplemented by reference to "Heimat" [homeland/home]: "'Leitkultur' provides a basis for integration, 'Heimat' creates identity" (CSU, 2016, p. 37). The supposedly harmless term is less provocative, but contains many 'Leitkultur' ideas. The CSU and the Saxon CDU adopted a "guiding and framework culture" with the "sources of strength: 'Heimat' and patriotism" (CDU Sachsen, 2016). Already in 2014, a Ministry of "Heimat" was established in Bavaria, and in 2018 Bavarian president Markus Söder (CSU) planned to oblige Bavarian authorities to display crosses as a symbol of 'Leitkultur' and "Heimat" (Gütle, 2018). In the same year, the Federal Ministry of the Interior was expanded to include "Heimat"—earning ridicule and criticism for the fact that the "leadership team" consisted exclusively of "old white men" (Yaghoobifarah, 2018). Furthermore, the term was taken up in civil society ranging from searching ("Haymat") to rejectionist works ("Your 'Heimat' is our nightmare").

While 'Leitkultur' is mocked for having "the charm of an administrative authority" (Krause, 2000), "Heimat" contains a promise of naturality and authenticity. While this would offer opportunities to address the complexity of social, territorial, and emotional affiliations, neither the aspect of plurality nor of the active mandate to belong is associated with the term in the political debate. Instead, "Heimat" one-sidedly implies the country of origin (Kailitz et al., 2021) and thereby reinforces the logic of descent. Hence, the ideation of "Heimat" is either (1) culturally, depoliticized and nostalgic (German forest, smell of favorite childhood food, etc.), (2) academically, a differentiated concept of socialization experiences and affiliations, even in multicultural contexts (Patzelt, 2018) or (3) politically, a strongly national-defensive against modernization and migration (AFD Thüringen, 2018).

3.2. From provisory to decolonial ideations: Constitutional patriotism

Although this paper focuses on political debates since 1991, it is necessary to include background information about the ideation because many actors referred to it. Thereby, they treat it as

set knowledge and don't explain its historical components and integrational aspirations.

3.2.1. Background I: Emergence of constitutional patriotism in (Western) Germany

Attempts to establish constitutional patriotism can be traced back to the 1970s within the following background: the nation was divided into two states, the reference to the past was "spoilt" due to national socialism, the common notion of cohesion and community building was still connected to ethnic or probably racial categories but tabooed, there was economic progress and hedonistic lifestyles but a "collective political vacuum of meaning" (Depenheuer, 1995, p. 98). So, the question of political community and its foundation was open, as the former idea of a nation was neither possible nor appropriate.

To fill this vacuum of meaning and identity the concept of constitutional patriotism was popularized by Dolf Sternberger in a newspaper article (Sternberger, 1979/1993). His redefinition of the terms "fatherland" and "patriot" allowed Germans to use them without exposing themselves to the suspicion of national socialism. The conventional understanding of patriotism as "love of the fatherland" ideally encompasses a congruence of territory, state and nation. For the FRG, there were several problems in this regard: the pre-existing burden of blood-and-soil ideology, the "lost" territories, and the division of Germany. Therefore, building patriotism with territorial reference in one direction or another would have been politically suspect. The solution was to find the fatherland not in the nation but in the constitution: "The national feeling remains wounded, we do not live in the whole of Germany. But we live in a whole constitution, in a whole constitutional state, and that itself is a kind of fatherland" (Sternberger, 1979/1993, p. 3). Without abandoning the idea of the nation, the constitutional state and democratic values were moved to the center of what unites and binds. The constitution must necessarily be a democratic one, as Sternberger makes clear when he says "there can be no freedom without a state. And no human rights outside the state" (Sternberger, 1979/1993, p. 3). However, he did not propagate the idea of a "civil society," a self-governing community, but emphasizes the representation system and the separation of powers within state institutions as well as between society and state (Sternberger, 1979/1993, p. 3f.).

The reactions to Sternberger's writing were predominantly positive; there was broad recognition that this consensus was sustainable across parties and generations (Schölderle, 2008, p. 1, 3). Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker took up the term and praised: "with the constitution as a task, however, patriotism has once again been given an object to which it may be oriented." At the same time, he emphasized: "Neither insight nor feelings are prescribed, and certainly not patriotism. That would be completely against the spirit of the constitution" (Weizsäcker, 1987).

3.2.2. Background II: De-nationalization of constitutional patriotism

Only a few years later, the question of a German identity and its 'normalization' was reignited by the "historians' controversy." Particularly the handling of the Second World War, the guilt

for the terror of it and the emergence of a "new German ideology" (Eschenhagen, 1988) were the subject of polarized disputes. In this context, Jürgen Habermas developed the concept of constitutional patriotism further. For him, it was essential that patriotism definitively had to overcome national (more precisely: nationalist, Müller, 2010, p. 44) logics and ethnic notions of community: "The only patriotism that does not alienate us from the West is constitutional patriotism" (Habermas, 1987, p. 123). "The West" means the Western democracies, but also the concept of liberal democracy itself. Habermas emphasizes that 'democracy' can be thought independently from 'nation'; although there was a parallel historical development, the connection was not essential, consequently not necessary (Habermas, 1992, p. 636). Therefore, an appropriate collective identity would not result from essentialist categories, but from the universalism of reason and would have to emphasize the rational, not the emotional, the ethical, not the ethnic. Overcoming these irrational elements is a necessary developmental task for human history (Habermas, 1985, p. 33ff, 344ff.).

In contrast to Sternberger, for whom constitutional patriotism was linked to gratitude for the historical development toward democracy, Habermas conceptualized it as decidedly future-oriented. Again, the constitution is a symbol of the break with pre-1945 history, which for him, however, is not completed, but rather a reminder of the constant further development of democracy. He emphasizes that the foundation of the state is not 'the people' as a collective but "the humans" as individuals, who are connected to each other through processes of participation and communication; a notion that is linked to his concept of deliberative democracy and his theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1981, 1992) and differs from Sternberger's state-oriented concept of order. Habermas thus emphasizes controversy-oriented democratic values and processes, not historical-national entities. At the same time, he too acknowledges that a particular identity is a necessary prerequisite: "For this rooting of universal principles, a particular identity is always needed" (Habermas, 1987, p. 152).

3.2.3. Constitutional patriotism after reunification

For reunified Germany, constitutional patriotism was not immediately accessible. Here, national ideations dominated the discourse ("We are one people"). Moreover, there were controversies about the constitution itself. While it originally provided that a new constitution would be negotiated by the entire population in the event of reunification, the Eastern parts legally just became part of West Germany. This disappointed especially East German civil rights activists with regard to the lacking democratic procedure as well as substantive, especially social and feminist, demands (Steinberg, 1994). When reference was made to constitutional patriotism in the 1990s, it was to diagnose its end or to point out that political practice made constitutional patriotism impossible (Krippendorff, 1994).
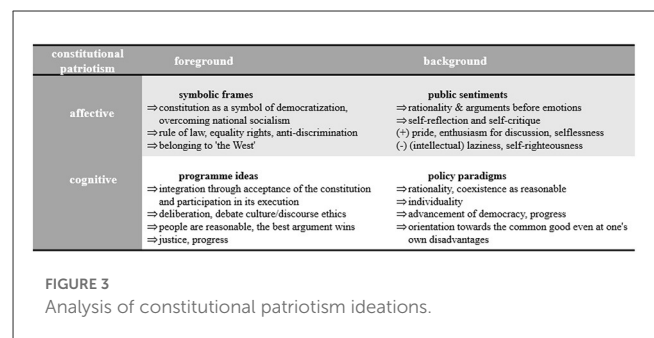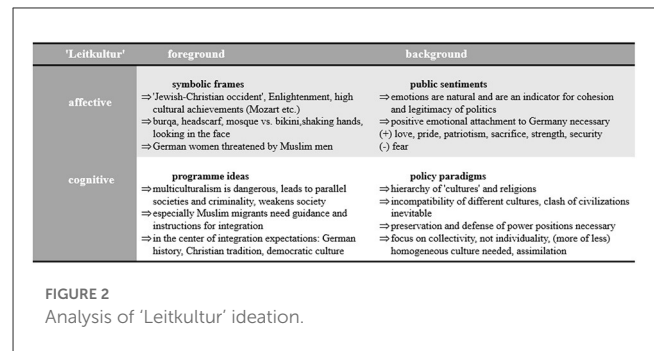
3.2.4. Constitutional patriotism since 2000: "Leitbild" and emotionalization

Since 2000 the ideation is referred to much more often, but closely tied to 'Leitkultur'—either to legitimize demands for it

("constitutional patriotism is not enough," Glück, 2000) or as a counter-speech. Social-democratic, green or left party members criticize that the demands for 'Leitkultur' go much too far and anyway, no-one could define what this culture should actually encompass beside democratic rights and structures. The President of the Central Council of Jews asks: "Is it German Leitkultur to hunt down strangers, burn synagogues, kill the homeless? Is it a question of culture or of the values of Western democratic civilization, which we have firmly anchored in our constitution?" (Spiegel, 2000). Furthermore, it is emphasized that 'autochthonous' Germans are not homogeneous either and that it is sufficient for integration to obey the laws (Tuchel, 2000).

However, it is not uncommon to support the idea to propagate the constitutional values more widely. In 2015, the Migration Council called on the Bundestag to jointly develop a "Leitbild" (guiding principles). As 81% of people with a migration background also agree to the statement "I love Germany," one aim was to "redefine the term 'We Germans'" (dpa, 2015). Since the parliament didn't take up the request, the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation started a corresponding initiative. In 2017, this commission presented the "Leitbild for the Immigration Society" (FES—Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017), which "takes everyone on board, the autochthonous as well as the new Germans" (Dernbach, 2017). It refers primarily to the constitution, the strengthening of democracy through diversity, and the changeability of identities. Instead of "pouring oil on the fire [to] warm oneself on it," it promotes a "social contract with the values of the constitution as its foundation and equal opportunities for participation as its goal" (Özoguz, 2017). Yet, in public the proposal was hardly received and did not trigger new debates.

The idea of constitutional patriotism is either a minimum or maximum demand in every integration debate, but conceptually not further developed. To get insight into how it is actually practiced, the discourse analysis is extended at this point to include festivities, since this is another important form of public-political communication. 2019 was the 70th anniversary of the constitution and 19 major and longer-term campaigns have been initiated. The actors for these are mainly federal ministries (BMI—Bundesministerium für Inneres, 2019; BMJ—Bundesministerium für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz, 2019) and public broadcasting (e.g., ARD, 2019; WDR, 2019; ZDF, 2019), as well as campaigns by civil society, albeit publicly funded (Deutschlandstiftung Integration, 2019; Gesicht Zeigen e.V., 2019). The thematic focus of most campaigns was on the genesis of the constitution as well as fundamental rights; institutional-structural constitutional arrangements or constitutional conflicts were left out. The historical facts were presented as vibrantly as possible through video clips for social media, comic illustrations and a movie. Organic semantics are used widely, e.g., "the *birth* of fundamental rights," "*mothers and fathers* of the constitution." The basic rights are often cited literally, linked back to daily life scenes, personalized through interactive formats and hashtag actions, and original sound bites from citizens. The normative orientation is predominantly affirmative, the constitution is presented as a success story and Germany as a modern, cosmopolitan, free country, especially in the ministerial campaigns. Critical voices can be found mainly in newspapers and on the radio, but the general tendencies are "love declarations to the constitution" (bpb, 2019).

FIGURE 2
Analysis of 'Leitkultur' ideation.

FIGURE 3
Analysis of constitutional patriotism ideations.

3.3. Ideational concepts and cleavages

It has become clear, that ideations about integration are controversial in Germany and that their emergence or revival as well as the distribution is closely tied to political interests and actors. The above is now brought together and summarized using the ideations scheme. Figures 2, 3 aim at organizing the various elements into the four analytical dimensions of ideations.

The comparison highlights that there are clear differences between the ideations. Obviously, 'Leitkultur' refers to the idea of a cultural nation, with religious traditions playing a major role in self-image and distinction from others. In contrast to this particularistic approach, constitutional patriotism considers itself universalistic by emphasizing democratic rights and processes. Therefore, several dichotomies occur between individual-collective, rational-emotional, liberty-unity, evolution-continuity, future-past. Furthermore, overcoming the national-socialist time was a turning point for constitutional patriotism, while 'Leitkultur' sees it as a negative episode in an otherwise positive history. Finally, religion is a private respective collective source of morality. Summarizing, constitutional patriotism and 'Leitkultur' pursue different concepts of integration and societal goals in the ideational foreground dimensions (Figure 4).

While this chart concentrates on the ideational foreground, the following considerations focus on their background. Here, the ideations interact with and react to each other more intensely. At the same time, the assumption is likely that there are deeper obstacles for promoting social sustainability. These obstacles can be summarized under the keywords culture, religion, and politics of emotion.

Programmatic and symbolic differences	Constitutional patriotism	'Leitkultur'
Identity by	Democracy and deliberation	Traditions and customs
Interpretive instance	Individuals	'Majority' / dominant group
Basic values	Liberty, self-development	Unity, nation, emotionality
Determining the discourse	Reason	Nation
Unifying instance	Rationality	Emotionality
Desired result of conflicts	Evolution	Continuity
Target groups	Everyone (democratisation)	Newcomers (assimilation)
Temporal perspective	Future-oriented (learning from the past to improve democratic awareness and structures)	Past-oriented (preservation and protection of cultural traditions)
Opponents	"Bourgois, dropouts, Nazis, fundamentalists of any provenance who believe in [absolute] truths" (Depenheuer 1995, 108).	Islamic 'fundamentalists', multiculturalists, atheists, individualists, reformists
Role of national socialism	Central point of reference (rupture necessary for democratic new beginning, learning from history)	One of several reference points (negative episode in an (also) positive national history)
Role of religion	Private source of moral awareness and solidarity (religion-unspecific)	Collective source of values (Christianity)

FIGURE 4
Programmatic and symbolic cleavages.

3.3.1. Cultural racism and hegemony

While culture was initially used as an academic term by Bassam Tibi (political culture), the political rhetoric ethnicized it (German culture). In this sense, culture is mainly used to demarcate it from other—especially Muslim—cultures, whereby a hierarchization is widespread: "Our 'German' culture includes [...] standards that cannot be *undercut* anymore" (Gauger, 2006, p. 33). Constitutive for the argument is a dichotomy between Christian-enlightened-democratic and Muslim-backward-undemocratic ("pre-modern and archaic values," AFD Thüringen, 2018).

Using the concept of culture in this way, conceals 'naturally' understood entities. Since 'race' and 'ethnicity' revealed their biologistic basis, the concept of 'culture' has been used as a rhetorical alternative. That this does not imply a change in content has already been shown by Hall (1989) and Balibar and Wallerstein (1990), who refer to the discursive replacement of "genetic deficit" by "cultural deficit." When community building takes place not on the political but on the cultural level, there is a danger of artificial and instrumental homogenization and stereotyping of the own and other groups. The capacity for self-criticism decreases, as becomes clear, for example, when Christianity is interpreted as genuinely enlightened and aiming at gender equality.

In addition, memberships are narrowed down to an either-or. A striking example are soccer matches where the German team is not cheered on. The understanding of "closed cultures" does not allow space in which non-uniformity or non-linearity is tolerated. Binaries are postulated that negate hybrid or multiple affiliations as well as "common or interdependent developments" (Attia, 2009, p. 151). The integration approach *via* culture is empirically as exclusionary as *via* ancestry (Reijerse et al., 2013) and thereby degenerates into a hegemonic project.

Framing societal problems is also likely to conceal and possibly solidify socio-economic inequality (Dyk, 2019, p. 7ff.). Furthermore, efforts at banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) are

particularly ineffective for integration if they are associated with competing narratives or the narrative is exclusionary (Bekerman and Zembylas, 2012). Crucifixes in public buildings or the historically loaded national anthem are well-known examples of this. Similarly, the construction of a new royal palace in the center of Berlin may be a different symbol for East Germans who have just fought for democracy than for those seeking a prolonged positive historical narrative. Interventions on the symbolic level therefore require critical and scrutiny from multiple perspectives to avoid having the opposite effect. When Gauger marks patriotism as capable and nationalism as incapable of criticism, but at the same time calls any criticism of established symbols "without style" (Gauger, 2006, p. 25), he fails to recognize their disintegrating effect and demonstrates that patriotic critical capacity has its limits.

However, most political actors in both ideations are strikingly homogeneous in terms of age, gender, skin color, religion, and origin. Moreover, both strands of discourse are conducted from a continuity-oriented West German perspective. Migration is not included as a part of the narrative, and the inclusion of the East German states and population is limited to their function of creating national 'unity.' Thus, entire groups and generations are denied the right to contribute to Germany's identity and to demand representation—they are conceived as recipients or bystanders of a discourse, not as shapers. Other groups are appropriated for the needs of the dominant society. While initially the 'Christian Occident' was referred to, later on it was replaced by 'Christian-Jewish traditions.' This was intended to ward off the accusation of marginalizing and excluding Jews (again), but without really including Jewish actors. This doesn't improve integration, but leads to resistance, especially from civil society, the arts, and disciplines other than political science. An increasing number of books address the hidden racism of integration ideations and the inherent epistemic violence. Writer Max Czollek denounces correctly that the Jewish population is instrumentalized in an

"integration theater" to convey the purification of the German society while at the same time distinguish it from Islam (Czollek, 2018).

3.3.2. Religion and values

Religious diversity is anyway one of the permanently underlying conflict lines. 'Leitkultur' emphasizes "Christian values" and creates the narrative that the "principles of our liberal democracy, human dignity and freedom, can only be justified by recourse to the Christian image of humanity" (Gauger, 2006, p. 34). Here, topoi of threat and primacy are common, for example, when Edmund Stoiber (CSU) says: "With all tolerance—cathedrals must be bigger than mosques" (Stoiber, 2000). While religiosity and secularity historically function as opposites, here they are combined to create an identity against a (Muslim) other. Lammert even attributes secular citizens to Christianity: "A reactivation of Christian beliefs is indispensable as a prerequisite for a secular experience of the world" (Kummer, 2007).

The topoi of Christianity as a prerequisite for democracy and secularity culminate in the statement that Christianity is a condition and prerequisite for modern statehood. Just like the connection between democracy and nation, a specific historical development is thus universalized in order to present "one's 'own' way of life, culture, and religion as the best possible" (Attia, 2009, p. 149). The German dominant culture is thus homogenized and serves to justify unequal standards, especially in religious matters. On the one hand, the 'headscarf debate' called for the religious neutrality of the state, while on the other hand, Christian religious education in state schools and crucifixes in Bavarian offices were defended. Representatives of the 'Leitkultur'—ideation create a 'Christian-Jewish culture' that historically never existed without tension or worse. The discourse analysis has shown how this part of the ideation was especially promoted by the catholic church before being taken up by the CDU in political discourse, possibly with Christian interests, subsequently adopted by the AFD as a pure delimiter.

Constitutional patriotism is not bound to religion but calls for tying individual demands back to democratic values. Whereas this seems to be appropriate also for socially sustainable societies, other problems may arise, if these values are claimed as fully realized in the constitution. The study of the anniversary year revealed that the numerous amendments to the Constitution are not included in the political communication. Yet, if the democratic project is perceived as completed, political discourse is limited to legal logics. Perhaps the Federal Constitutional Court is popular among the population because it embodies a moment of unambiguity in an ambiguous reality by distinguishing between 'right' and 'wrong' through final judgments. However, there is a danger of interpreting constitutional patriotism as a "civil religion" (Müller, 2010, p. 91ff.) that ignores its core communicative elements of deliberation. It is precisely this progressive element that has been pushed back in the debates of recent years in favor of a conserving, stabilizing, less conflictual interpretation; the constitution is presented as a "holy book" (Vorländer, 2009). For democracy, however, concrete processes of negotiation are essential, since the integration into the democratic community lies precisely

in controversial negotiations ("agonistic communitarization," Tranow, 2016). Moreover, 'sacralized constitutional patriotism' can lead to further demarcations: when the constitution is used for the self-narrative that 'we' have a democratic constitution and fundamental rights, firstly, a sweeping 'other' is constructed. Secondly, the successful and completed implementation of principles and rights is postulated which makes any criticism is considered unjustified. If the constitution does not symbolize a constant political task, constitutional patriotism is in danger of falling into self-righteousness through dehistoricization.

3.3.3. Emotion politics

'Leitkultur' emphasizes the need for affective integration, and the enactments of constitutional patriotism attempt to address this as well. In doing so, they follow the argumentation of Rorty (1998) and others, who claim that emotional bonds, specifically pride, are a prerequisite for political action. It remains open which comes first, pride or integration. However, even if the connection between emotion and motivation may be true for individual psychology, several concerns arise when demanding emotions at the collective level.

Whether it is ethically legitimate to want to evoke feelings with instrumental intentions is not problematized, although the request reminds more on dictatorial-manipulative than of democratic societies. Additionally, it is contradictory when the desire for a 'warm' and 'genuine' bond, shall be generated with a cold-instrumental logic of governmental impact.

There is no discussion about *which* feelings are appropriate. Why specifically the male-militaristic conception of community through pride and sacrifice is supposed to motivate democratic action is left open. The idea that victimhood is something purely positive and directed toward the common good is a fragmentary self-narrative in light of the success of various other ideologies. That pride in particular can lead to passivity is not mentioned. If the goal is activation, why is anger condemned and indignation (Hessel) or hope (Bloch) not even considered?

The *why* of emotional-political interventions is questionable in terms of democratic theory, since they are intended to generate approval for the "impositions of necessary reforms" (Gauger, 2006, p. 18). Thereby, 'positive emotions' don't counteract the neoliberal development of society, as is sometimes postulated, but they mask it by the propagation of a 'feel-good society.' Instead of naming and treating structural inequalities, individuals are made responsible, especially those trapped in exploitative structures or exposed to assimilation demands (Osler, 2008).

How emotion politics is conceived follows an illusion of controllability. Gauger (2006, p. 18f.) configures a scenario in which poor, unemployed and unqualified people are threatened with falling into "resignation, pessimism, fear of the future, extremism." This should be countered with "love of the fatherland and national pride" in order to generate "self-confidence, willingness to make sacrifices and commitment." However, the necessity of this correlation seems doubtful; empirically, it is more likely that they develop competition-induced xenophobia and demand recognition due to national belonging (Endrikat et al., 2002; Zick and Küpper, 2012). Assumptions that emotions could be

steered in a desired direction to a desired extent unreflectively follow capitalist-instrumental control logics ("emotion by design," Neckel, 2005). In particular, the widespread demand for a 'good patriotism' (distinct from 'bad nationalism') therefore requires further consideration.

3.4. Ideational agreement: Patriotism

Both ideations strive for a direct connection between the individual and the society as a whole, which overlays other group identities and is preceding them. Thus, a shift away from multicultural approaches can be observed, in which system integration takes place through the intermediary instances of group-related identities and no official culture or one ethnic group dominates over others (Kobayashi, 2011, p. 147). Group identities and emancipatory "identity politics" are increasingly judged to be dividing society (Dyk, 2019), which is to be contrasted with a 'unifying bond.' This bond is supposed to constitute the *demos* considered necessary for democracy as well as enable recognition for everyone (Lilla, 2017; Fukuyama, 2018). This development can be traced back to different discourses, including these three essential approaches:

- Communitarianism, which wants to override individual and particular rights and affiliations by strengthening the "community" (Tönnies, 2001, p. 253–269).
- Neoliberalism, which demands a comprehensive 'activation' of citizens (Houdt et al., 2011).
- Patriotism, which (also from a leftist perspective, Rorty, 1998) promises to enable this activation through emotionalized identification.

What they have in common is a critique of both multicultural group identities and liberal individualizations; a republican identity with correlative patriotism is seen as beneficial. The widespread reception of these (and not other) theoretical traditions is an example how ideations are spread and selected between academia and politics (Fähnrich and Ruser, 2019; Marej, 2021 for paradigmatic preferences). Political communication aims to translate and adjust the theoretical assumptions into the concrete contexts (cf., 2.1). Correspondingly, a perpetuating call for patriotism can be observed not only by demands of specific parties but even at the level of official state representation, by Federal Presidents (Figure 5).

The historical perspective reveals an increasing reference to patriotism. Before Johannes Rau became president, the term was used only once. Rau, however, has appealed to patriotism from the beginning of his presidency, reaching a peak in 2002. His message was almost always the same: that nationalism and patriotism were different things and should not be confused. Furthermore, constitutional patriotism was good (in the past), but not enough (anymore). In 2014, Joachim Gauck spoke about the "enlightened patriotism" of German Jews before World War II and about "joyful patriotism" during the 2006 Football World Cup. Since 2017, Frank-Walter Steinmeier advocates on various occasions an initially "enlightened," since 2018 a "democratic patriotism." Such

patriotism deals critically with the past and leads to democratic commitment. It is "friendly," with "quiet tones and mixed feelings," it uses national symbols and does not (like nationalism) place itself above others. The development toward a perpetuating reference to patriotism can be interpreted as a result of the governance goal of national 'normalization' by the SPD government and presidency in the end of the 1990s. The prerequisite for this was to disconnect patriotism and nationalism.

3.4.1. Semantics and (false) promises of patriotism

Following president Weizsäcker (1989), Johannes Rau made the following distinction prominent: "A patriot is someone who loves his fatherland, a nationalist is someone who despises the fatherlands of others" (Rau, 1999). This ideation of patriotism gets by without demarcation/hostility. Yet, that the political discourse does not correspond to this in reality has already been demonstrated. Nevertheless, patriotism is increasingly accepted as a goal of governance, with regular but one-sided historical reference to the democratic power of the French Revolution. A less selective view of history however makes clear that patriotism flourished primarily in monarchies, as a military mobilizing factor to legitimize imperial aspirations or 'civilizing missions' (Sardoc, 2019).

Etymologically, patriotism refers to the community of descent ($\pi\alpha\tau\rho\iota\acute{\alpha}$, patriá) and thus activates an organic-naturalistic understanding of the state (love of the *father*land, cf. Rousseau: patria as "common *mother* of citizens," Xenos, 1996). In later centuries, the militaristic tradition of patriotism built on this understanding. The familial semantics explains the demand for sacrifice linked to patriotism, which is supposed to be declared to the fatherland or the nation as a sacralized superpower (and not to other people). The sacrifices are identity- and meaning-giving and based on myth, making them appear voluntary within this ideological frame (Cassirer, 1946/2002). Sacrifice in this sense can mean taking part in military operations, but also monetary redistributions or already tolerating dissenting or competing opinions. But, what does not occur in this discourse is the question of whether this is also possible within the framework of other logics (altruism, prosocial behavior, empathy, etc.). Instead, patriotism is given even more utilitarian considerations, such as strengthening social capital (Münkler and Wassermann, 2008, p. 3).

However, the separation of 'good patriotism' and 'bad nationalism' is a theoretical one that is not effective in practice. How the cognitive and emotive conveyance of the 'right' measure is supposed to be achieved (and who decides about that) remains open. Outside political and philosophical theory, numerous objections are raised, notably that patriotism also leads to group-based hostility (Becker et al., 2005). In addition, the freedom-oriented republican or liberal-communitarian version is only partially received. Gauger (2006, p. 20ff.) identifies four levels of patriotism: (1) love of the fatherland, (2) common good orientation (with priority of local and national common good over global), (3) freedom and democracy, (4) as a prerequisite for cosmopolitanism. Elements of (1) and (2) are activated in the ideations studied, (3) is seen as achieved by 'Leitkultur,' and can be framed as a continuing
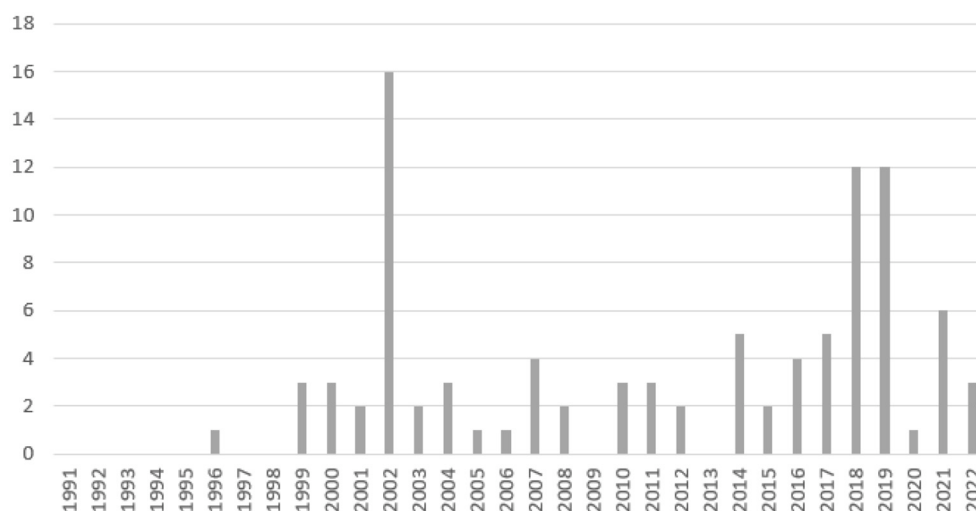
FIGURE 5
Usage of "patriotism" and "patriot" in speeches and interviews of German Federal Presidents.

task by constitutional patriotism. Cosmopolitanism plays no role in any of them, although isolated references to Europe are made. In the current use of both ideations, the focus is on national cohesion, system stability and prevention of radicalization and is closely linked to identity discourses.

3.4.2. Patriotism + X

Patriotism is discussed in the same way as the question of national identity, but it is substantiated and justified differently. While statements about national identity often contain metaphors of nature, patriotism is discussed in surprisingly functional terms. In 1993, Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) lamented the "loss of authority and loss of values" and called for "patriotism and the willingness to serve" (Keller, 1994, p. 47). Alternatively, it can be interpreted as a "principle under which all citizens, as a community of responsibility and liability, are united in the same interest" (Keller, 1994, p. 44). These two forms of patriotism may be characterized as national-functionalist and republican-idealist, and they are reflected in the concepts of 'Leitkultur' and constitutional patriotism. They pursue opposing ideological goals: re-mystification and enlightenment, respectively.

To some extent, the ideations move toward each other, attempting to create a mystification of enlightenment. Constitutional patriotism strives to become tangible and emotional, while 'Leitkultur' strives for democratization. They meet in the perspective of successfully completed enlightenment and democratization that resembles "the end of history" (Fukuyama, 2018) and is thereby romanticized. This social "freezing" (Suvarierol, 2012) can be traced in the orientation toward tradition in 'Leitkultur' and in the selective enactment of the constitution in constitutional patriotism. There, fundamental rights are mentioned and recognized, but less so the procedural and discursive character of political action or the social struggle for their interpretation (e.g., women's rights). For this preservationist goal, Sternberger's gratitude-oriented

approach is clearly more connectable and compatible with the current interests of "democracy protection" (Laborde, 2002, p. 591; Molt, 2006).

Many actors in the discourse agree that a cognitive understanding of democratic structures and rights alone is insufficient. An emotional-affirmative offer is needed that leads to 'right and good' behavior through a heightened sense of community. In this regard, the theoretical concepts of civic patriotism and liberal nationalism are hardly distinguishable as both ultimately aim to present the national identity as a liberal one (Yack, 1996; Laborde, 2002). This is reflected in numerous concepts of a 'patriotism+X,' where X serves as an "expressive" element of belonging (cf. Peters, 1993). X is filled by various adjectives (e.g., enlightened, critical, leftist, humanist controlled, democratic, modern, civil), and serves to combine political and cultural elements while equally denying any nationalist tendencies.

4. Conclusion

Since 1990, the ambition to provide a unifying social imaginary has increased in Germany. The universalistic, future-oriented conception of constitutional patriotism is more and more challenged by particularistic, preserving demands of 'Leitkultur.' The emergence for this ideation can be traced back to historical events: the 'national unification' 1989/90, the change of the citizenship law in 2000, terror attacks in the early 2000s, and the 'refugee crisis' since 2015. Applying the ideation of being a 'Western immigration country' by several government decisions led to an intensified political debate about integration requirements.

First, the two positions were opposed to each other. Constitutional patriotism was criticized as too abstract while 'Leitkultur' was marked as nationalist. Since the beginning of the 2000s, however, they increasingly converge, trying to resolve the "liberal dilemma" (integrating people by *universal* principles into

a *particular* society, Joppke, 2008, p. 538) in favor of the particular: "universal values and virtues are not just seen as indispensable, but as 'ours'" (Jensen and Mouristen, 2019, p. 837). In constitutional patriotism, the particular is not sought in the constitution itself, but in the specific constitutional history, and thus the German path to democracy. However, the progressive deliberative elements are set aside in favor of gratitude for the constitution. 'Leitkultur' refers to the 'cultural nation.' Beside the constitution, it targets high-cultural icons (Goethe, Mozart etc.) as well as everyday cultural phenomena (e.g., shaking hands, Maizière, 2017), following a cultural racist logic. It was increasingly discussed after the 'refugee crisis' in 2015, following the European trend of strengthening national identities by promoting exclusionary ideations. Both integrational ideations focus on legal and cultural aspects and neglect political (and thus controversial and pluralistic) inclusion. The debate ended relatively abruptly with the onset of the COVID pandemic in 2020. Instead of 'patriotism' (like in France), there was now a call for 'cohesion' and 'solidarity.' This may be due to the fact that none of the ideations is firmly and uncontroversially anchored in society or not specifically migrants were addressed.

The unifying factor is (narrowly defined 'good') patriotism, which has been emphasized worldwide since 9/11 as a goal to be striven for in society. Patriotism is said to strengthen and defend democracy and oscillates between political-progressive and cultural-conservative components. Yet, what patriotism should be directed at remains the subject of dispute. All actors can agree on the (possibly selectively recited) constitution, but it is to be supplemented by a controversial "X."

It became clear that governance decisions are based on ideations that can be adopted from other contexts, including the self-image as a country of immigration, the introduction of *ius soli*, the possibility of naturalization, and its restriction by naturalization tests. Moreover, governance decisions may foster the emergence of opposing ideations, e.g., the concept of 'Leitkultur' and 'Jewish-Christian Occident' in reaction to the abolition of religious education and the citizenship reforms 2000. The use or activation of ideations depends on current needs and they can be reshaped accordingly, e.g., the ongoing reinterpretation of 'democratic Leitkultur' to 'German Leitkultur' to 'German liberal Leitkultur.' In response, the older ideation of constitutional patriotism was reactivated and then modified as an alternative integration model.

The convergence of ideations indicates an intermediate consensus that a shared imaginary is necessary. This development mirrors corresponding shifts in academic discourse. Political sciences in particular are increasingly oriented toward communitarianism, social capital, republicanism or liberal nationalism. Whether the initiative for this came from politics or vice versa remains to be investigated elsewhere. However, it is worth noting that so-called knowledge-based decision-making includes a selective reception of academic ideations. Not only are alternative concepts such as postmigrant societies (Foroutan et al., 2018) or convivial disintegration (Meissner and Heil, 2021) rarely taken up, it is already barely admitted that ongoing differentiation is a feature of modern societies (Nassehi, 1997).

The currently dominating ideations are supposed to provide a remedy for various problems of the (post-) modern world,

not by addressing their causes, but by legitimizing existing regimes. Therefore, the focus is not primarily on the cognitive resolution of the problems, but on their affective management. Since the "anxiety society" (Bude, 2014/2018) is characterized by postmodern uncertainties, offers of unambiguity, self-affirmation, and community are sought (see also Jetten et al., 2017). Corresponding ideations increase the governance over citizens or the expectation that they internalize politically set guidelines ("gouvernementalité," Foucault, 1978/2000). Both ideations aim to shape not only the outer behavior of citizens but also their inner constitution and feelings and reveal an intensification of governmental efforts for social integration. While after World War II it was emphasized that abiding laws is sufficient for integration, by the end of the 1970s this was extended to (voluntary) constitutional patriotism, and from the 1990s onwards 'Leitkultur' was developed (Fisch, 2018). Both ideations studied promote 'pride' and 'love' as particularly appropriate emotions (not hope or outrage, for example). In contrast to emancipatory ideations of citizens, the current ones are intended to "harmonize social contradictions, mobilize a willingness to sacrifice, and generate acceptance of decisions that are detrimental to interests" (Zifonun, 2016, p. 289). Overall, the development of integration ideations in Germany is moving away from an activist to an elitist understanding of citizenship: instead of (constructive) critique, loyalty to the state and belief in patriotic symbols and rituals are promoted (Sears et al., 1999, p. 124).

Whether the examined ideations foster social sustainability goals seems therefore questionable. Although there is (to some extent) a democratization of 'Leitkultur,' it still emphasizes self-affirmation rather than self-critique (self-attribution as democratic, tolerant, 'good' patriotic, etc.). Constitutional patriotism is more demanding in this respect, at least potentially, but actual programs differ greatly and contain purely affirmative and de-politicized moments, as the study of events in 2019 has shown. In terms of content, historical national ideas of belonging dominate, which do not correspond to the requirements of the 2030 Agenda. This is presumably related to the fact that the main actors belong to socially dominant groups. It is therefore not surprising that elements of securing power and maintaining dominance are in the foreground and that decolonization efforts remain marginal. 'Leitkultur' is characterized by the elevation of Christianity, and adaptation to its religious traditions is considered a prerequisite for the integration of first the East German and later the Muslim 'others.' Although counter-movements are also visible as are approaches to the development of novel, decolonial concepts, they have not yet had a broad impact on the political level. In general, decolonizing approaches refer to the dominant positions, but this rarely happens the other way around. Thus, a tension remains, according to which the interests of the 'autochthonous' population groups are worthy of political attention, but those of 'others' are alienated and discouraged. The focus is thus not on efforts for the further development of democratic principles or (post)modern modes of belonging that correspond to plurality and globality. The frame of reference is rather the nation-state in its present constitution, the goal being its stability and 'competitiveness.'

Sustainability principles such as the culture of peace, (deep) diversity or global citizenship play no role gender equality is considered achieved. This may be caused by a limited understanding of sustainability which concentrates on ecological problems and technology-based solutions. However, technological logics are then transferred to the social - by top-down narratives and emotion politics to 'solve the problem' of integration. If there are moments of self-criticism on a social level, problems are addressed to 'others,' particularly Muslim migrants but also East Germans (especially obvious when it comes to antisemitism or right-wing extremism). At the same time, many other groups, are simply ignored or instrumentalized (e.g., Asians, Jews, Ukrainians) so that the ideation of an inclusive society is not met or even fostered. The study of ideations provides first explanations. The obstacles for social sustainability are not primarily in the foreground, but in the background of ideations, namely (a) missing social permeability and plurality, (b) missing separation of state and religion, and (c) ambiguous emotion politics. Shared, or rather prescribed cognitive and emotional ideations are intended to ensure support for democracy, but the process as well as the extent to which these policies themselves exhibit undemocratic tendencies must be critically observed and corrected.

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The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

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