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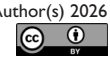

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Jewish Sopranos in Germany: A Study of Jewish–Muslim Cooperation in the Post-Migrant Television Series *The Zweiflers*

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Abstract

In an extremely critical public sphere surrounding Jewish–Muslim relations in Germany, the multi-award-winning miniseries *The Zweiflers* has uniquely navigated this intense scrutiny, depicting a nuanced subplot of Jewish–Muslim coexistence. Inspired by HBO's *The Sopranos*, the series centres on the Zweifler family, exploring their complex intergenerational dynamics, transnational diasporic ties and alleged connections to Frankfurt"s underworld. While initially lauded for its portrayal of a modern German-Jewish identity, this article takes a closer look at the significant theme of Jewish–Muslim cooperation in post-war Germany. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted in Frankfurt's Bahnhofsviertel (train station district), where the series was filmed, *The Zweiflers* is critically analysed and compared with insights from that long-term fieldwork. This analysis is further contextualized by engaging with the crucial works of diasporic artists and post-migrant filmmakers, alongside scholarship on urban multiculture and anti-essentialist concepts in sociology and cultural studies. The Jewish–Muslim relationships depicted in the series are not merely fictional; they reflect real, historically evolved partnerships characterized by a collective will to overcome contradictions. This nuanced depiction counters static assumptions about community relations often found in the polarized debates surrounding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, offering a vital contribution to understanding contemporary German society.

Keywords

Germany, Jews, Muslims, postmigrant film, urban diversity

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Introduction

The war in Gaza has profoundly impacted urban centres globally, evident in recent British elections and US campus politics. Germany, in particular, has seen a drastic increase in the scrutiny of cultural activities, with officials and politicians adopting a more stringent stance on issues, events and films related to Israel-Palestine, and particularly on the monitoring of Jewish–Muslim relations (Oltermann, 2024). Within this intensely polarized public sphere, the highly acclaimed miniseries *The Zweiflers*, which garnered several awards at this year's Cannes Film Festival[1] and was hailed by *Die Zeit* as 'the best German series in ages' (Kalle, 2024), has remarkably avoided such severe scrutiny. It courageously tells a subtle yet significant subplot of Jewish–Muslim coexistence.

Inspired by HBO's *The Sopranos*, *The Zweiflers* focuses on the Jewish Zweifler family, delving into their messy, intergenerational complexities, including transnational diasporic entanglements and purported ties to Frankfurt's infamous underworld. The series' creator and screenwriter, David Hadda, along with co-authors Juri Sternburg and Sarah Hadda, intentionally moved away from dominant Jewish victim narratives. Instead, they crafted a self-determined and ambivalent storyline spanning from Frankfurt's post-war survival years to its current cosmopolitan identity. Hadda articulated this ambition in an interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*: 'My grandfather survived seven concentration camps, my other grandparents survived when almost their entire family perished in Birkenau. But for me my grandparents were never victims, for me they were the greatest heroes who defeated fascism' (Magel, 2024). By creating such a powerful yet ambiguous portrait of the challenges and complex navigations faced by Holocaust survivors and their descendants, *The Zweiflers* also illuminates the story of migrant pioneers and novel diasporic encounters in post-war Germany, a theme this article aims to thoroughly explore.[2]

While *The Zweiflers'* search for a modern German-Jewish identity was initially praised by critics, at a second glance, the theme of Jewish–Muslim cooperation becomes apparent. Hussi Kutlucan plays the role of Salih, the son of a Turkish guest worker who has worked for decades in The Zweiflers' family business. Salih, who himself has to stick his (Muslim) neck out for the (Jewish) family several times in the course of the series, is a close associate of Symcha Zweifler (played by Mike Burstyn), the family's patriarch. During the six episodes, the viewers watch Salih hugging or joking with Jewish grandchildren, running the restaurant affairs, or driving around the family members, whilst also being humiliated in his attempts to defend the family from existential threats from a violent criminal and former Zweiflers' associate.

To analyse these dynamics, the article first provides a detailed methodology outlining the research design and data collection. Following this methodological approach, I establish the theoretical framework that guides my analysis, drawing on key concepts in cultural sociology. The subsequent sections delve into a plot overview of *The Zweiflers*, its inspirations from *The Sopranos*, an in-depth comparison with ethnographic insights from the Bahnhofsviertel and a broader discussion of Jewish–Muslim encounters in post-migrant Germany.

A Methodology to Study *The Zweiflers* in Frankfurt's Bahnhofsviertel

To study *The Zweiflers*, this research employed a qualitative design, primarily drawing on ethnographic and life-history approaches. This interpretive stance aimed to understand the subjective meanings and social constructions of reality among individuals within their specific socio-historical contexts, offering a nuanced, in-depth understanding of intergroup relations from their lived perspectives. Data collection spanned three years, from 2021 to 2024, allowing for sustained engagement and trust-building within the research site. This extensive fieldwork yielded rich, contextualized data through various methods. Over 50 semi-structured and informal interviews were conducted with a diverse range of local stakeholders, including Jewish displaced persons and Muslim labour migrants, as well as their children and grandchildren, politicians, civil servants, journalists, neighbourhood influencers, cultural entrepreneurs, business owners, religious authorities, schoolteachers and individuals from welfare and social organizations. Complementing the interviews, a substantial proportion of the research involved immersive participant observation in key social spaces within Frankfurt's Bahnhofsviertel, including local shops, bars, restaurants and cultural and religious institutions. This process involved informal conversations, observations of daily interactions, and participation in community events, all contributing to the understanding of 'boundary work' – how symbolic boundaries between Jewish and Muslim groups were blurred, crossed, or reinforced (Emmerich, 2025a). The study also incorporated city-led and informal walking tours with residents, which provided unique insights into the neighbourhood's historical layers and facilitated spontaneous discussions. Further, archival research and document analysis, including historical archives, exhibition materials, policy reports, social media and newspaper articles, triangulated these data sources, adding historical depth and contextualizing contemporary observations.

The sampling strategy was purposive and emergent, a common approach in ethnographic research. Initial contacts, established through existing networks and community organizations in Frankfurt, led to a snowball sampling approach. This strategy allowed for the identification of other relevant individuals with diverse experiences, ensuring the capture of a broad spectrum of Jewish–Muslim interactions across different generations, social classes and engagement levels with the neighbourhood's history. A specific effort was made to include individuals who could provide life-history accounts, offering long-term perspectives on Jewish–Muslim relations.

The ethnographic findings from the Bahnhofsviertel were continuously compared with a focused content analysis of *The Zweiflers* miniseries. This analysis focused on Jewish–Muslim issues, discourses and major and minor references at the global, national and local levels. For this content analysis, I conducted a systematic, scene-by-scene coding of all six episodes, using a critical document analysis framework. In researching different forms of textual and visual data, including film, television, newspaper articles and exhibition materials, I drew on Macdonald (2008: 287), who argued that:

> a document, like an untrustworthy witness, must be cross-examined and its motives assessed. How was it written, what was it really, why did it take place in that way, what was the point? Who had a motive? Who benefited? Who was in a position to write and disseminate it? Who was it intended to deceive and why?

These critical questions guided my assessment of the *Zweiflers* miniseries and all collected documents to uncover underlying motives, intended audiences and power dynamics, ensuring the analysis moved beyond surface-level claims.

The six episodes, which were triangulated with newspaper articles, podcasts, interviews and other social media content featuring the creators, actors and film critics, provided extensive material for analysis. The creators of *The Zweiflers* have stated in numerous media interviews that they were strongly influenced by the psychological complexity and social entanglements of the Italian-American families associated with organized crime in the HBO TV drama *The Sopranos* (1999–2007). Navigating between informal, criminal and everyday life, the creator of *The Sopranos*, David Chase, crafted an ambiguous portrait of the main character, Tony Soprano, his family and multi-ethnic associates, which included both Muslim and Jewish characters within the urban diversity of the New York metropolitan area.

Consequently, the ambitious aim of *The Zweiflers* creators was to produce nothing less than a 'Jewish Sopranos' in post-war Germany (Lühmann, 2024). In the light of this pivotal role played by the HBO series in the genesis of *The Zweiflers*, the article also examines the portrayal and relationship between Italian-American, Jewish and Muslim characters in *The Sopranos*. The article then presents a comparative discussion of the findings, themes and observations derived from both series, with the additional empirical insights gleaned from the ethnographic research conducted in the Bahnhofsviertel. This discussion includes a brief history of the neighbourhood as it relates to the content and themes of *The Zweiflers* (and, implicitly, *The Sopranos*) and advances our understanding of why the Bahnhofsviertel became an attractive backdrop for post-migrant filmmakers, entrepreneurs and influencers, using local stories of upward mobility, migration, crime and joint hardship in the post-war years. A common thread that thus runs through both *The Sopranos* and *The Zweiflers* is the portrayal of the complex and multifaceted historical entanglement of key figures in organized crime, alongside a depiction of the ordinary lives and everyday challenges faced by these individuals and their families. This observation resonates with my own observations of Jewish–Muslim networks in the Bahnhofsviertel. In this context, the analysis demonstrates how the notion of Jewish and Muslim gangsters, along with the dubious reputation of the Bahnhofsviertel, have been incorporated into cultural productions such as *The Zweiflers*, exhibitions by the Jewish Museum and initiatives by Jewish and Muslim entrepreneurs. This practice is performed done in order to challenge the simplistic and static portrayals of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities in contemporary Germany. The overall article is informed by various post-migrant perspectives within sociology and cultural studies, which will be discussed in more detail in the final part of the article.

The Bahnhofsviertel, where the series was filmed, plays an important role in Frankfurt's self-image as a multicultural city. Its dynamism and diversity are reflected in its geographical size and demographics as the second smallest district in Frankfurt.

Around 20,000 people work in the Bahnhofsviertel every day, although only about 3600 residents are officially registered, 65% of whom have a migration background (Künkel, 2021). In the 1950s and 1960s, Jewish survivors (displaced persons) from Poland and other Eastern European countries ventured to make a new economic and social start in Frankfurt's Bahnhofsviertel. In the late 1960s, they were joined by Muslim migrant workers, who also used the area around the station as an opportunity to improve their lives and contribute to the neighbourhood. Since the 2000s, ongoing urban gentrification processes, including Jewish and Muslim restaurants and bars, a small music scene and local tourism, have created new Jewish–Muslim alliances and reshaped the neighbourhood. At the same time, it is still considered one of Germany's most deviant neighbourhoods, with gun and drug-related offences topping the national crime statistics on a regular basis (Benkel, 2010).

The overarching rationale was to move beyond simplistic, often polarized, macro-level narratives of Jewish–Muslim antagonism. By grounding the study in the micro-level realities of urban life in a specific, historically rich neighbourhood, the research sought to uncover the complexities, nuances and long-term patterns of interaction often overlooked in broader public discourse. This comparative analysis with *The Zweiflers* then allowed for an examination of how these lived realities are represented, interpreted and potentially re-shaped in popular cultural productions.

Anti-Essentialist Concepts in Cultural Sociology: Post-Migrant Societies, Urban Multiculture, Media Representation and Identity Work

The analysis is informed by the concept of the post-migrant society, a German-specific discourse that recognizes migration and its diversification processes as an established and politically acknowledged reality (Foroutan, 2015). In a post-migrant society, 'structures, institutions and political cultures are adapt[ing] to the reality of migration, leading to greater permeability and social mobility, but also to defensive reactions and struggles over distribution' (Foroutan, 2015). This framework allows me to understand *The Zweiflers* as a cultural production that actively engages with, and contributes to, the ongoing renegotiation of established cultural, ethnic, religious and national identities, as well as hierarchies and resources in contemporary Germany. The series' portrayal of a multi-ethnic Jewish family navigating these complexities aligns perfectly with this societal shift.

Complementing this framework, I drew on Stuart Hall's seminal concept of 'new ethnicities' (Hall, 2021 [1988]). Hall theorized the emergence of diasporic networks and hybrid identities among young people with diverse migration backgrounds, challenging monolithic notions of national identity. This concept is crucial for understanding how young, British-born Muslim and Jewish artists in East London, for example, blended musical genres and rediscovered shared histories (Everett and Gidley, 2018). In the German context, Elisabeth Becker (2024) has extensively applied Hall's theory to analyse how Muslims and Jews 'contest essentialized understandings of their identities and marginalized sociocultural locations', demonstrating the 'universalizing capacity' of

new ethnicities to challenge racialized 'othering' in national narratives. *The Zweiflers*, by showcasing Muslim and Jewish characters, who transcend static identity categories and forge inter-ethnic alliances, provides a vivid illustration of these new ethnicities in action. The series' explicit goal, as stated by its creators, to avoid 'dominant Jewish victim narratives' and instead create 'a self-determined and ambivalent storyline' (Magel, 2024) directly resonates with the agency and redefinition of identity central to Hall's framework. The representation of Jewish–Muslim cooperation, rather than conflict, exemplifies how 'new ethnic identities' can be culturally constructed from the margins.

The study is also embedded in the literature on urban multiculture and conviviality. Steven Vertovec's (2007) concept of 'superdiversity' is relevant, emphasizing the complex and often contradictory dynamics of diverse societies. This concept highlights the multifaceted layering of differences (e.g. ethnicity, migration status, legal status, gender, religion) that shape urban social life. Frankfurt's Bahnhofsviertel, with its historical layers of Jewish displaced persons, various waves of Muslim labour migrants and more recent refugees, serves as an ideal case study for superdiversity in action. Paul Gilroy's (2004) notion of 'conviviality' is central to this exploration of Jewish–Muslim interactions. Conviviality refers to the potential for positive social interactions, cultural exchange and 'living with difference' in diverse urban settings. The ethnographic research in the Bahnhofsviertel, where *The Zweiflers* is set, directly examines how this conviviality is manifested in everyday life – from shared meals and jokes to mutual support in times of hardship. The series' depiction of Salih as an integral part of the Zweifler family, or the casual interactions between Jewish and Muslim characters, reflects this convivial potential.

However, I also critically engage with the complexities and limitations of conviviality. As scholars like Back and Sinha (2016) have pointed out, convivial practices can coexist with exclusionary practices, including anti-Muslim racism and anti-Semitism. The Bahnhofsviertel, while a space of dynamic intergroup relations, also faces challenges related to crime and social marginalization. This situation necessitates 'convivial labour' (Rosbrook-Thompson and Armstrong, 2022; Wessendorf, 2020), the active effort required to manage differences and maintain positive interactions. The analysis thus considers how *The Zweiflers* portrays these tensions and the 'non-convivial labour' that may reinforce boundaries, reflecting the ambivalent nature of inter-ethnic relations. The series' inclusion of 'casual' anti-Semitism and 'casual' anti-Muslim racism within its narrative demonstrates an awareness of these complexities, moving beyond idealized portrayals.

The Zweiflers' exploration of diverse identities necessitates drawing on scholarship concerning media representation and cultural production. Albrecht (2015) analyses how shows such as *The Sopranos*, which inspired *The Zweiflers*, depict complex male archetypes. Albrecht criticizes the lack of intersectional analysis, particularly with regard to race. In contrast, *The Zweiflers* consciously engages with multiple marginalized identities. The portrayal of alleged ties to Frankfurt's underworld, for instance, echoes themes of organized crime in *The Sopranos*, but *The Zweiflers* filters this thematic content through a distinctly Jewish and post-migrant German lens, challenging simplistic and static portrayals of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities in contemporary Germany.

Furthermore, Sanli's (2011) study of the Turkish talk show 'Woman's Voice' highlights how seemingly 'soft media' can become 'legitimate venues for political deliberation' by publicizing private lives and creating subversive subject positions for disadvantaged groups. Similarly, *The Zweiflers*, while a fictional drama, publicizes the everyday lives and concerns of a Jewish–Muslim community in Germany, offering a space for previously underrepresented narratives. Sanli draws on the concept of 'cultural citizenship', defined as being 'concerned with "who needs to be visible, to be heard of, and to belong"' (2011: 283). *The Zweiflers* actively addresses this need for visibility by offering visibility to Jewish–Muslim cooperation, an aspect often 'carefully censored out from the public sphere' in Germany due to prevailing narratives of conflict. The series' approach aligns with critiques of traditional public sphere models that hierarchize 'politics and culture' as 'masculine, superior, serious vs. feminine, inferior, entertaining' (Sanli, 2011: 289). By focusing on the lived experiences of a specific community, *The Zweiflers* positions itself as a form of cultural production that fosters critical discussion and contributes to a broader understanding of 'cultural citizenship' beyond formal political participation. Moreover, Niyogi's (2011) research on 'Bengali-American fiction in immigrant identity work' offers insights into how immigrant communities use cultural products to construct internal ethnic identities and navigate racialization and class privilege. Her findings on how 'immigrants actively use these themes to reconcile apparently contradictory impulses and to draw boundaries that safeguard their class privilege, assuage gender inequality and avoid racialization' (Niyogi, 2011: 243) can be paralleled with how *The Zweiflers* might be appropriated by its audience. The series' nuanced portrayal of Jewish identity, for example, allows for a departure from singular, often victim-focused, narratives, enabling a more complex 'identity work' among its viewers. Lion's (2024) study on 'Minority Flemish youth employ ethnic humour for identity construction' further illuminates how humour can be a powerful tool for self-identity and contesting sociopolitical contexts. While *The Zweiflers* is not explicitly a comedy, its creators' deliberate move away from 'dominant Jewish victim narratives' towards a more 'self-determined and ambivalent storyline' (Magel, 2024) hints at a similar reclamation of agency and a challenge to stereotypical portrayals. The series, in its depiction of the Zweifler family's interactions, including moments of banter and shared cultural references, could be seen as demonstrating how identity is performed and negotiated, echoing Lion's findings on the role of humour in mediating lived experiences and constructing identity.

Finally, the Bahnhofsviertel, as depicted in *The Zweiflers*, is not a neutral backdrop but a site where multiple histories and geographies converge, reflecting its transient nature and intertwined histories between Jews and Muslims. The perceived 'historical amnesia' surrounding long-standing Jewish–Muslim relationships in Germany is a critical theme, as Özyürek (2023) argues: The historical presence of Muslim minorities in Germany and their close ties with Jewish communities before and during the Second World War has been largely forgotten because the history itself 'does not fulfil the necessary conditions to be included in the post-war German social contract [and culture of remembrance]'. *The Zweiflers* directly challenges this amnesia by bringing these forgotten narratives to the forefront. By depicting Jewish–Muslim cooperation that predates and transcends current political antagonisms, the series actively participates in a

're-invention of Jewish life' (Zubrzycki, 2022) and, in this case, in Germany. My analysis examines how the series, alongside real-world initiatives in the Bahnhofsviertel, uses narratives of shared hardship, informal economies and inter-ethnic solidarity to challenge the simplistic and static portrayals of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities in contemporary Germany. The decision by *The Zweiflers*' creators to focus on 'local, interpersonal relationships' rather than directly addressing the Israel-Gaza war (Post, 2024) is a deliberate act of memory-making, aiming to highlight enduring coexistence often overshadowed by political conflict. By integrating this theoretical discussion within cultural sociology and beyond, this article offers a comprehensive analysis of *The Zweiflers* as a cultural text that not only reflects but also actively shapes contemporary understandings of Jewish–Muslim relations in a post-migrant Germany.

Not Simply a Muslim Waiter in a Jewish Restaurant – a Brief Plot Overview

The Zweiflers presents a structured examination of a Jewish family in Frankfurt, utilizing the impending sale of their delicatessen as a central narrative device to dissect internal dynamics and external pressures. The narrative establishes a clear generational divide, a recurring theme in contemporary family narratives. Symcha Zweifler's decision to sell the business initiates a conflict that reveals divergent views on tradition, continuity and financial security. This conflict is not merely a clash of personalities, but a reflection of broader societal shifts impacting the family's identity. Symcha's past in the red-light district in the Bahnhofsviertel introduces a destabilizing element, revealing hidden aspects of his character and challenging the family's established narrative. This subplot serves to undermine the idealized image of the family patriarch, adding a layer of ambiguity to his motivations. The series demonstrates the impact that unresolved past issues have on the present-day lives of the characters, and the difficulty of navigating familial relationships in a changing world.

This remaining section will outline the specific dynamics of the Jewish–Muslim diaspora cooperation and minority solidarity as they are addressed in a relatively unnoticed subplot of *The Zweiflers*. The character of Salih (Arabic name: 'the pious') is only referred to as a 'waiter' on the ARD-Degeto website, while his surname is not revealed at all. The inadequacy of this description is evident from the outset, in the opening scene, when young Samuel Zweifler (played by Aaron Altaras) enters his family's restaurant and immediately approaches Salih, who is standing behind the counter in his white apron. Samuel greets Salih with a kiss on the cheek, after helping himself to a beef sausage on a plate intended for a customer. In response, Salih gives him an affectionate slap on the back of the head, justifying this disciplinary measure with the exclamation, 'You cheeky monkey [Frechdax]!' What this opening scene reveals is that Salih is not just a waiter, but an integral part of the Zweifler family and their business, reflecting a long-standing relationship between the family business and its multi-ethnic staff, and an authentic example of local Jewish–Muslim cooperation in a multicultural neighbourhood such as the Bahnhofsviertel. Salih's introduction foreshadows the 'modern' diaspora alliances, love relationships and global friendship cliques shaped by Frankfurt, London,

New York and Berlin, which *The Zweiflers* critics have praised. Salih seems to play only a minor role in these relationships and is occasionally labelled a simple 'errand boy'.

On closer inspection, it becomes clear that Salih occupies a pivotal position alongside the family patriarch, Symcha Zweifler (played by Mike Burstyn), and plays a crucial role in ensuring the continued success of the Jewish delicatessen empire. More specifically, Salih is key to the master plan to get rid of 'Jew Siggi' (played by Martin Wuttke), an underworld figure who is blackmailing his former business partner Symcha for his involvement in organized crime in the early years of the family venture. To carry out the plan, Symcha instructed Salih to deliver an envelope of money to Siggi's office to prevent him from leaking information to the media. Subsequently Salih is subjected to a considerable degree of humiliation when he hands over the money in Siggi's office, including having a hot cup of coffee thrown in his face. Despite the intimidating circumstances, Salih continues to persuade Siggi to cease his blackmail of the Zweiflers, stating, 'I pray every day' while defending Symcha that he is 'not a gangster'.

When he discovers that 5000 euros are missing, Siggi continues to intimidate Salih, who acts as the official representative of the Zweiflers. He threatens to expose the family's illegal affairs to the public and 'finish them off once and for all'. In this seemingly desperate moment, Salih confesses that he gambled away the missing money earlier. He begs Siggi: 'Please don't tell Symcha. Don't let me lose my dignity'. As security, he promises Siggi watches worth 30,000 euros, which he has to pick up from an acquaintance. The episode ends with the police raiding Siggi's office and confiscating the stolen watches. Symcha and Salih's plan to use the watch trick to put Siggi back in prison seems to have worked. However, the raid also uncovered an alleged murder weapon that can be traced back to Symcha, which puts the Zweiflers in an even more compromising position, as Symcha is now facing a prison sentence himself.

Once the intergenerational succession to the business and other family matters have been settled, Symcha is forced to flee his old life in the Bahnhofsviertel. Again it is Salih who helps Symcha and his wife Lilka to flee Germany in the early hours of the morning after the bri (circumcision) of their great-grandson. He secretly drives Symcha and Lilka in a Mercedes limousine to an airport where a private jet is stationed. What follows is a touching farewell scene between the three, in which no words are exchanged. Salih unloads the heavy suitcases and instinctively embraces Symcha with a heavy heart. Symcha returns the hug and pats him on the shoulder like a long-lost foster son, as if to say, 'Now you must be strong.' Salih then kisses Lilka on both cheeks, as he has done so many times in the past, before the elderly Jewish couple climb the steps of the plane. At the same time, the police searched Symcha's apartment in Frankfurt. With the exception of Salih, none of the other family members were aware of Symcha's escape plans. This event serves to illustrate the strong interconnectedness and mutual respect between the Turkish-Muslim and Jewish diasporas, as well as the enduring intergenerational ties within Frankfurt's Bahnhofsviertel. Returning briefly to *The Sopranos*, the Jewish character of Herman 'Hesh' Rabkin, a retired record producer, stands out as a close mentor, right-hand man and informal banker first to Johnny and later to his son Tony Soprano, with whom Tony develops a loving fatherly relationship after Johnny's death. Hesh, for example, provides counselling sessions and advises Tony on how to deal with a Hasidic Jewish business partner Shlomo Teittleman. He also asked Tony for help in a dispute

over royalties with a black music producer. In this context, the parallels and influences on the formation of the quasi-father-son relationship between Symcha and Salih in *Zweiflers* are evident.

Meeting the Real Zweiflers and the Ghost of *The Sopranos*

The fictional relationship between Salih and the Zweiflers, influenced by *The Sopranos*, existed and to some extent still exists today. In addition to numerous economic ties, these Jews and Muslims drank tea together, had conversations in Turkish barbershops, visited synagogues and mosques and celebrated weddings and birthdays together. Muslim teenagers, like Salih's character, recognized the potential of the Jewish businessmen and acquired valuable skills from them as employees, apprentices and colleagues. On the other hand, Jewish entrepreneurs like the character of Symcha saw the new neighbours as younger versions of themselves and were reminded of the post-war years in Frankfurt, when the welfare state paid less attention to the needs of minorities and migrants (Emmerich, 2025a).

Muslims like the character of Salih, who had long worked in Jewish family businesses such as the fictional Zweiflers, knew survivors of concentration camps personally and therefore knew their family stories. However, during my fieldwork, Muslims were perceived as lacking knowledge of the Holocaust and awareness of Jewish history and life in the Bahnhofsviertel. This mirrors the national debate over whether Muslims are 'outsiders' to Germany's remembrance culture and thus unable and unwilling to develop a relation with or interest in the Holocaust and Germany's Jewish history, which according to Özyürek (2023) partially erases 'the more than sixty-years-long history of millions of postwar Muslim migrants'.

During a walk in the Bahnhofsviertel, my interlocutor, Ahmet and I passed by a Stolperstein ('stumbling stone', a street memorial for the victims of Nazi extermination) with the following inscription: 'Ruldof Mahler, born in Frankfurt 1889, imprisoned in Buchenwald, murdered in Sonnenstein in 1941.' 'Yes sadly!' Ahmet remarked, 'It was your [German] family, [who killed him].' As a teenager Ahmet worried that Germans might also murder Muslims. While he received basic history classes and learned what led to the Second World War, it was by working and spending time in shops like that of *The Zweiflers*, where he 'overheard the old Jews' that he shaped his awareness and knowledge about Jewish history, including the Holocaust (Emmerich, 2023, 2025a). Becker (2023) also explored such horizontal identification in her research at the Sehitlik Mosque in Berlin, which revealed empathy for the German-Jewish experience among the mosque congregation, as well as solidarity with Jews as a marginalized minority. In this context, local stores like that in *The Zweiflers* became 'safe places' for young adults like Salih. The fact that the Bahnhofsviertel was once so dominated by Jewish families that Yiddish was sometimes spoken has also left its mark in an almost curious way: There are still Yiddish-speaking Muslims today. Similarly, local authorities such as Symcha acquired language skills in Turkish and Arabic, which are common in the station district and were sometimes passed on to the next generation. These accounts mirror the interactions of *The Sopranos*, where Yiddish terms such as 'shnorrers', 'bupiks' and 'gonifs', and other

culturally specific knowledge, were incorporated into the multilingual slang of New Jersey, which was useful in their commercial transactions and everyday social relations.

Since the 2000s, some of them have opened restaurants and bars, created smaller music scenes, forged new Jewish–Muslim alliances and helped to shape the neighbourhood. It is no surprise that *Die Zweiflers* was able to depict these modern, post-migrant love affairs and global friendship cliques in Frankfurt's 'cool' Bahnhofsviertel in such an authentic way (Cunningham, 2016). Key scenes such as the first kiss between the main characters Saba and Samuel or scenes in the hip restaurants between Turkish and Afghan supermarkets, mosques and the migrant-dominated blocks of Münchener Straße also take place in an Islamic backdrop shaped by the district. On the same street there was until recently a bakery which sells kosher German-style bread, the new Jewish Museum in the Rothschild Palais is 2 minutes walking distance. Due to ongoing gentrification over the past 15 years, a few Jewish restaurants, bars and small music scenes have been emerging; the role of entrepreneurial activity that foregrounds intercultural encounter is vital to the reshaping of the area. It is also noteworthy that Paterson, an industrial suburb of New York City, where many scenes from *The Sopranos* were filmed, has – similar to the Bahnhofsviertel – undergone rapid urban transformations and recently became home to a significant population of Muslim immigrants, reshaping the area. According to American journalist Matthew Petti:

> the locals [of Paterson] wear gold chains under their sleeveless shirts and talk with the same accent as Tony Soprano, but their last names start with 'Abu' or end with 'oğlu' more often. Shawarma shops and künefe bakaries have replaced pizzerias. The city's Main Street has been renamed Palestine Way, complete with American and Palestinian flags and keffiyeh-print banners. (Petti, 2023)

Researching urban diversity, specifically encounters between Jews and Muslims, and trying to represent it in cultural productions such as *The Zweiflers* inevitably confronts us with what Michael Keith has called the 'productivity of space and temporality', due to the 'multiplicity of threads' to be found in the 'weaves of the city at any particular time'. Local neighbourhoods thus create 'a multiple of histories and geographies all in a single space' and 'different imagination[s] of the same space' (in Gidley, 2022: 273). This, in turn, resonated with the portrayal of the Bahnhofviertel in *The Zweiflers* or Paterson in *The Sopranos* – the transient nature and intertwined histories between Jews and Muslims, in the context of several waves of migration and the steady arrival of newcomers. In these moments, the series addresses an important diaspora issue: the long-standing and often forgotten Jewish–Muslim relationships in Germany.

Bahnhofsviertel as a Post-Migrant Safe Space

It is this milieu of the Bahnhofsviertel, characterized by hardship, an informal and highly innovative economy based on face-to-face interactions, narratives of upward mobility and inter-ethnic solidarity, that *The Zweiflers* series is caught up in. It is no surprise, then, that the post-migrant Jewish and Muslim artists, filmmakers and segments of Frankfurt's cultural producers have used the history of the Bahnhofsviertel in their own creative

expressions, marketing and products to create an alternative, empowering and self-determining narrative. David Hadda described his multi-ethnic upbringing in Frankfurt, where the majority of his classmates in school had a 'migrant background', which almost self-evidently included him and the other Jewish pupils. It was only when he went to Heidelberg University that he was made aware of his identity: 'Everyone asked what it was like for me as a Jew in Germany. The question is annoying, but it is part of [the Germans'] lack of knowledge [about Jews and other minorities]'. That is why he created *The Zweiflers* (Magel, 2024). Similar to Hadda's positively connotated school experience in Frankfurt, the Bahnhofsviertel symbolizes a similar space for migrants, diasporic communities and their children, with different costumes, rites, languages and, most importantly, shared experiences of discrimination. A Jewish business owner in my fieldwork, whose grandfather started out as a cigarette seller in a neighbourhood not unlike that of the Zweifler character of Symcha, noted that the area has become a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood:

> That's the amazing thing about the station area. Everyone knows we're Jews, but it's never an issue . . . It's the only place where I feel completely normal, much more so than in these bourgeois and German-dominated cultural spaces where I'm always made to feel different.

It was not mere coincidence that during my fieldwork in the station area, a number of Jewish and Muslim entrepreneurs, cultural educators, musicians and post-immigrant filmmakers employed creative techniques in their marketing and media statements, engaging with the complicated, criminal and informal past (and present) of the Bahnhofsviertel in a manner that was ambiguous, thought-provoking and empowering. In an interview with the *Journal Frankfurt*, the director of the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt, Mirjam Wenzel posited that an autonomous Jewish cultural milieu could only have emerged outside the purview of the Frankfurt-based organized Jewish community within the edgy, multicultural and business-oriented milieu of the Bahnhofsviertel (Post, 2019). Indeed, themes of Jewish–Muslim solidarity have been represented in a variety of contexts, including food menus, art projects, fashion brands, music performances and social media pages (Emmerich, 2025b). In some instances, the representation of Jewish–Muslim relations has been shaped by the presence of Jewish and Muslim gangster tropes. For example, one cafe and one restaurant have adopted the names of Jewish-American gangsters, the so-called 'koshernostra', serving Old Fashions and New York-style pastrami sandwiches. These businesses were inspired by Jewish-American organized crime figures such as Lepke Buchalter, who ran the mafia hit squad Murder Inc. in the 1930s, working for Jewish mobsters Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel, who frequently beat up Nazi sympathizers and intimidated anti-Semites.

One such business in the Bahnhofsviertel was the Maxie Eisen Restaurant and Bar, named after the Chicago gangster who headed the Hebrew Butchers, Bakers and Fish Merchants Association and controlled the meat industry in the 1920s. After the Second World War, the Bahnhofsviertel became known as 'Little Chicago' due to prostitution, crime and drugs. Between 1945 and the 1960s, the neighbourhood was dominated by former forced labourers under the Nazis and Jewish refugees (displaced persons) from Poland and other Eastern European countries (Lorei and Kirn, 1968), who worked as

street vendors and middlemen (Freimüller, 2020). Most famously, the Jewish-owned Fischer-Stube pub was a known destination for criminals, GIs and sex workers, including the later murdered escort Rosemarie Nitribitt (Janke and Häfner, 2018: 149–150). On 12 October 1946, a 'gangster duo' shot dead a policewoman and killed bystanders as they fled through the streets of the Bahnhofsviertel.

In this context, one of the managers of Maxi Eisen, a Jewish mafia-themed restaurant, explained the choice of theme for the Koshernostra: 'Maybe unconsciously we want to show that being Jewish is more than just the Holocaust [victim] and has many more facets'. This sentiment was echoed by another local Jewish business owner in the station area, whose grandfather founded the family business in the 1960s. He recalled that 20 years ago his clientele consisted of 'prostitutes, pimps and criminals'. Now it also includes lawyers, architects, bankers and other in-betweens, like the rapper, Haftbefehl, or one of the rabbis in Frankfurt. The controversial and – occasionally charged with anti-Semitism – gangster rapper Aykut Anhan, better known by his stage name Haftbefehl (arrest warrant) is a German national of Kurdish and Turkish parents. Anhan has a long association with the Bahnhofsviertel, selling drugs as a young adult and, according to one of his songs, with many Jewish customers. In other songs, Anhan highlights the creative power of multi-ethnic alliances and the harsh realities of the post-migrant milieus of the Bahnhofsviertel, while his work is featured in social media content and commercial products in local shops.

In 2022, the Jewish Museum Frankfurt collaborated with Max Czollek, a Jewish activist and curator of the 'Days of the Jewish–Muslim Lead Culture' ('*Tage der jüdisch-muslimischen Leitkultur*'), to organize the popular exhibition '*Revenge*' ('*Rache*'). The exhibition traces the theme of revenge throughout Jewish cultural history, from rabbinic writings and biblical stories to pop culture narratives in films and comics. One of the museum's aims was to present alternative perspectives on Jewish agency and empowerment. This exhibit included the original baseball bat from the 'bear jew' in Quentin Tarantino's film *Inglorious Basterds*, the formerly proscribed video game *Wolfenstein*,[3] and the food menus of a renowned Jewish-themed mafia restaurant, Maxi Eisen, in the Bahnhofsviertel. One section of the exhibition presented the biographies of several American gangsters within the context of the broader phenomenon of the koshernostra. A local Jewish historian who attended the exhibition observed that, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, a phenomenon akin to the koshernostra emerged in the Bahnhofsviertel, referring to the 1960s and 1970s, when the neighbourhood station was characterized by drug trafficking, illegal gambling, murders and the consolidation of the red-light district (see Janke and Häfner, 2018: 92), including the presence of an Israeli heroin mafia (Spiegel, 1976). The aspect of the Jewish presence in the Bahnhofsviertel that has generated the most controversial debate in Frankfurt's civil society is the involvement of a few Jewish displaced persons (DP) business owners in the growth of the red-light district. It is perhaps most famously the case that Hersch and Chaim Beker commenced their careers as bouncers in nightclubs owned by Josef Buchmann, a prominent property tycoon and concentration camp survivor. Hersh Beker became known as the 'brothel king' in the German media with close political ties to the CDU (Christian Democratic Party), who eventually had to flee to Israel to avoid prosecution. In the public eye, he represented the practices of ruthless property owners, profit maximization, poorly

maintained buildings and run-down flats inhabited by undocumented migrant workers, including many Muslim newcomers from Turkey, India, Pakistan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yugoslavia. However, a former mosque leader recalled being in a car with Hersh Beker looking for a new mosque building, while a Turkish shopkeeper described his Jewish property owner landlord as 'fatherly' and 'never raised the rent'. Muslims in general saw the 'Jewish' shops in the Bahnhofsviertel as 'safe havens' during their childhood.

However, unlike the case seen in *The Zweiflers* series, the Jewish Museum has refrained from addressing this ambiguous and subaltern aspect of the neighbourhood's history, citing concerns about potential anti-Semitic implications. Going beyond the accepted triangle of Jewish representations of anti-Semitism, Israel and the Holocaust is always ambivalent in Germany. This is why the focus is on the koshernostra, deliberately situated in New York and Chicago, rather than in the Bahnhofsviertel, which is in close proximity to the museum. During an exhibition-related event on Yiddish gangster songs in 1920s' USA at the Jewish Museum in May 2022, a 70-year-old Jewish man, who was the son of a DP family, expressed his discontent with the organizers of the event. He believed that they should refrain from mocking or idealizing the lives of these (DP) Jews and avoid comparing them to the Italian mafia, which, in his view, entailed attempting to establish intergenerational criminal empires. In contrast, Jewish communities engaged in such subversive activities for only one generation and then invested in the educational capital of their children. This perspective resonates with the aspirations articulated by some of my Muslim interlocutors, as evidenced by a shop owner's remark, 'I don't want that my daughter still comes to the Bahnhofsviertel.'

The theme of Jewish (and Muslim) immigrant criminality raises complex questions about the role of violence in protecting Jewish neighbourhoods from Italian and Irish gangs, in breaking up pro-Nazi rallies in several US cities, and in helping to smuggle weapons after the Second World War to support efforts to create a Jewish state. It also raises questions about the costs of such brutal empowerment and the legacies of violence within immigrant communities seeking acceptance, upward mobility and security for their families (Gragg, 2021). While these concerns relate to the US historical context, a certain similarity between *The Zweiflers* and Jewish–Muslim life in the Bahnhofsviertel cannot be denied when looking at the struggles of Symcha and Salih in Frankfurt's post-war era, facing prejudice and marginalization, which they circumvented by sometimes illegal means.

Cultural Production and Diasporic Representation

The creators of *The Zweiflers*, as well as many of the new generation of Bahnhofsviertel entrepreneurs and influencers, are part of what Peretz (2023) called the 'enraged generation'. The term refers to a cohort of Jewish activists who challenge the imposition of identity by the leadership of the organized Jewish communities and German majority society. They are attempting to forge 'alliances with other marginalised minorities', 'increase the visibility of post-migrant perspectives' and recognize cultural and religious diversity (see Hopewell and McLennan, 2024). The concept of the 'enraged generation' as depicted in the *The Zweiflers* series contributes to the German-specific discourse surrounding the notion of the post-migrant society. Gidley demonstrated how British-born

Muslim and Jewish artists in East London blended musical genres, and hosted events featuring both Jewish and Muslim acts. British-born Jews and Muslims in this context started to rediscover their shared histories and participated in events like Jewish festivals and anti-fascist marches, fostering a sense of community and mutual understanding (Everett and Gidley, 2018). The French film *La Haine*, by Jewish director Mathieu Kassovitz, also represents, perhaps more than any other post-migrant film, the golden age of urban multiculture in Europe in the 1990s and 2000s. It explores the multifaceted experiences of young adults with Arab, Jewish and African roots in a Parisian suburb, deconstructing fixed essentialist narratives of identity and illuminating the fluid realities of new ethnic formations from the margins.

Critics at the 1999 Berlin Film Festival also noted that a new German cinema was being created by a generation of (post)migrant, particularly German-Turkish, artists and directors, who were attempting to break away from the dominant portrayal of passive victimhood (Burns, 2007). Films such as Thomas Arslaner's *Der schöne Tag* and Fatih Akin's German-Turkish relationship drama *Gegen die Wand* showed how the migration experience in Germany has changed over the last three decades, combining biographical stories with complex urban realities, including the challenges and creative opportunities that these new lifestyles have brought. Several of these post-migrant films, such as Arslan's *Dealer* (1995), focused on the challenges faced by young Turkish-Germans, such as poverty, crime and discrimination, thus challenging the pervasive stereotype of the 'immigrant criminal' and the common portrayal of ethnic and religious minorities as victims. Migrants could therefore also be perceived as perpetrators, navigating a complex political economy characterized by an emphatic yet critical portrayal of subcultural innovation, 'breaking bad' and discrimination. The result is a revealing journey between agency and structure, shaped by local opportunities and constraints as well as transnational ties, which mirrors the complex portrait in *The Zweiflers* in Frankfurt's Bahnhofsviertel, which has nothing to do with sensationalist images of 'immigrant criminality', nor does it avoid debates about the moral responsibility of the main protagonists.

Among these new productions the 1998 comedy *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (*Me Boss, You Sneaker*) deserves special attention, not only because it was directed by Hussi Kutlucan, who played Salih in *The Zweiflers*. In his portrayal of Dudie (also played by Kutlucan), an illegal immigrant in Berlin who ends up working with other migrant workers from Ghana, Iraq, Afghanistan and Turkey on a construction site at Berlin's Potzdamer Platz, the film creates a satirical take on German society exploring themes such as migration, identity and power. Through an analysis of Kutlucan's work, cultural studies scholar, Deniz Göktürk (2004: 121) draws parallels between the experiences of Jewish immigrants in early 20th-century New York and contemporary Muslim migrants in Berlin, to 'complicate all too clear-cut conceptions of ethnic and cultural identities in the Turkish [Muslim]-German-Jewish trialogue'. She shows how the Marx Brothers, a Jewish-American comedy trio, used 'ethnic jokes and role-playing as a survival strategy of speaking back' [to government authorities] to counter hostility and aggression' against Jews. Similarly, Kutlucan uses humour and irony to critique German society and its treatment of immigrants. Göktürk's discussion of Jewish and Turkish immigrants is in line with Stuart Hall's (2021 [1988])concept of 'new ethnicities' and clearly shows

how Jews and Muslims have modified their identities and formed alliances with other disenfranchised groups in response to changing opportunity structures, thereby challenging static notions of ethnicity, religion and nationality. *The Zweiflers* series is thus part of a long tradition and an important contribution by diaspora artists and post-migrant filmmakers. It could be argued that it is the Frankfurt equivalent of films such as Kassovitz's *La Haine* (1996) or Kultucan's *Me Boss, You Sneaker* (1998), which constitutes another influence of the 'real' Salih on *The Zweiflers* plot.

Concluding Analysis: Anti-Essentialist Concepts and Lived Reality

The portrayal of Jewish–Muslim dynamics in *The Zweiflers* offers a compelling window into the complex tapestry of contemporary Germany. The series goes beyond simply depicting diverse characters; it actively engages with the fluid and often contradictory nature of identity construction in a post-migrant society. As highlighted in the theoretical discussion, the concept of the post-migrant society recognizes migration as an established reality that continuously renegotiates cultural, ethnic and national identities (Foroutan, 2015). The Jewish–Muslim diaspora networks within the narrative, characterized by their hybrid alliances and multi-ethnic composition, exemplify this constant negotiation of belonging. While these portrayals resonate with theoretical concepts of 'new ethnicities' (Hall, 2021 [1988]) and 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007), particularly in urban settings like the Bahnhofsviertel, the series also foregrounds the practical, lived reality of these ideas. It illustrates that the 'universalising capacity' of new ethnicities (Becker, 2023) to challenge essentialized categories exists alongside inherent tensions and potential for 'non-convivial labour' to reinforce boundaries (Emmerich, 2025a). This practical negotiation is evident in the inclusion of 'casual' anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism within the show's dialogue, reflecting the complex, often imperfect, nature of intergroup relations in real-world 'convivial' spaces (Back and Sinha, 2016).

The strength of *The Zweiflers* lies in its commitment to exploring the micro-politics of belonging. By presenting scenarios where characters engage in 'ethnic banter' and 'language crossing' (Rampton, 1995), the series highlights how trust and shared knowledge are built and maintained through everyday interactions. This deliberate depiction contrasts with the frequently polarized national discourse surrounding Jewish–Muslim relations in Germany. For instance, the inclusion of conversations about religious circumcision, Islamophobia and historical events like the 2015 refugee crisis or 9/11 directly mirrors public debates. However, the series consistently brings these large-scale issues back to the interpersonal level, showing how families and individuals in the Bahnhofsviertel navigate such controversies while striving for local coexistence. This focus on local perspectives, mirroring the approach of researchers like Gidley et al. (2024), provides a crucial counter-narrative to abstract, often conflict-driven, representations. By grounding these broader societal anxieties within the intimate confines of a family drama, *The Zweiflers* humanizes complex political and social tensions, making them accessible and relatable to a wide audience. As explored in the theoretical section referencing Sanli's (2011) work on 'cultural citizenship', the series effectively publicizes

the everyday lives and concerns of this Jewish–Muslim community, contributing to their visibility.

Furthermore, *The Zweiflers* actively engages with the process of identity work through the experiences of its characters. The dynamic between conservative cultural heritage and the fluidity of urban diversity is a constant source of both tension and adaptation for the Zweiflers and their associates. The exploration of 'dynastic structures' within both Jewish and Muslim families, reminiscent of multi-ethnic family sagas in *The Sopranos*, reveals a unifying element across diasporic groups. This emphasis on intergenerational ties, as also explored in Niyogi's (2011) work on immigrant identity in fiction, suggests a shared cultural logic that transcends specific religious or ethnic affiliations. The casual, yet heated, discussions on historical traumas like genocide and slavery between characters such as Samuel and Saba underscore how shared minority experiences can foster empathy and interconnectedness, even amidst profound historical differences. This approach moves beyond simply portraying victimhood, offering a more active and complex understanding of how these communities grapple with historical legacies and contemporary challenges, often with a sense of agency and even humour, as observed by Lion (2024) in the identity construction of minority youth. This deliberate embrace of ambivalence and self-determination aligns directly with the stated ambition of the series creators to move beyond dominant victim narratives, a point I emphasized in the theoretical introduction.

The series' narrative choices also address the issue of historical amnesia prevalent in the German public sphere. By depicting informal Jewish–Muslim relationships that predate the current era of heightened scrutiny, *The Zweiflers* highlights forgotten urban narratives of cooperation. This is particularly significant given scholarly arguments that the historical presence and positive interactions of Muslim minorities in pre-Second World War Germany have often been overlooked or excluded from national memory frameworks (Jonker, 2020; Özyürek, 2023; Steinke, 2017). The series' deliberate decision to avoid direct engagement with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during filming, as emphasized by Hadda (Post, 2024), serves to underscore its commitment to foregrounding local, interpersonal relationships often overshadowed by global events. This strategic framing reinforces the idea that coexistence is not an anomaly but a deeply rooted historical pattern in marginalized urban spaces like the Bahnhofsviertel. In this way, *The Zweiflers* works against the 'production of ignorance' (Sharapov and Mendel, 2018) that can arise from oversimplified or exceptionalized media portrayals of intergroup relations, instead promoting a more nuanced and historically informed understanding. As my theoretical overview indicated, the series itself functions as a cultural text that shapes public discourse, actively countering simplistic binaries.

In its entirety, *The Zweiflers* operates as an implicit, yet powerful, form of cultural production that actively shapes contemporary understandings of Jewish–Muslim relations. It challenges static assumptions and stereotypical portrayals by presenting characters engaged in ongoing, complex identity work within a superdiverse urban landscape. The show's ability to demonstrate how Jews and Muslims navigate social boundaries, focusing on local challenges and multi-ethnic networks, contributes to a more nuanced public discourse, aligning with Sanli's (2011) concept of 'cultural citizenship'. The enduring partnership between Symcha and Salih, characterized by resilience and a

willingness to endure contradictions, serves as a powerful fictional illustration of the 'convivial labour' (Wessendorf, 2020) observed in real-world Jewish–Muslim encounters. In doing so, *The Zweiflers* offers not just entertainment, but a vital contribution to cultural sociology's ongoing examination of identity, community and representation in a rapidly evolving post-migrant Germany.

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Notes

1. See https://canneseries.com/en/series/the-zweiflers-1/ (accessed 4 December 2025).
2. Part of *The Zweiflers* success may also be due to the lack of diversity in German films and series, with migrants playing stereotypical and mostly supporting acts such as criminals, greengrocers, prostitutes or cleaning ladies. Younger generations, however, who do not recognize their complex reality in these old-fashioned films and series, have increasingly turned away from linear television and found a new entertainment in home streaming services (Assmann, 2020).
3. The Wolfenstein series is a video game franchise set during the Second World War. The protagonist is William Blazkowicz, an American spy of Polish Jewish descent. Blazkowicz is renowned for his capacity to undertake solo missions behind enemy lines, neutralizing Nazis from a first-person shooter perspective. During my visit to the Revenge exhibition at the Jewish Museum in 2022, I had the opportunity to briefly interact with two Dutch Muslim teenagers who were engaged in a gaming session featuring the character of Blazkowicz in Wolfenstein. This particular exhibition room was dedicated to exploring the theme of Jewish revenge in comics and video games. Initially, the accompanying Muslim parents were unsure about the game's violent content. However, upon realizing that it was about killing Nazis, their mother expressed approval, stating, 'Oh, so it's actually a good game.' This demonstrated Muslim minority solidarity with the Jewish victims and their recognition of the agency Wolfenstein provides.

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