Macro-environmental factors affecting integration: Turks in Germany and the Netherlands

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Abstract

This study examines the causal factors to explain the different integration patterns of the Turkish community in the Netherlands and Germany. The Dutch and German Turkish communities offer an excellent opportunity for comparative analysis of integration, since they share many socio-cultural characteristics but differ in their level of integration. It suggests that the Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands are more integrated into the host society than their counterparts in Germany due to the difference in "macro-environmental factors" such as the political-legal framework and economic factors in these countries. These factors can stimulate or constrain the integration of ethnic groups. While anti-ethnic legislation, unfavourable immigration policies and discrimination in the labour market discourage integration, anti-discrimination laws and easy naturalization promote integration of immigrant communities into host societies.

Keywords: Immigration, Turkish immigrants in Europe, naturalization laws.

Introduction

The factors affecting the integration of Turks in Germany and in the Netherlands are examined in this paper.[1] Structural integration is defined as "access to positions and statuses in the core institutions of the receiving society by the immigrants and their descendants," while identificational integration includes "feelings of belonging and identification, particularly in forms of ethnic and/or national identification" (Heckmann, 2003: 47). The Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands are more integrated into the host society than their counterparts in Germany.

Turks in the Netherlands are more willing to adopt Dutch ways of social interaction and more prone to have social relationships with the Dutch. They have a high level of political participation, high voter turnout at municipal elections and in other forms of politics. Their level of trust in Dutch institutions is higher than Turks in Germany, and they are more interested in local news and local politics. At the mass, leadership and organizational level, the Turkish community in the Netherlands is more integrated into the Dutch society. At the mass level, Turks are more willing to learn Dutch and have more social contact with Dutch people on a daily basis. Turkish community leaders

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[1] This study is based on the extensive field research that I conducted in 2005-2006 and was sponsored by the Miami-Florida EU Center of Excellence. The interviews that are used in this study are based on this field research. I conducted 40 interviews in Germany and 20 interviews in the Netherlands. Interviewees are aged 18 and older and selected randomly.

are integrated into the Dutch elite structure and have strong contacts with Dutch local leaders (Tillie *et al.*, 2000). The central Turkish organizations that play a bridging role between the Turkish community and the Dutch society aim to facilitate the integration of Turks, and all cooperate with Dutch institutions in integration (Doomernik, 1995).

On the other hand, Turkish immigrants in Germany are less integrated. Most live in Turkish neighbourhoods, do not speak German and have higher unemployment rates than Germans and other foreigners. When they were asked about how they feel about the German society and their degree of connection to Turkey, 59% of Turks in Germany said that they felt very strong connections to Turkey and did not feel part of the German society (Ozcan, 2004:13). Contrary to their Dutch counterparts, Turkish organizations in Germany isolate the ethnic community from the rest of the society, which furthers both the economic and social exclusion of Turkish immigrants from the German society (Doomernik, 1995).

The Dutch and German Turkish communities offer a comparative analysis of integration, since they share many socio-cultural characteristics but differ in their level of integration. First, most Turks in Germany and the Netherlands are from Central Anatolia, and most never lived in a town prior to emigrating (Manco, 2004). Second, the migrants were initially recruited as labourers. Third, both Turkish communities have existed for several generations, over 45 years.

This paper examines the causal factors to explain the different integration patterns of the Turkish community in the Netherlands and Germany. It suggests that "macro-environmental factors" such as the political-legal framework and economic factors can act stimulate or constrain the integration of ethnic groups (Wong, 1978).

Macro-environmental factors

Political and Legal Factors

Anti-ethnic legislation and unfavourable immigration policies discourage the integration of minority groups by affecting the public perception and self-identification of immigrants (Wong 1978; Broom and Kitsuse 1955; Sharot 1974; Koopmans 1999). In countries where the nation is defined as a 'community of consent' so that 'in principle anybody who pledges allegiance to the common political values and institutions can have access', ethnic boundaries are less visible and the integration of the minority groups is easier. By contrast, in countries where the nation is defined as a 'community of descent', society can be polarized along ethnic lines (Koopmans, 1999). Dutch and German immigration policies show that these policies are important to shape integration processes.

The Netherlands has a policy of giving foreigners local voting rights, enacting and enforcing strong anti-discrimination laws, and offering secure resi-

dence rights after five years and easy naturalization. Both the Dutch officials themselves and the representatives of the minority groups living in the country consider the Netherlands to be a multicultural and tolerant country that respects diversity (Thranhardt, 1999). In Germany, on the other hand, a culture of institutionalized diversity is not established. The conflict about immigration and the identification of immigration and specific immigrant groups is an issue between the left and the right central to German politics. Immigrants were attacked, suffered arson attacks and beatings (Thranhardt, 1999).

Germany's ethno-cultural conception of citizenship and nationhood is reflected in its definition of Germany as a 'community of descent." According to Article 116 of the German Constitution, 'Germans' include German citizens and people of German ethnicity who live outside Germany and are not German citizens until they return. Article 6 of the Federal Law on Expellees says: 'Members of the German people are those who have committed themselves in their homelands to Germanness (Deutschtum), in as far as this commitment is confirmed by certain facts such as descent, language, upbringing or culture' (Koopmans, 1999). Germany's ethno-centric citizenship regime leads to a rigid division between immigrants and Germans, which is reproduced with every generation since citizenship was not obtained by birth in Germany until 2000 (Koopmans, 1999).

The ethno-centric citizenship regime of Germany has important consequences for Turkish immigrants' access to certain professional and political positions. For instance, there are few Turks in the German police force, army or the judiciary, and teachers must have German citizenship (Koopmans, 1999).

Definitions of citizenship thus have a strong impact on the ways Turkish immigrants are perceived by the German society and the ways they define themselves and their relationship to Germans. Since most of the Turkish immigrants in Germany lack citizenship rights, they do not display interest in their integration, occupying themselves instead with homeland political struggles (Bocker, 2004: 8).

Years of legal discrimination also had other consequences. Since the Turkish immigrants have been excluded from the institutional structure of the German society, they relied on ethnic associations to provide welfare and legal services and a positive identity, which further segregated the residents of Turkish neighbourhoods from the larger society and minimized out-group contacts (Manco, 2004).

While Germany's ethno-cultural conception of the nation makes citizenship difficult to obtain, the Dutch tradition of tolerance and plurality is reflected in its easy naturalization after five years of permanent residence in the Netherlands. A child of immigrant parents has the option to become Dutch without the parents having to give up their own nationality (Doomernik, 1995). This liberal citizenship regime is reflected in the naturalization rate of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. While about 20% of Turks have

German citizenship, in the Netherlands this percentage is about 70% (Bocker, 2004:4).

Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands have the right to vote and to stand as candidates in municipal elections as a result of a policy aiming at equal participation of ethnic minorities in Dutch society (Rath, 1983). This increased the political participation of the Turkish immigrants and resulted in a high turnout of Turkish voters (Bocker 2004). In 1990, the first Turkish councillors took office, and today almost all cities and towns with sizable Turkish populations have two or more Turkish councillors.

This openness of the Dutch political system has far reaching consequences for the self-perception and public perception of Turkish immigrants, increasing their level of trust in political parties and governmental institutions and defining where they stand in relation to local politics. Contrary to their German counterparts, who are mostly engaged with homeland politics and display little interest in local politics since they do not have the right to vote in local elections, Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands are more interested in local news and local politics (Fennema & Tillie, 2000), which makes them part of the host society both in the eyes of the Dutch society and in their own self-perceptions.

While ethnic organizations in Germany create ethnic enclaves that make integration into the German society harder, Turkish organizations in the Netherlands play a bridge-like function between the Turkish community and the Dutch society due to the Dutch policy of supporting ethnic associations and because of the inter-ethnic coalitions between these organizations. Ethnic organizations have been subsidized from the 1960s onward, and the maintenance of ethnic culture has been actively promoted by the Dutch government (Fennema and Tillie, 2000). If an ethnic organization launches activities that can be considered of public benefit (for example, schools, broadcasting, etc.), the state covers the costs, so that the Turkish religious organization *Milli Gorus* in the Netherlands can offer language courses, inter-ethnic sports and cultural activities with government support, creating communication opportunities for the Turks and the Dutch. On the other hand, the number of social activities in mosques that are aimed at furthering the chances for participation of their clients in the host society is rather small in Germany due to the lack of financial support by the German state (Doomernik, 1995).

Turkish organizations in the Netherlands are cooperating with the Dutch institutions, which increases the level of inter-ethnic trust. According to a study by Tillie *et al.* (2000), all Turkish organizations in the Netherlands work with at least one Dutch organization (political party, welfare organizations.), but this inter-ethnic coalition building does not exist in Germany, where Turkish organizations have defensive motivations such as protecting their identity, culture, values and norms. Being excluded from the institutional structure of the host society, Turkish organizations in Germany aim to create

ethnic enclaves to provide for the ethnic community without the need to integrate into the host society.

Political and legal factors provide opportunities and shape the incentives at individual and organizational levels. Policies and regulations can create a tolerant social atmosphere that promotes the coexistence of different ethnic groups. In such a social setting, minorities will have both the opportunity and the incentive to integrate into the host society. While the legal definition of an immigrant and the policies that reflect this definition shape the identity of the immigrant by determining his/her public perception and self-perception, the policies that regulate the organization of the immigrant community shape the relationship of the organizational structure of the immigrants with that of the host society. Therefore, political and legal factors are important variables in the integration process of the immigrant groups.

Economic Opportunity

Economic opportunity is another aspect of the larger society that plays an important role in the integration process of an ethnic group. Economic success and its accompanying upward mobility can provide incentives for integration (Fellow, 1972; Befu, 1965), while restricted economic opportunity may prompt ethnic groups to form closed ethnic associations and neighbourhoods for protection and thus isolate themselves from the larger society (Wong, 1974). Finally ethnic groups may use their ethnicity as a resource for socioeconomic activities and perpetuate ethnic enclaves (Wong, 1978).

Turks in Germany have limited upward mobility, while the Turks in the Netherlands have more access to the public sector and higher positions (Bocker, 2004: 24). Since the end of 1970s, the unemployment rate of Turks in Germany has been above the rate of the total labour force. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Turks' unemployment increased markedly, from 10% in 1990 to 24% in 1997. The rate decreased slightly to 22.7% in 2002 (Ozcan, 2004: 5). There are two main reasons for the high unemployment rate among Turkish immigrants: many are employed in manufacturing industries where job opportunities have been declining and many lack vocational qualifications.

Turks commonly remain without formal vocational training, which is a trend that holds true for the second generation as well. In 2002, 71% of Turkish migrants had no vocational qualification, while 25% had completed formal vocational training (Ozcan, 2004: 6).

Over 62% of second generation employed Turks in 2002 were in blue-collar jobs (Ozcan, 2004: 8). As a result of the increasing unemployment rate and discrimination, the share of the self-employed among the second generation increased from 2% in 1997 to 5% in 2002. Turkish immigrants established ethnic businesses in Berlin, where the presence of other Turks made it profitable to establish businesses. Using strong social ties, ethnic entrepreneurs could mobilize financial and human capital. One study found that Turk-

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ish businesses employed 412 persons, of whom 23 per cent were family members and 65 per cent were of Turkish origin (Bayar, 1996).

Due to the discrimination in the labour market and the lack of capital to participate in capital-intensive enterprise, Turkish businessmen have concentrated in the ethnic niche. Due to limited economic opportunity, Turks united around ethnic associations, which decreased incentives to integrate into the German society. This "ethnic enclave" provides the Turkish immigrants the social environment to survive without using the institutions of the host society, which also means that Turks in Germany do not have to learn German.

Islam is by far the most important marker of belonging and identity in the Turkish immigrant community and geographical concentration of ethnic institutions has strengthened their attachment. These ethnic organizations not only enhance communication among members of the ethnic group, they also create a sense of common good and destiny that reinforces the ethnic boundaries between the host society and the immigrant community and thus they are detrimental to the integration (Manco, 2004).

There is more upward mobility in the Netherlands for Turkish immigrants because the nationality requirement applies to a more limited number of positions and because more immigrants have Dutch nationality. Both the national and the local governments in the Netherlands have positive discrimination policies to favour immigrants, making Turks in the Netherlands far less dependent on the ethnic niche for economic activity. Although there are Turkish neighbourhoods, they are less popular than in Germany, which makes the integration of the community in the Netherlands easier.

Conclusion

Structural and environmental factors in the larger society are principally responsible for differential rates of integration. Historically, Germany has been more discriminatory in its treatment of immigrants (Zick *et al.*, 2001). The legal structure in Germany reflects the attitudes and perceptions of the host society and years of discriminatory practices produced feelings of rejection among Turks, which led to defensive measures such as creating ethnic niches. In the Netherlands, by contrast, the Dutch cultural tradition does not emphasize racial differences and the Turkish community found a place for itself both in the public and political realm.

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