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Comparing integration

Host culture adoption and ethnic retention among Turkish immigrants and their descendents in France, Germany and the Netherlands

Introduction

The past years there has been much debate on immigrant integration and the role of integration policies. Several countries, including the Netherlands, are currently rethinking their integration policies with the goal of stimulating immigrant integration. There are several European research projects that compare integration policies across countries. Some of these projects, such as the Migration and Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), use a list of 'best practices' that would form the basis of a successful integration policy. So far, little is known about the extent to which policies affect integration and about what type of policy produces what type of result. This dissertation seeks to contribute to societal and scientific debate by examining the relationship between integration policies and the socio-cultural integration of immigrants. Socio-cultural integration includes aspects such as language proficiency and usage, identification, social contacts and religiosity. There are several studies that have examined the relationship between policies and political integration and integration in the labour market, but studies on the effect on socio-cultural integration are rare. I compare the socio-cultural integration of immigrants in three European countries that have pursued a different type of integration policies; France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Cross-national comparative research on integration is complicated by differences in the registration of the immigrant population. Some countries collect statistics on the foreign population, others on the foreign-born, and yet others on ethnic or racial minorities. Differences in the origin countries of the immigration population also complicate international comparisons. Differences in the colonial history and recruitment of guest-workers, have led to a different composition of the immigrant population in France, Germany and the Netherlands. A representative sample of the immigrant population would contain many Algerians in France and many Turks in Germany. Previous studies have shown that nationality, country of origin and generation affect socio-cultural integration. Since this dissertation focuses on the effects of integration policy, it is crucial to minimize the influence of other differences between the three countries. Therefore, new data have been collected using the same definition of the target population in all three countries. The target group consists of Turkish immigrants (irrespective of their nationality) and their adult children. Turks form the largest immigrant group in Europe. More than 70% of Turkish immigrants and their children live in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Turkey has not been colonised by any of these countries, so the comparison is not distorted by host country language proficiency acquired prior to migration. In all three countries large scale immigration of Turks started in the 1960s with the recruitment of guest-workers. The rules for admission did not noteworthy differ between the countries. After the end of recruitment in the mid-1970s the immigration pattern of Turkish immigrants started to diverge. France

and the Netherlands had a fairly open family reunification policy which has led to a high share of marriage migrants. Germany had a relatively open asylum policy, which resulted in a higher share of Turkish asylum seekers than in the two other countries. Since differences in the type of migration can influence socio-cultural integration, the target group of this study is limited to Turkish immigrants who migrated no later than 1975 and their children – both those born in the host country (second generation) and those born in Turkey who immigrated before adulthood (1.5 generation). Marriage migrants, refugees and other immigrants who came to the host countries as adults after 1975 are excluded from the study. The regional origins of Turkish migrants vary between destination countries. Turkish regions show large differences in modernisation, prosperity, religiosity and ethnic composition which in turn can affect socio-cultural integration. Therefore the target group is further restricted to immigrants from two Turkish regions; South-Central and East-Central Anatolia. South-Central Anatolia, with as core regions Konya and Karaman, is a predominantly ethnic Turkish and religiously Sunni region. East-Central Anatolia, with Sivas as core-region, has ethnic minorities such as Kurds and Zaza. In addition this region contains a large share of Alevis. Alevism is a humanistic current within Islam. According to rough estimates Alevis constitute 25 per cent of the Turkish population. Many Turkish Sunnites think Alevis are not 'real' Muslims because they do not visit the mosque and do not practice Ramadan.

With almost 1.5 million Turkish born inhabitants, Germany has the largest group of Turkish immigrants. They make up 1.78 per cent of the total German population. In the Netherlands the almost 200,000 immigrants form 1.20 per cent of the total population, but in France with 222,000 immigrants the share in the total population is only 0.36 per cent. It is possible that the relative size of the Turkish population has an effect on socio-cultural integration. Someone who lives in an area with few other Turks will have more difficulties finding Turkish friends than someone in an area with many other Turks. The influence of the relative size of the Turkish community will mainly be on the local and not on the national level. Therefore all multivariate analyses in this dissertation are controlled for the relative size of the Turkish immigrant community in the place of residence of the respondent. The cross-national differences presented below exist after controlling for the size of the Turkish immigrant population.

In a cross-national comparative study, it is not only important to have a comparable target population, but also that respondents are recruited with comparable or preferably the same sampling method. Every sampling method can lead to a certain form of bias. By using the same sampling methods in all three countries under study, the chance that found national differences are caused by differences in sampling instead of policies is minimised. A combination of three different sampling methods has been used. The largest share of the respondents has been recruited in a sample of online telephone books on the basis of stems of common Turkish surnames. In addition, part of the respondents from Sivas and Karaman have been recruited during the Summer of 2005 while they were

visiting their region of origin. Lastly, a cross-generational and cross-national snowball was used; respondents were asked for the telephone numbers of their children and parents, and of family members and fellow villagers living in the two other countries of the study. A telephone survey was held from November 2005 until June 2006. In total 1,000 people participated; 432 in France, 295 in Germany, and 273 in the Netherlands. All interviews were conducted by bilingual interviewers. The questionnaire was available in Dutch, French, German and Turkish. In 2007 additional in-depth interviews were held; 28 in France, 29 in Germany, and 29 in the Netherlands. Most respondents of the in-depth interviews were recruited through the telephone survey. A minority was recruited later on through the snowball method.

Theoretical framework

In this dissertation socio-cultural integration is treated as a two-dimensional concept consisting of the degree of host culture adoption and the degree of ethnic retention. These two dimensions are seen as independent. Both dimensions are measured on the basis of four indicators. The degree of host culture adoption is measured as identification with the host country, host country language proficiency, host country language usage and social contacts with natives. The degree of ethnic retention is measured as identification with Turks, Turkish language proficiency, identification with Muslims and the observance of Islamic religious rules (halal diet, participation in Ramadan, mosque visits and headscarf wearing). Identification with Islam and observance of Islamic religious rules is treated as an aspect of ethnic retention because the Islamic religion is the dominant religion in Turkey but not in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Treating religiosity as an indicator of retention does not mean that I assume that people who are (observant) Muslims are not adopting the host country culture. Precisely because integration is measured independently on two dimensions we may find that people are both religious Muslims and have largely adopted the host culture.

France, Germany and the Netherlands are examples of three different integration policy types. French policies are 'universalist'. This means that immigrants in France have relatively good access to individual equality, but that there is little accommodation of immigrant culture and religion. German policies are more 'assimilationist', they give immigrants relatively limited access to individual equality and also little accommodation of immigrant culture. Finally, Dutch policies most approach a 'multicultural' policy. They offer both good access to individual equality and accommodation of diversity. Recently, there has been a lot of criticism of studies that argue that the policies of a country can be seen as exemplary of a certain policy type. Critics argue that policies have converged between countries and that large policy changes within countries show that there is no consistent ideology behind integration policies. In **Chapter 2** it is shown that, despite changes over time, all three countries have consistently pursued a different policy type. German policies have granted immigrants easier access to citizenship since the changes in

the nationality law in the 1990s and 2000, but Germany still has the highest residence requirement (8 years compared to 5 in both the Netherlands and France). Germany is also most strict in the allowance of dual citizenship. The anti-discrimination legislation in Germany provides less protection than the legislation in France and the Netherlands. In addition, immigrants and their German-born children face a higher risk of expulsion than in France and the Netherlands. Despite frequent claims that the Netherlands has turned away from multiculturalism, Dutch policies still provide a relatively high degree of accommodation of immigrant culture and religion. The change in Dutch integration policies was mainly a change in discourse and barely in policy. Mother tongue classes were not abolished until 2006. The Netherlands still has a national consultative body for immigrant organisations (*Landelijk Overleg Minderheden*) and subsidies for schools and public broadcasting corporations of religious minorities. France's policies have been most stable over the past 30 years. French citizenship is seen as a driving force behind integration. France however provides little room for the public expression of particularistic identities. It is the only one among the three countries in this study that has forbidden the headscarf for secondary school pupils.

There are several theories about the possible effects of policies on host country adoption and ethnic retention. In this dissertation five different hypotheses are tested. Firstly, the hypothesis that accommodation of diversity leads to a higher degree of ethnic retention. Countries that offer access to means on the basis of group characteristics such as language or religion, make it more attractive for immigrants to retain their culture, because certain benefits are attached. In addition, in countries that have lower assimilation requirements, ethnic retention has fewer costs. There are competing hypotheses on the effect of the accommodation of diversity on the degree of host culture adoption. Some argue that the accommodation of diversity has a positive effect on host culture adoption, because immigrants feel more at home when they are not forced to give up a part of their identity. Others argue that accommodation of diversity removes the incentive for host country adoption and therefore will have a negative effect. On the basis of social identity theory it is predicted that policies that provide immigrants with a high degree of individual equality have a positive effect on host culture adoption. The individual equality makes immigrants feel accepted as a member of the host society and therefore will be more likely to adopt host country culture. The absence of equality on the other hand might lead to a reactive ethnicity. It is argued that the lack of equal rights causes immigrants to withdraw into their own ethnic group.

Results

In **Chapter 3** the data from the survey are used to test all five above mentioned hypotheses. The results from the multivariate analyses show significant cross-national differences for 6 of the 8 measures of ethnic retention and host culture adoption. Turkish immigrants and their children show a high degree of identification with Turks in all three countries under

study. There are no significant cross-national differences. Turkish language proficiency is also equally high across countries. However, Turkish immigrants and their children in the Netherlands do identify more with Muslims than those in Germany. France takes an in-between position. The analyses also show that Islamic religious rules are more often observed in the Netherlands and France than in Germany. There is limited evidence for the hypothesis that policies that accommodate diversity also lead to a higher degree of ethnic retention. No support is found for the prediction that limited access to individual equality results in immigrants withdrawing into their own circle. Despite less access to individual equality, Germany does not show a higher degree on any of the four measures of retention and even lower scores on religiosity than in the two other countries. The higher educated and younger generations generally show a lower degree of ethnic retention. Alevis identify less with Turks and are also less religious than Sunnis. The analyses of the measures of host culture adoption show more cross-national differences than for ethnic retention. In France and the Netherlands the degree of host country identification is significantly higher than in Germany. Host country language proficiency however is higher in France than in the Netherlands, with an in-between position for Germany. In France not only host country language proficiency is higher, the host country language is also used more often in conversations with the partner, children and friends than in the Netherlands and Germany. Finally, Turkish immigrants and their children in France also have more social contacts with natives outside their homes. These results provide no support for the hypothesis that accommodation of diversity, such as in the Netherlands, leads to a higher degree of host culture adoption. There is more support for the counterhypothesis; identification with the host country is equally high in the Netherlands and France, but on the other three measures the Netherlands has a lower score. The differences between France and Germany support the argument that a higher degree of individual equality has a positive effect on host country adoption. Generation, education and employment in general show a positive relationship with the four measures of host culture adoption.

In **Chapter 4** the identification of the children of Turkish immigrants with Turks and the host country is analysed with the data from both the telephone survey and the in-depth interviews. The analyses in this chapter show that the lower degree of identification with the host country in Germany compared to France and the Netherlands can in part be attributed to a lower degree of experienced acceptance. Nevertheless children of Turkish immigrants do not feel completely accepted as host country members in France and the Netherlands either. This explains in part why the overall degree of identification with Turks is higher than the degree of identification with the host country. Another factor, however, is the strong ethnic identity and desire for culture preservation that through a process of self-exclusion also contributes to a relatively low degree of host country identification. This does not mean that children of Turkish immigrants do not feel connected with their country of residence. This connection does exist, however it is mostly present at the local instead of the national level.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the effect of naturalisation requirements. Germany has had the highest barriers to naturalisation. The minimum residence requirement was lowered from 10 to 8 years in 2000. Until 2000 the naturalisation guidelines stated that Germany is not a country of immigration and that naturalisation is only possible if it is in the German public interest. Immigrants had to show they were integrated in German society. Membership of an ethnic organisation was seen as a counter indication of integration. Dual nationality is only allowed in a minority of cases. Until 1991 there was so simplified naturalisation procedure for the German-born children of immigrants. The strict naturalisation rules led to low naturalisation rates in Germany until the 1990s. The Netherlands, to the contrary, did strive for the naturalisation of immigrants. This would improve their legal position. Naturalisation is possible after 5 years of residence. Until 2003 only limited integration requirements were in place. Generally the integration test consisted of little more than a couple of simple oral questions. From 1992-1997 dual nationality was allowed. This provision has been much used. Since 1997 the requirement to renounce previous nationality has been reinstated, but many exceptions exist. Children of immigrants have simplified access to citizenship; they have an option right. Due to the lenient naturalisation requirements, the Dutch naturalisation rate is above the European average. France has an open naturalisation policy for the French-born children of immigrants. They become French citizens automatically at the age of majority. France is the only country in this study that allows dual nationality without exception. France has always demanded a certain degree of integration including language proficiency but also knowledge of French culture. These are tested at a higher level than in the Netherlands.

In **Chapter 5** data from the survey are used to determine whether easily accessible citizenship has a positive effect on host culture adoption. Only the Turkish born are included in the analyses in this chapter. French and Dutch citizenship regulations have led to a near maximum degree of host country citizenship for the second generation which makes it impossible to examine the difference between people with and without host country citizenship. First the relationship between nationality and host culture adoption is examined. For the Dutch respondents no differences were found between those with and without Dutch citizenship. In France and Germany naturalised Turkish immigrants showed a higher degree of identification with their host country, better host country language proficiency, and higher host country language usage than non-naturalised Turkish immigrants. In none of the three countries a relationship between citizenship and social contacts with natives was found. It appears that only in the two countries that demand a certain degree of integration, there is a positive relationship between naturalisation and the degree of host culture adoption. As in Chapter 3 the overall degree of host culture adoption turns out to be highest in France. The results in this chapter again provide no support for the premise that accommodation of diversity – in this case in the form of low integration requirement for naturalisation – has a positive effect on host culture adoption. The French results show that the allowance of dual nationality does not hinder host culture adoption.

In **Chapter 6** data from the in-depth interviews are used to examine what motives Turkish immigrants and their children have for naturalising or remaining foreigners. In general respondents see few benefits in naturalisation. Nevertheless instrumental reasons are most important in the decision to naturalise. This generally does not refer to voting rights, but rather to easier travelling. The high naturalisation rate in the Netherlands is mainly caused by the low naturalisation costs. In France and Germany respondents relatively often gave emotional reasons for naturalisation. This reflects the stronger connection that is made between nationality and identity in these two countries. In Germany, however, many respondents feel that even with a German passport they will not be accepted as Germans. The possibility to maintain Turkish citizenship plays an ambiguous role in naturalisation decisions. For people in Germany it is not a barrier, but part of the Dutch and French respondents states that when forced to choose they would choose the Turkish passport.

Conclusions

It is difficult to draw strong conclusions about the effects of integration policies on socio-cultural integration on the basis of a three country comparison. It is possible that other differences between the countries have affected socio-cultural integration. In **Chapter 7 I** therefore discuss several alternative explanations such as differences in segregation, cultural distance, selective return migration and the shift in the Dutch integration debate. None of the explanations fits the results from this study better than the hypotheses on the effects of policies.

On the basis of this study several tentative policy recommendations can be made. Policies that grant immigrants and their children a high degree of individual equality – meaning access to citizenship and good protection from discrimination-, have a positive effect on the degree of host culture adoption. It can therefore be expected that the facilitation of access to citizenship in Germany eventually will lead to a higher degree of host culture adoption. Policies that grant immigrants a relatively high extent of accommodation of diversity are more likely to have a negative than a positive impact on host culture adoption. The only exception is identification with the host country. Possibly, this is because a multicultural policy reflects a thinner national identity; this makes it possible for immigrants to identify with the host country without a high degree of language proficiency or social contacts with natives. The decreasing support for the accommodation of diversity in the Netherlands can have a positive effect on host culture adoption. However, this will only be the case when policies that grant a high degree of individual equality are maintained, because otherwise feelings of exclusion will hinder host culture adoption.

The results from Chapters 5 and 6 suggest that low naturalisation costs and open and transparent naturalisation procedures will have a positive effect on naturalisation rates. Including a certain degree of integration as naturalisation requirement has a positive effect

on host culture adoption. However, no miracles should be expected from raising integration requirements, since the host country nationality is not much desired. High requirements will lead to a lower naturalisation rate, which in a liberal democracy with high numbers of immigrants eventually lead to problems, because large sections of the population will not be able to vote.

Though this study has shown that there is a relationship between integration policies and socio-cultural integration, it is important to realise that the effect of policies are generally modest. This is in part because policies are not always completely supported by the general population. Policies in France and the Netherlands offer immigrants a higher degree of inclusion, but, as can be read in Chapter 4, also in these countries immigrants face exclusion in their daily lives.

This study looks only at Turkish immigrants and their children. Though the restricted target group is the strength of the research design, it is important to repeat the study with other groups. Possibly a study of other immigrant groups with a lower degree of national awareness will show more effects of policies on the degree of ethnic retention. This study only looked at the relationship between policies and socio-cultural integration. To what extent the results also apply to other domains such as educational and labour market integration should be addressed in future studies.