

Join the club, but learn the rules

Wanted: intelligent integration policies

Evelyn Ersanilli and Ruud Koopmans

Many European countries are struggling to develop policies that stimulate socio-cultural aspects of integration, such as language proficiency, interethnic social contacts and identification with the host society. These are all important prerequisites for social cohesion in plural societies. The question is, which type of policies best promotes immigrant integration? Two dimensions of national integration policies are relevant here: the degree to which countries offer immigrants access to legal equality as individuals, and what kind of duties and rights immigrants have in the cultural domain. On the individual equality dimension, the central question is whether policies should grant immigrants immediate access to full citizenship rights (rights as a precondition for integration) or whether access to rights should be dependent on a certain amount of integration (rights as a reward for integration).

On the cultural dimension, the core choice is between more assimilationist and more multicultural policies. The former are based on the idea that a certain degree of cultural assimilation should be demanded from immigrants to further their integration. Multicultural policy approaches, by contrast, assume that recognizing and supporting immigrant cultures and religions help immigrants connect to the host country. The state should therefore provide support for immigrant organizations and expressions of immigrant cultures, such as their ethnic languages or religious expressions such as the Islamic headscarf.

In our study, we have investigated the effects of integration policies on the socio-cultural integration of immigrants along these two dimensions by comparing three countries with different policies; Germany, the Netherlands and France. In such a comparison, one must take into account that the immigration histories of these countries are not identical. Because we are interested in the effects of different integration policies and not in the effects of origin country characteristics or migration type, our study controls for these factors by only looking at Turkish immigrants and their descendants. Germany, France and the Netherlands have been the three most important destination countries for Turkish immigrants. They number about 350,000 in France and the Netherlands, and 2.5 million in Germany. Relative to the total population, the concentration of Turks is clearly lower in France. However, this does not explain the differences we report below, which remain when we control for the percentage of Turks.

Germany has long been known for a citizenship regime that made it hard for immigrants to become German citizens. Although over the course of the 1990s Germany opened up its citizenship legislation, Germany still provides immigrants with fewer rights than France and particularly the Netherlands. Immigrants in Germany can naturalize after eight years, those in France and the Netherlands after five years. Dual citizenship is only allowed in a limited number of cases, whereas it is mostly condoned in the Netherlands and unconditionally accepted in France. Germany also has weaker anti-discrimination legislation than the other two countries.

Since the 1980s the Netherlands has granted immigrants much more cultural and religious rights than France and Germany. It has set up and funded advisory councils for the largest immigrant groups and for a long time provided immigrants with information in their own languages. In addition, the legal provisions that existed for Catholics and Protestants were also used for immigrant groups, which for instance led to the establishment of Islamic and Hindu broadcasting corporations and schools. There are currently about 45 state-funded Islamic schools in the Netherlands, compared to two in Ger-

Summary

Socio-cultural integration of immigrants in Europe

A study of Turkish immigrants in Germany, France and the Netherlands shows different outcomes, depending on different policies. Everywhere, Turkish immigrants show strong ethnic retention, but Islamic religiosity is weaker in Germany. Inclusive citizenship rights stimulate immigrants' orientation on the host country in the form of identification, language use, and interethnic contacts. Multicultural policies on the other hand seem to have a negative impact on host culture adoption, with the exception of identification.

many and one in France. The Netherlands have also been the most tolerant towards the headscarf. In public schools, both teachers and students are allowed to wear a headscarf, and the same is true for civil servants, with the police and the courts as the only exceptions. In Germany, in most federal states, teachers and civil servants are not permitted to wear headscarves, although pupils can wear them without restriction. France has been most restrictive in accommodating public expressions of the Islamic faith. Teachers and other civil servants cannot wear a headscarf and since 2004 this also applies to school pupils. The Netherlands also have the lowest cultural integration requirements for naturalization. Because citizenship was seen as an important means of legal equality, the integration requirement for naturalization consisted of nothing more than a very modest oral language exam. Germany and France have generally had stricter language requirements and have also demanded a certain degree of social integration. In 2003 Dutch legislation became stricter, but by then a large share of the immigrant community had already naturalized.

Ethnic retention

We look both at the socio-cultural orientation of immigrants on the host society, and at the extent to which they have maintained the language and culture of their country of origin. To measure retention we have investigated the degree of identification with Turks, Turkish language proficiency, identification with Muslims and observance of Islamic religious practices. The data were gathered in a telephone survey that was held in 2005-2006. We found that in all three countries retention is high. On a scale ranging from 1 “not at all” to 5 “completely” the average level of identification with Turks is 4.5. There are no differences between the three countries. The same holds true for Turkish language proficiency, which is equally high in all three countries. One of the reasons for the lack of cross-national differences is likely the strong ethnic identity of Turkish immigrants. Many expressed their desire to raise their children as ‘Turks’, meaning being aware of their ethnicity, being fluent in Turkish and maintaining Turkish customs.

For religious retention we did find cross-national differences. In all three countries Turkish immigrants identify strongly with Muslims (4.7 on a five-point scale), but identification is higher in the Netherlands than in Germany, and France takes an in-between position. The observance of religious practices is also highest in the Netherlands, slightly lower in France and lowest in Germany. For instance, little over half of our German respondents, compared



Evelyn Ersanilli, born in 1980, studied Interdisciplinary Social Science at Utrecht University (the Netherlands). She did her PhD research at the Free University Amsterdam on the socio-cultural integration of Turkish immigrants in France, Germany and the Netherlands (defense expected in 2010). Since August 2009 she has been working as a senior researcher at the WZB for the research unit “Migration, Integration, Transnationalization”. [Photo: Udo Borchert]

ersanilli@wzb.eu

Ruud Koopmans, born in 1961, is a graduate of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam; senior researcher at the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research (ASSR), at the Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau in Rijswijk and at the WZB. Since 2003 he has held the position of Professor of Sociology, Chair in Social Conflict and Change, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and since April 2007 he has been Director of the WZB research unit „Migration, Integration, Transnationalization”.

koopmans@wzb.eu

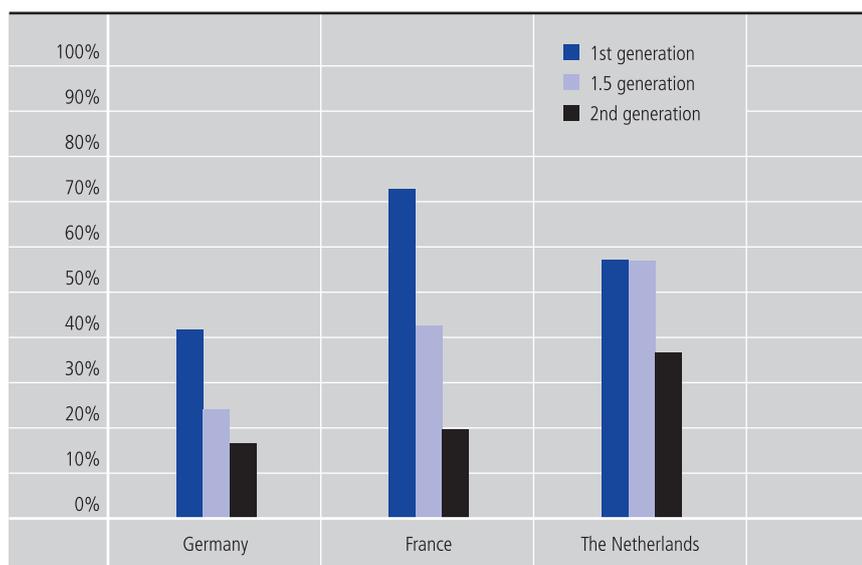


Figure 1
Share of women who always wear a headscarf, per country and generation
Source: own calculations
1.5 generation: born in Turkey, immigrated as a minor

Kurz gefasst

Eine Studie über türkische Immigranten in Deutschland, Frankreich und den Niederlanden zeigt, dass die soziokulturelle Integration in diesen Ländern unterschiedlich verläuft, abhängig von deren Gestaltung. Es zeigt sich, dass die Ausstattung mit inklusiven Bürgerrechten die Orientierung an und Identifizierung mit der Kultur im Gastland stimuliert. Multikulturelle Integrationsstrategien scheinen auf der anderen Seite einen negativen Einfluss darauf zu haben, wie gut sich Zuwanderer an die einheimische Kultur – abgesehen von der Identifikation – anpassen.

to almost 80 per cent of the French and Dutch respondents, always observe Ramadan. As Figure 1 shows, the share of women who always wear a headscarf shows a similar pattern. The wearing of headscarves strongly declines over the generations, but this decline is most notable in France and least in the Netherlands. Dutch policies of multiculturalism thus seem to have been effective to the extent that they have stimulated Turkish Muslims to retain their religious identity and practices to a larger extent than their counterparts in France and Germany. The question is, of course, whether this has also led to a stronger orientation on the host society.

Adoption of host country culture

To measure adoption of the host country culture we inquired about identification with the country of residence, host country language proficiency and use, and social contacts with host country ethnics. In all the three countries, the identification with the country of residence is much lower than the identification with Turkey. On average it is 2.6 on a five-point scale. Turkish immigrants in France and the Netherlands identify more strongly with their country of residence than Turkish immigrants in Germany. Many Turkish immigrants in Germany feel they are not accepted as fellow Germans. In France and the Netherlands feelings of exclusion are also present, but they are less prevalent.

Turkish immigrants and their descendants in France have the highest level of host country language proficiency, those in the Netherlands the lowest. In all three countries Turkish is the language that is most frequently used in communication with parents, the partner, children and friends. In general, Turkish immigrants in France use the host country language more often than those in Germany and the Netherlands. Though the use of the host country language increases over generation, only for those born in France has it become the dominant language. Turkish immigrants in France are less likely to have a predominantly Turkish social circle (see Figure 2). In France and Germany the children of Turkish immigrants are more likely to hang out with natives than their parents, but in the Netherlands, there is little sign of such a generational increase.

On the whole, we can conclude that Turkish immigrants in France show the strongest orientation on the host society: they identify relatively strongly with France, speak French better and use it more often, and have more social contacts with natives. In the Netherlands, the only positive aspect of socio-cultu-

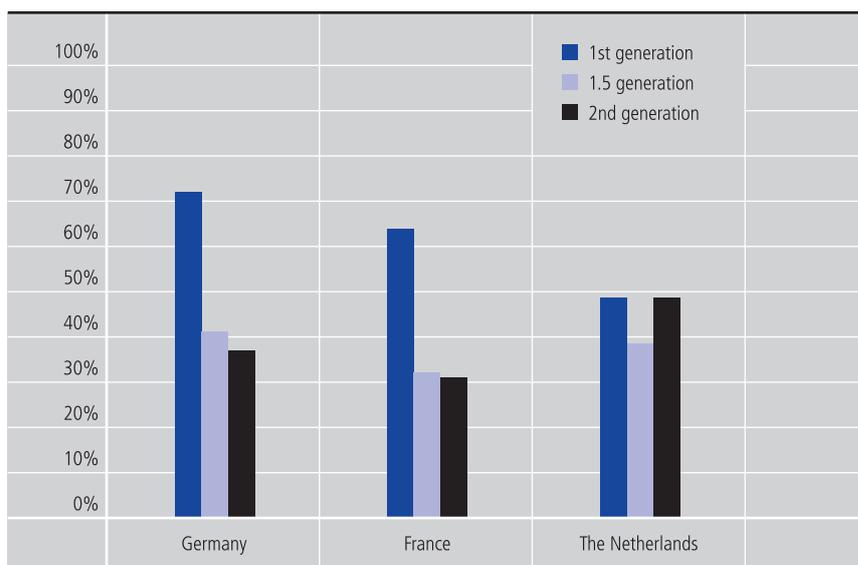


Figure 2

Predominantly Turkish social circle, per country and generation

Source: own calculations

1.5 generation: born in Turkey, immigrated as a minor

ral integration is the relatively high level of identification with the Netherlands, which, however, is combined with low levels of language proficiency and use, and particularly in the second generation a comparatively strong orientation on social contacts within the own ethnic group. German Turks score only slightly better than Dutch Turks on language adoption and interethnic social contacts, but are further distinguished by a very low level of identification with Germany, which is linked to their, in a comparative perspective not unfounded, feelings of being excluded from access to equal citizenship rights.

These results do not provide support for the Dutch multicultural policy approach, which has, as we have seen, stimulated the retention of a strong religiosity among Turkish immigrants, but has not promoted their proficiency and use of the Dutch language or the development of interethnic social contacts. Only regarding identification can the Dutch approach be seen as successful, although one may ask what feeling Dutch means if it is not accompanied by high levels of linguistic and social integration. However, the results do not provide support for the view of rights as a reward for integration, either. This has been the dominant German policy approach, but it has not only kept most immigrants from obtaining equal citizenship rights, but has also led to a very low identification of immigrants with the country in which they live. Moreover, this approach has not led to significantly higher levels of linguistic and social integration than in the Netherlands.

The relative success of France shows that policies that provide immigrants with a clear perspective of full membership, but that also require a certain amount of cultural adjustment from them are most effective. Importantly for the German discussion, the results for France also show, however, that the allowance of dual citizenship is not necessarily a barrier to integration. German policies have become more inclusive, especially with the new citizenship law of 2000 that grants automatic citizenship to German-born children of immigrants. Germany would do well to continue further on this course, which we may expect to eventually have a positive impact on the socio-cultural integration of immigrants. At the same time, however, there is little to recommend that Germany follow the approach that prevailed in the Netherlands until recently, which tended to see the obstacles towards integration primarily in the cultural biases of the host society and demanded very little in return from immigrants. The road towards integration neither leads through exclusion from equal rights, nor through state support for ethnic and cultural identities, organizations and practices. Instead, our study suggests that immigration countries do best by offering immigrants a welcoming perspective of full membership, which, however, also implies a duty for the immigrant to acquire the capacities to fulfil the role of citizen, above all in the form of knowledge of the language, the law, and to some extent also local customs.

Literature

Evelyn Ersanilli, Ruud Koopmans, *Ethnic Retention and Host Culture Adoption among Turkish Immigrants in Germany, France and the Netherlands: A Controlled Comparison*, Berlin: WZB 2009 (WZB discussion paper SP IV 2009-701)

Evelyn Ersanilli, Ruud Koopmans, „Rewarding integration? Citizenship regulations and socio-cultural integration of immigrants in the Netherlands, France and Germany“, in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4, 2010 (forthcoming)