Integration and perceived discrimination: two competing hypotheses tested among persons of Moroccan and Turkish descent in Belgium

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[D R A F T   V E R S I O N]

Abstract

This paper examines the relation between integration and perceived discrimination among persons of Moroccan and Turkish descent living in Flemish Belgium. Two opposing theories exist concerning this relationship. The assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964) posits that the more ethnic minorities are integrated into the country of residence, the less discrimination they perceive. The ethnic competition theory (Portes, Parker & Cobas, 1980) proposes the opposite: the more ethnic minorities integrate, the greater their perception of unequal treatment. The two competing theories are tested quantitatively by regressing perceived personal discrimination and perceived discrimination of the ethnic group on a number of structural and social-cultural integration indicators and a series of background characteristics. Data are used from the *Flemish Integration Survey 2008*, a representative face-to-face survey in three multicultural cities (Antwerp, Genk and Ghent) designed by the *Policy Research Centre on Equal Opportunities.* Analyses show a mixed pattern of findings. Social-cultural integration appears to be negatively associated with perceiving group discrimination, thus supporting the assimilation theory. With respect to structural integration, the findings are more ambiguous. A high occupational level goes together with perceiving more personal discrimination. A prosperous financial situation, on the contrary, is related to less experiences of personal and group discrimination.

Introduction

During the last few decades, an extensive amount of research has been devoted to ethnic minorities' experiences of discrimination, mostly dealing with the health outcomes of perceived unequal treatment. Previous studies reported repeatedly that more perceived discrimination is associated with a poorer psychological and physical health (for an overview, see: Williams *et al.*, 2003; Paradies, 2006). More recently, also the relationship between ethnic minorities' perceived discrimination and their integration in the society of residence has attracted research interest. Scholars have been examining whether being more or less integrated in the society of residence goes together with perceiving more or less discrimination (e.g. Finch *et al.*, 2000; Goto *et al.*, 2002; Estrada *et al.*, 2008; Pérez *et al.*, 2008).

In the social sciences literature, two opposing theories exist concerning the relationship between integration and perceived discrimination: the assimilation theory and the ethnic competition theory. The assimilationist view posits that the more minority group members or immigrants are integrated into the country of settlement, the less unequal treatment they perceive (Gordon, 1964). The assimilation theory assumes that experiences of discrimination decrease as a result of the gradual disappearance of differences between minority and majority group members. Against this point of view, Portes, Parker and Cobas (1980) formulated the ethnic competition theory. This theory proposes that the more ethnic minorities integrate, the more they will experience unequal treatment. Integration is supposed to involve competition, which makes minority group members aware of discriminatory processes: "greater familiarity with the culture and language and some economic advancement can lead to greater consciousness of the reality of discrimination and a more critical appraisal of the host society" (Portes *et al.*, 1980: 200).

A glance at the studies that have examined the relationship between integration and perceived discrimination shows that findings are sometimes contradictory (see below), probably because the sampling was different and the measurement of integration varies. Another characteristic of these studies is that most of them have been conducted in a US setting, constraining the generalizability of the findings to specific ethnic minority groups and a certain geographical area. In European countries, the relation between the degree of integration and perceived unequal treatment has been given less attention.

Research should be broadened to include a European setting, because previous studies have shown that the European context differs in some respects from the American. First, there are differences in European and American attitudes towards immigrants and minority groups as evidence exists that in the United States people are more tolerant of diversity than in Europe (Citrin & Sides, 2008). Second, immigration and integration policies, and the dynamics that drive these policies, differ between the United States and Europe (cf. Freeman, 2004; Schain, 2006). Third, European welfare states are more heavily involved in reducing socio-economic inequalities than the US. This is relevant because income inequalities may have negative effects on social cohesion (cf. Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005).

The aim of this paper is to supplement existing research by replicating previous studies on the relation between integration and perceptions of discriminatory behavior in a European setting. More particularly, this paper elucidates whether the integration process of persons of Moroccan and Turkish descent living in Flemish Belgium positively or negatively relates to their experiences of personal and group discrimination. The paper is organized as follows. First, we review the literature on the concept of integration and make a synthesis of the studies that have examined the relation between integration and perceived discrimination among ethnic

minority groups. Second, we offer background information on the case of Moroccan and Turkish descendants in Flemish Belgium. Third, we describe the data and measurement. Fourth, we present the results of our study and, finally, we put forward conclusions and discuss our findings.

Literature review

The concept of integration

During the last decades, the concept of 'integration' has received a great deal of attention in academic and political discourse. Loosely defined, integration refers to whether and how ethnic minorities or immigrants (should) incorporate into the society of settlement. However, the concept is controversial and has a plethora of definitions. Therefore, one can consider integration as an 'essentially contested concept'. Essentially contested concepts unavoidably lead to disagreements about appropriate use and correct interpretation, because of their multidimensionality and because of their evaluative character and the value judgement that they imply (Gallie, 1956).

In pioneering migration theory and research not 'integration' but 'assimilation' was the common term to denote the process of inclusion of immigrants or minority groups into the society. Although developed in the 1920s by the Chicago School of sociologists (Park, 1928), it was Gordon (1964) who provided one of the most influential conceptualisations of assimilation. His classical assimilation theory, which is based on the study of immigrant groups in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, assumes a straight-forward, unidirectional adaptation of immigrants to mainstream American society. Gordon's theory argues that the longer immigrants live in the receiving society, the more they adapt completely to it and the more they become copies of the majority group. This conception of assimilation has been strongly criticized because it leaves processes in the receiving society out of account. Inappropriate government policies or discrimination by the native majority could, for instance, inhibit the inclusion of immigrants and minority groups. Furthermore, it was apparent even in the early sixties that immigrants and their offspring did not give up their culture and did not adapt completely to the society of settlement. 'The point about the melting pot' stated Glazer and Moynihan (1963: 288) in their influential *Beyond the Melting Pot*, 'is that it did not happen'. Many ethnic minority groups rediscovered or maintained their own culture, or followed different paths of assimilation.

A number of criticisms were countered in subsequent versions of assimilation theory. According to the segmented assimilation theory, immigrants assimilate in several ways with diverse possible outcomes – as opposed to one straight-line path. Hence, a rapid economic advancement could be combined with the preservation of the immigrant community's values

and tight solidarity (Zhou, 1997). Alba and Nee's (1997) new assimilation theory assumes that assimilation need not be an entirely one-sided process, but involves change and acceptance by the majority group as well. This view assumes that assimilation 'can take place as changes in two (or more) groups, or parts of them, shrink the differences and social distance between them' (Alba, 1999, cited in Heckmann, 2006).

These kind of present day American conceptualizations of assimilation have an interface with European scientists' conceptualizations of integration. Heckmann (2006: 18), for instance, defines integration as: 'a generations lasting process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society'. He states that 'for the migrants integration refers to a process of learning a new culture, an acquisition of rights, access to positions and statuses, a building of personal relations to members of the receiving society and a formation of feelings of belonging and identification towards the society'. In his view, the receiving society 'has to learn new ways of interacting with the newcomers and adapt its institutions to their needs'. In spite of the overlap between much present day conceptualisations of the two concepts, most European scientists avoid to use the word assimilation. Since the public in Europe has come to see assimilation as a taboo concept, one that presupposes a complete and unidirectional adaptation forced on ethnic minorities, they prefer the concept of 'integration'.

In the past decades, several conceptual frameworks for analyzing the integration process of ethnic minorities or immigrant groups were developed, mostly characterizing integration as multidimensional. One of these conceptualizations comes from Veenman (1994). He distinguishes between 'participation' (the behavioural aspect) and 'orientation' (the attitudinal aspect). The dimension 'participation' he subdivides into 'formal' and 'informal' participation. By formal participation Veenman means taking part in the activities and developments of key institutions such as education, employment and housing. The term informal participation refers to interethnic contacts, particularly contacts of minority group members with members of the majority group. The attitude adopted by minority group members towards the importance of participation in the host society Veenman calls 'orientation'. He also states that formal participation can be read as an index of the socio-economic position of immigrants, and that informal participation and orientation together determine their cultural position.

In a slightly different way a number of scholars (Vermeulen & Penninx, 1994; Dagevos & Schellingerhout, 2003; van Tubergen en Maas, 2006) and institutions (e.g. the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office; the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy) make a distinction between structural integration and social-cultural integration. There are some variations in the elaborations but all come close to that of Dagevos and Schellingerhout (2003). They take structural integration as the position occupied by ethnic minorities in socio-economic

stratification. Important indicators of this dimension are the educational attainments and the position in the labour market. The social contacts that ethnic minorities have with individuals and agencies of the majority group make up the social component of social-cultural integration. Their values, norms, opinions, proficiency (and use) of the majority language and identification make up the cultural component. We note that, unlike the other authors, Vermeulen and Penninx consider structural integration to be a process that not only takes place in the economic domain, but also in the political domain (Vermeulen, 1997).

Phalet and Swyngedouw (2003) drew on Alba and Nee's (1997) new assimilation theory to develop a conceptual framework of integration. Firstly, they argue that 'integration refers to mutual interactions between (perceived) treatment and adaptation, which result in more or less harmonious or conflicted ethnic relations between immigrant and host communities'. The 'treatment side' refers to integration policies, institutions and societies, whereas the 'adaptation side' deals with the resources, perceptions and strategies of minority groups. Secondly, they emphasize that integration is multidimensional. Phalet and Swyngedouw (2003) split up the concept in a socio-economic dimension, a political dimension and a cultural dimension. In the Belgian research tradition they find three indicators of socio-economic integration: the degree of residential segregation, the educational attainments and the occupational attainments. Cultural integration refers to cultural adaptation to the majority group (concerning values, norms, partner choice and other relations, child rearing, religion, language and use of media) and preferred social mobility strategies (individual and/or collective). Identification and political participation make up the political dimension.

There are similarities between the framework of Phalet and Swyngedouw (2003) and the conceptualization of Entzinger and Biezeveld (2003; 2005). The latter authors also distinguish three dimensions of integration: socio-economic, cultural and legal-political integration. Socio-economic integration deals with the participation of immigrants and their descendants in the labour market, their income level, the use they make of social security, welfare and other social policy instruments, their quality of housing and residence patterns, and their level of education. Cultural integration refers to the social contacts of ethnic minorities, their choice of spouse, language proficiency, delinquency and the attitudes towards the core values and rules of the society of residence. Legal-political integration relates to whether or not minority group members or immigrants are naturalised or obtained a secure residence status, their participation in elections and their participation in the civil society. Entzinger and Biezeveld remark that research on integration should also take into account the behaviour and attitudes of the majority group. In particular, they point at discrimination by individuals or at the institutional level, the perceptions of ethnic minority or immigrant groups shared by the majority group and the role of the media in the formation of attitudes towards integration or

minority groups. This aspect of their framework corresponds to a significant extent to what Phalet and Swyngedouw (2003) consider the 'treatment side'.

Esser (2004) makes a distinction between 'system integration' and 'social integration'. System integration refers to relations between parts of a social system, while social integration refers to relations between actors within a social system. In concrete terms, the emphasis for social integration lies on the way in which new actors seek and attain a position within an existing social system. System integration is the way in which the social system adapts itself to the new situation. In Esser's view, social integration is a multidimensional process that can be divided into four aspects: culturation, positioning, interaction and identification. The first dimension, 'culturation', relates to the acquisition of a sufficient base of knowledge and skills to function adequately in a society. Basic language skills are an obvious instance. 'Positioning' refers to the position occupied by minority groups in structural social domains such as employment, education, housing, civil rights, and so forth. 'Interaction' refers to participation in (interethnic) social relations, whether formal or informal. Finally, 'identification' relates to the mental and emotional attitude of minorities towards the country. This is to say, feelings of loyalty, belonging, and so forth. Something very like the four dimensions distinguished by Esser (2004) can also be found in the conceptual framework of Koryś (2005). She distinguishes a cultural dimension, an institutional dimension, a social dimension and an identificational dimension. Both Esser (2004) and Koryś (2005) emphasize the interrelatedness of these four dimensions of (social) integration.

Esser's dimensions are translated by Heckmann (2006) as cultural, structural, interactive and identificational integration. In his conceptualization cultural integration refers to 'processes and states of cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal change of individuals' (p. 16). Heckmann states that cultural integration does not mean that immigrants and their descendants have to give up their culture. Instead, bicultural competences and personalities could be an asset for individuals and the society as a whole, he argues. Structural integration refers to 'the acquisition of rights and the access to positions and membership statuses in the core institutions of the immigration society (e. g. labour market, education, housing system, health system and citizenship as membership in the political community) (Heckmann, 2006: 15). Interactive integration deals with the private relations and group memberships of people (e.g. friendships, marriages, and memberships of voluntary organization). Finally, identificational integration highlights the inclusion of immigrants and their offspring in a society on a subjective level as it means 'feelings of belonging to and identification with groups, particularly in forms of ethnic, regional, local and/or national identification, or in sophisticated combinations of these' (p. 17).

To study the relation between integration and discrimination, we need an advanced conceptualization that bridges the different (sub)dimensions of integration and the comments on (perceived) treatment into a single framework. This can be done by making a synthesis of the reviewed literature on integration and linking this synthesis to the concept of social cohesion (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Integration and social cohesion: a conceptual framework
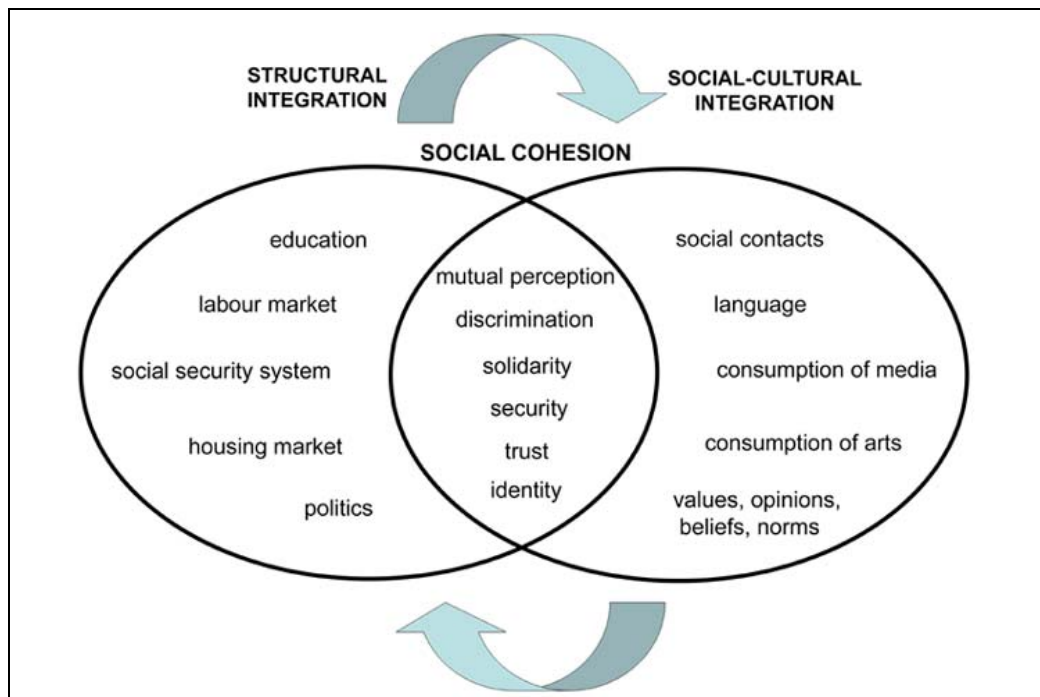
In the conceptual framework we present, the degree of integration refers to a certain position in society. Minority group members position themselves on different dimensions and subdimensions. In our conceptualization structural integration refers to their position in the economic and political domain, while social-cultural integration comprises their position in the social and cultural domain.

To avoid misunderstandings, we stress that the conceptualization presented in figure 1 is a framework for empirical research, not a normative framework. This implies that we pronounce no judgements in terms of better or worse. Thus, we do not consider the job of a doctor to be of more value than that of a labourer. Neither do we show more appreciation for someone with many friends in the majority group than for someone with no friends in the majority group. What we are interested in is to analyse the effect of these positions in society on aspects of social cohesion. The above framework should enable us to describe actual situations, measure trends, discover relations and find explanations. No more, no less. At what point we can speak of 'succesful' integration is a political question.

We also remark that social-cultural integration does not necessarily mean that minority group members give up their social and cultural background: following Heckmann (2006), we provide for the possibility that they develop (to a certain degree) a bicultural way of living. Thus, it is likely that minority group members learn both the majority and a minority group language or have friends in the majority and their minority group.

Although we make a conceptual distinction between structural and social-cultural integration, in practice the two processes can be interwoven, which entails the possibility of mutual influence betweem them. For instance, fluency in the majority language may improve educational achievement and interethnic social contacts may help in finding employment. From the other angle, the employment situation may affect an individual's language skills, interethnic contacts, value orientations, ... Nevertheless, one cannot simply assume that there is a positive correlation between social-cultural and structural integration. Asian immigrants in the United States, for example, combine socio-economic success with a strong orientation towards their own community (Portes & Zhou, 1994). When studying integration, the relationships between the two dimensions and the various subdimensions have to be considered very carefully.

Building on a suggestion of Niessen and Huddleston (2007), we situate integration in the broader context of social cohesion: integration can connect individuals that are divided by economic, political, cultural and social distinctions into a community. According to Niessen and Huddelston, it does so when promoting solidarity and equality. They point at non-discrimination as the core element of equality. We combine this view on integration and social cohesion with the view of Sardinha (2009). He states that integration entails processes that can "bind the individual to society, creating belonging and loyalty". He also posits that integration can "make peaceful coexistence possible between different ethno-cultural groups within one and the same polity" (Sardinha, 2009: 34). Peaceful coexistence seems to refer to elements like security, trust and non-discrimination, which recur in many other conceptualizations of social cohesion (Harell and Stolle, 2008). These elements are often related to one another and to mutual perceptions (Van Craen & Ackaert, 2006; Van Craen *et al.*, 2007; Van Craen & Ackaert, 2008; Van Craen, 2010).

We think it is helpful for research about the way minority and majority groups live together to consider the subdimensions of structural and social-cultural integration as factors that can facilitate or impede social cohesion. An attentive reader will have noticed that we have written that integration *can* connect individuals into a community. Whether integration really creates social cohesion, is a question that has to be answered by (among others this) research. Moreover, since integration is an interactive (meaning 'not one-sided'), dynamic and long-lasting process it will probably be influenced by (changes in) the aspects of social cohesion.

There is likely to be mutual influence between subdimensions of structural and social-cultural integration on the one hand and aspects of social cohesion on the other hand. Thus it is quite possible that minority group members which obey certain religious norms suffer more discrimination than do minority group members who do not, or no longer, obey those norms, but also that frequent experiences of discrimination will lead some people to rediscover religious values and norms, and cultivate them more intensely. Therefore, we do not consider social cohesion as the end product of integration: our conceptual framework explicitly provides for the possibility that the subdimensions of integration and the aspects of social cohesion can influence one another dynamically.

Experiences of discrimination and integration

This paper scrutinizes the relationship between integration and one aspect of social cohesion, namely (perceived) discrimination. Discrimination can be described as 'a process by which a member of a socially defined group is treated differently (especially unfairly) because of her/his membership in that group' (Brüss, 2008: 877). Hence, perceived discrimination deals with one 's subjective experience of being treated differently. As mentioned before, two opposing views exist about the relationship between integration and perceived discrimination: the assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964) and the ethnic competition theory (Portes *et al.*, 1980). The first posits a negative relationship, the latter assumes a positive association. A handful of studies have examined the relation between (what the co-ordinating researchers consider as) integration and experiences of discriminiation.

Portes, Parker and Cobas (1980) themselves examined the two competing perspectives on samples of Cuban and Mexican immigrants (18 to 60 years old) interviewed at the time of arrival in the United States and on the same samples reinterviewed three years later. Their findings lean in the direction of the ethnic competition theory: 'the better immigrants understand the host country language and the more they endorse its values (as embodied in the concept of modernity), the more skeptical they are of the realities of that society and of their actual condition within it' (Portes *et al.*, 1980: 220). In other words, integration to the country of settlement is positively associated with perceived discrimination. Nevertheless, as the findings were obtained on the basis of data from immigrants who have lived in the country of immigration for only a short time (three years), one might argue that the observed relation may change over time.

In their replication study, Aguirre, Saenz and Hwang (1989) addressed the shortcomings in the study of Portes and his colleagues by broadening the research to three generations of persons of Mexican origin. Furthermore, they analyzed the effects of a wider range of integration indicators – the authors themselves speak of assimilation – on perceptions of discrimination.

Using data from a nationwide survey a multivariate analysis finds evidence against the ethnic competition theory. The higher the respondents' level of education, the greater the weakening of Mexican culture, the more contact with the majority, and the higher non-Mexican co-worker prevalence, the lower the degree of perceived discrimination. Aguirre *et al.* (1989: 602) conclude that 'as minority people disperse throughout the larger society, they tend to perceive less discrimination against their group'.

About a decade later, Finch, Kolody and Vega (2000) gained insight in the connections between perceived discrimination and depression among Mexican-origin adults in California. This study also dealt with 'the social patterning of perceived discrimination' of immigrants and their descendants. With respect to Mexican immigrants, the survey findings were in accordance with the ethnic competition theory. Highly integrated immigrants (as defined by a longer length of stay, English language proficiency, and a higher educational attainment) were more likely to perceive discrimination than less integrated immigrants. With regard to Mexican-origin respondents who were born in the United States, results show a negative association between integration and experiences of discrimination, thus favoring the assimilationist perspective.

Goto, Gee and Takeuchi (2002) examined the perceptions of discrimination among Americans of Asian descent, a community that is often considered as a 'model minority', because of their educational and economic success stories. Using data of a survey among Chinese Americans living in the Los Angeles Area, the scholars show that a higher household income, a higher level of education, shedding of Chinese behavioral practices and a longer length of stay in the receiving country are associated with more perceived racial discrimination. These findings clearly support the ethnic competition theory.

More recently, Pérez, Fortuna and Alegría (2008) reported on the correlates of perceived discrimination among a national sample of Latinos in the United States. Their findings suggest, in line with the ethnic competition approach, that as Latinos achieve higher social status and become more integrated, they report higher rates of perceived discrimination. The study showed, for instance, that English-speaking Latinos reported twice the rate of perceived discriminatory behavior compared to Spanish-speaking Latinos. Hence, the authors lay emphasis on the importance of 'linguistic isolation' for reducing perceived discrimination argueing that 'the more English Latinos speak, the more likely they will interpret any intercultural interactions as discriminatory and understand it when someone discriminates against them' (Pérez *et al.*, 2008: 430).

Estrada, Tsau and Chandler (2008) investigated the relation between integration – once again the authors use the term 'assimilation' – and perceived discrimination among Hispanic-Americans. In this study, measures of perceived discriminatory behavior were divided into two categories, one that can be described as personal experiences of discrimination, the other as

perceived discrimination against Hispanics in general. Despite a few contradictory findings, the authors argue that their data generally support the assimilation theory, indicating that a higher degree of integration among Hispanics results in lower levels of perceived personal and group discrimination. Political satisfaction, political participation, holding views similar to mainstream attitudes towards immigration, a positive attitude towards America and economic achievement all reduce personal experiences of discrimination. With respect to perceived group discrimination, preference for English, political satisfaction, economic success, identification as American and positive attitudes towards the American society are negatively related to perceptions of discrimination.

A short literature review clearly reveals a mixed pattern of findings regarding the relationship between integration and perceived discrimination. Neither the assimilation theory nor the ethnic competition perspective receives full support. This may be due to different sampling, various geographical areas and settings, different measures of integration and perceived discrimination or differences in statistical analyses. Also, it is apparent that a lot of research has been done in a US setting. In Europe, by our knowledge, little research exists on how integration relates to perceived discrimination.

Case: Moroccan and Turkish minorities in Flanders

The present study investigates the relation between integration and perceived discrimination among persons of Moroccan and Turkish descent living in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Moroccan and Turkish communities are the two largest non-EU minority groups in Belgium. At the national level and based on nationality at birth, in 2006 Belgium had a population of 249,623 people with a Moroccan background and 141,570 people with a Turkish background (Perrin, 2007:14). Moroccan and Turkish migration to Belgium started in the early 1960s when the Belgian government signed bilateral agreements with Morocco and Turkey in order to meet the need for labour forces in the expanding metal and mining industries. In 1974, when industrial labour was shrinking and Belgium was evolving to a post-industrial economy, the government issued a moratorium on immigration. Still, this measure implied no turning point in immigration flows from Morocco and Turkey. After 1974 and well into present, Moroccan and Turkish immigrants came to Belgium on the basis of family reunification or, more recently, family-forming (or marriage) migration (Timmerman, Vanderwaeren & Crul, 2003). Nowadays, Moroccans and Turks are, next to Dutch and Polish immigrants, still among the largest newcomer groups in the Flemish region (Willems, 2008).

In Belgium, the issue of integration appeared on the political and research agenda in the early 1990s as a result of the electoral breakthrough of the *Vlaams Blok* (now *Vlaams Belang*), an extreme right-wing political party that lays emphasis on anti-immigrant feelings (Phalet &

Swyngedouw, 2003: 777). That the topic of integration appeared rather late on the agenda has two main reasons. Firstly, for a long time both immigrants and host institutions considered the immigrants' stay to be temporary (Martiniello, 2003). Secondly, living together only became an issue after the economic crises of the seventies and eighties. These crises upsetted the Moroccan and Turkish immigrants' (economic) integration and involved ethnic competition. At the present time, the federal government determines migration, legal status and citizenship policies. The reception and integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities falls under the three regions and language communities.

 In the overarching policy framework in the Flemish region, the recognition of ethnic minority groups and group-based multicultural policies are important. It is based on the idea that preservation and development of the ethnic identity enhance emancipation and participation within the society of residence (Loobuyck & Jacobs, 2006). With respect to newcomers, the Flemish government developed a reception policy. New immigrants must follow an *inburgeringstraject* (civic integration course) or else face an administrative sanction. This course includes Dutch language lessons, social orientation and assistance for access to the labour market. According to the *Migrant Integration Policy Index*, Belgium ranks third out of 28 countries (EU-25 + Canada, Norway and Switzerland) with regard to policy development. However, concerning ethnic minorities' labour market position and the acceptance of ethnic minorities by the majority group, Belgium is among the worst-scoring countries of the EU (Integration Index, 2007). With regard to the latter, Moroccan and Turkish descendents are among the most negatively stereotyped minority groups (Van Craen, Vancluysen & Ackaert, 2007).

Method

Data

The data of this study derive from the *Flemish Integration Survey 2008*, a representative face-to-face survey designed by the government-commissioned *Policy Research Centre on Equal Opportunities* to monitor the social-cultural distance between ethnic minority groups and the native majority and the way they live together in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium (Vancluysen, Van Craen & Ackaert, 2009). In Flanders it is the main data source with respect to the social-cultural position of persons of Moroccan and Turkish descent. The survey is a disproportionally stratified sample, in which persons within the age category of 18 to 70 years were randomly selected in three Flemish cities with large Moroccan and Turkish-descended populations: Antwerp, Genk and Ghent.[1] Per city and per ethnic group a separate sample was

made.[2] The criterion applied to select respondents was 'ethnic background' as 'current nationality' is useless since the relaxation of Belgium's naturalization laws.

Selected persons were approached by interviewers of Moroccan and Turkish descent between March and July 2008. The non-response rates (47% for the Turkish and 64% for the Moroccan descendants) seem rather high, but are common in survey research among ethnic minority groups (*see* Dagevos *et al.*, 2007).[3] Checks on generalizability showed that the answers of members of the Moroccan and Turkish respondents had to be weighed according to sex and city. There was no need to weigh the groups for age, and as no reliable reference data were available in the three cities, a control for level of education was not possible. The final (weighed) dataset consists of 616 cases: 260 interviews with individuals of Moroccan descent and 356 interviews with individuals of Turkish descent.

Measurement

To gauge the relation between integration and perceived discrimination, regression analyses were carried out. With respect to the dependent variables we opted, following Estrada *et al.* (2008), to divide measures of discrimination into two categories: experiences of personal discrimination and perceived discrimination of the ethnic group to which one belongs. Making such a distinction is relevant as evidence exists that people perceive a higher level of discrimination of their group as a whole than at themselves as individual members of that group (Taylor *et al.*, 1990; Ruggiero, 1999). The perception of personal discrimination was measured by a single item. The question asked respondents was: 'During the last twelve months, how many times have you felt being discriminated against?' Respondents could answer with 'never', 'once', 'a few times', 'several times', 'often' and 'very often'. Perceived unequal treatment of the ethnic group was measured by a scale based on seven items that measure the respondents' perception about the extent to which a social or institutional actor (police, employers, colleagues, local authorities, schools, media, house owners) discriminate against members of the ethnic community to which one belongs (e.g. 'Moroccan-/Turkish-origin people are rejected much more/more/ neither more nor less/less/much less by house owners than Flemish-origin people when they want to rent a house', see appendix). The Cronbach's alpha of the seven-item scale was 0.72, which is an acceptable value to consider the items as a single construct (Field, 2005).

The independent variables represent measures of the degree of integration. Measures of structural integration comprised in the analyses were level of education, occupational level and (the perception of) the financial situation.[4] Measures of social-cultural integration included contact with the majority group, majority language proficiency, consumption of majority-language media and the attitude toward the emancipation of women. Contact with the majority

group was measured by asking respondents how frequent they chat with Flemish people living in the neighbourhood (a six-point scale running from 'never' to 'daily'). Majority language proficiency was measured by a scale based on an item that measures how much the respondent could make out of letters and folders in Dutch and by an item that measures how much the respondent could make out of people speaking in Dutch, both items varying from 'very little' to 'very much'. Consumption of majority-language media was questioned by the frequency of reading Dutch-language newspapers and the frequency of watching Dutch-language television channels. With both items a scale for majority-language media consumption was made. The attitude toward the emancipation of women was measured by asking the respondents whether or not they agree with the statement that men should contribute to domestic labour as much as women (a five point scale running from 'totally disagree' to 'totally agree').

Control variables included in the analysis are: ethnic background, gender, age, length of stay in Belgium, the (perceived) ethnic composition of the neighbourhood and the city of residence (Antwerp, Genk and Ghent). Previous studies in Belgium and the Netherlands have shown that Moroccan-origin people perceive more discrimination than Turkish-origin people (Van Praag, 2003; Van Craen, Vancluysen & Ackaert, 2007). Men and younger people may experience more discrimination because of their greater participation in the public life (De Rycke, Swyngedouw, & Phalet, 1999) and in accordance with the assimilation theory or ethnic competition theory (cf. supra) a longer length of stay in the country of settlement may result in perceiving less or more discrimination respectively. Following Goto et al. (2002) we expect that those living in a neighbourhood with few inhabitants of Flemish descent are likely to perceive less discrimination than those living among many majority group members. Finally, the city context may have an impact as it is likely that differences in local policies and politics result in perceiving more or less discrimination. Table 1 gives an overview of the variables used in the analyses.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (N=616)

	min - max	Mean		code	%
Perceived discrimination of the group	1 - 5	3.78	Level of education		
Age	18 - 70	35.5	up to primary	1	36.0
Length of stay in Belgium (years)	1 - 62	23.1	lower secondary	2	25.2
Majority language proficiency	1 - 5	3.8	upper secondary	3	32.2
Consumption majority-language media	1 - 5	3.27	college/university	4	6.7
	code	**%**	Occupational status		
Perceived personal discrimination			low	1	15.0
Never	1	54.4	lower-middle	2	55.1
Once	2	8.9	upper-middle	3	24.4
A few times	3	19.7	high	4	5.5
Several times	4	8.2	(Perceived) financial situation		
Often	5	5.4	very difficult to make ends meet	1	10.9
Very often	6	3.5	difficult to make ends meet	2	21.3
Ethnic background			neither difficult nor easy to make ends meet	3	36.4
Turkish	0	57.8	easy to make ends meet	4	24.9
Moroccan	1	42.2	very easy to make ends meet	5	6.5
Gender			Chatting with natives living in the neighbourhood		
Female	0	48.9	never	1	11.3
Male	1	51.1	several times a year	2	4.8
(Perceived) neighborhood composition			about once a month	3	9.5
almost exclusively natives	1	9.9	about once a week	4	18.8
more natives than non-natives	2	20.3	several times a week	5	30.1
almost as many natives as non-natives	3	29.6	every day	6	22.5
more non-natives than natives	4	29.8	Attitudes toward emancipation of women ('men should contribute		
almost exclusively non-natives	5	10.4	to domestic labour as much as women')		
City of residence: Antwerp (ref. Genk)			totally disagree	1	35.9
no	0	67.9	disagree	2	29.5
yes	1	32.1	disagree nor agree	3	19.0
City of residence: Ghent (ref. Genk)			agree	4	9.9
no	0	66.2	totally agree	5	5.8
yes	1	33.8			

Results

Table 2 and Table 3 show the results of a multiple regression analysis on perceived personal discrimination and perceived group discrimination of Moroccan and Turkish descendants living in Antwerp, Genk and Ghent. The analyses were carried out in three steps. In a first step only the control variables were included in the analyses. In a second step the measures of structural integration (level of education, occupational status and (perceived) financial situation) were added and in the final step the measures of social-cultural integration (frequency of chatting with native neighbours, majority language proficiency, consumption of majority-language media and the attitude toward the emancipation of women) were included. A difficulty that could arise is that two or more of the independent variables are highly correlated to one another. This is called the problem of multicollinearity (Field, 2005: 175). However, the variance inflation factors (VIF) indicated there may be no multicollinearity problem. The highest variance inflation factor found was 2.44, which is far below the common cutoff threshold of 10 (Myers, 1990).

Perceived personal discrimination

Controlling for a series of background variables the analysis showed a statistically significant relation between perceived personal discrimination and two measures of structural integration: the occupational status and the (perception of the) financial situation. The higher the respondents' occupational status, the more personal discrimination one perceived. This relation supports the ethnic competition theory. The (perceived) financial situation was negatively related to perceived personal discrimination, hence supporting the assimilation theory. Respondents that find it difficult to make ends meet with the family income, experienced more personal discrimination than those who find it easy to make ends meet. No significant relation existed between educational attainment and perceived personal discrimination and between measures of social-cultural integration and feelings of personal unequal treatment.

The control variables that were significantly related to personal experiences of discrimination are age, length of stay and city of residence (Step 1). Young people, those who have lived in Belgium longer and residents of Antwerp and Ghent perceived more personal discrimination than did older people, those who have lived in Belgium for a short time and residents of the (less urbanized) city of Genk.

Perceived discrimination of the ethnic group

With regards to perceived discrimination of the ethnic group, the regression models showed a different pattern of findings. The analyses indicated statistically significant net effects of the

(perceived) financial situation and two measures of social-cultural integration: the frequency of chatting with majority group members living in the neighbourhood and the attitude toward the emancipation of women. The more persons of Moroccan and Turkish origin experienced financial difficulties, the more they argued that social or institutional actors discriminate against members of their ethnic group. Moroccan and Turkish descendents who often chat with native Flemish descendants living in the neighbourhood and those who have modern attitudes toward emancipation, perceived less unequal treatment of their ethnic group than did those who never chat with native Flemish neighbours and those who have a traditional opinion toward women's emancipation. All these findings support the assumption of the assimilation theory: the smaller the social-cultural distance between minority and majority group members, the less discrimination minority group members perceive. In our regression models, the level of education, occupational status, majority language proficiency and consumption of majority-language media were not associated with the extent to which one perceived unequal treatment of the ethnic group.

With respect to the control variables, the regression model showed that the ethnic background and the length of stay affect the extent to which one perceives discrimination of the ethnic group (step 1). In accordance with findings from previous studies, those of Moroccan descent perceived more unequal treatment of their group than did those of Turkish descent. Length of stay in Belgium was positively associated with one's perception of group discrimination, a correlation that is in line with the assumption of the ethnic competition theory as well.

Table 2. Perceived personal discrimination regressed on structural and social-cultural integration measures

Variable	Step I			Step II			Step III		
	Std. Error	Beta		Std. Error	Beta		Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	0.254			0.708			1.004		
Control variables									
Ethnic background	0.121	0.038		0.188	0.030		0.198	0.033	
Gender	0.120	-0.018		0.194	**-0.134**	**	0.215	**-0.178**	**
Age	0.005	**-0.237**	**	0.010	**-0.250**	**	0.012	**-0.266**	**
Length of stay in Belgium	0.006	**0.135**	**	0.009	**0.192**	**	0.012	**0.189**	**
(Perceived) neighbourhood composition	0.054	0.046		0.084	-0.050		0.087	-0.080	
City of residence: Antwerp	0.153	**0.138**	**	0.243	**0.197**	**	0.259	**0.195**	**
City of residence: Ghent	0.148	**0.126**	**	0.214	**0.191**	**	0.233	**0.184**	**
Structural integration									
Level of education				0.030	0.026		0.031	0.031	
Occupational status				0.126	**0.144**	**	0.132	**0.131**	**
(Perceived) financial situation				0.088	**-0.192**	**	0.093	**-0.166**	**
Social-cultural integration									
Chatting with native neighbours							0.123	-0.033	
Majority language proficiency							0.063	-0.076	
Consumption of majority-language media							0.105	-0.029	
Attitude toward emancipation of women							0.084	-0.086	
R-square	0.063			0.138			0.145		

**p < 0.05 *p<0.01

Table 3. Perceived group discrimination regressed on structural and social-cultural integration measures

Variable	Step I			Step II			Step III		
	Std. Error	Beta		Std. Error	Beta		Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	0.126			0.318			0.452		
Control variables									
Ethnic background	0.058	**0.218**	**	0.087	**0.222**	**	0.088	**0.223**	**
Gender	0.060	0.060		0.097	-0.044		0.105	-0.133	
Age	0.003	-0.091		0.005	-0.156	*	0.006	-0.207	*
Length of stay in Belgium	0.003	**0.202**	**	0.004	**0.207**	**	0.005	**0.283**	**
(Perceived) neighbourhood composition	0.025	-0.085		0.038	-0.140	*	0.038	**-0.162**	**
City of residence: Antwerp	0.077	0.096		0.117	0.138		0.123	0.165	*
City of residence: Ghent	0.068	0.070		0.095	0.065		0.099	0.033	
Structural integration									
Level of education				0.014	0.010		0.015	0.061	
Occupational status				0.059	0.063		0.060	0.078	
(Perceived) financial situation				0.041	**-0.221**	**	0.042	**-0.195**	**
Social-cultural integration									
Chatting with native neighbours							0.029	**-0.178**	**
Majority language proficiency							0.056	-0.148	
Consumption of majority-language media							0.046	-0.082	
Attitude toward emancipation of women							0.040	**-0.186**	**
R-square	0.090			0.120			0.190		

**p < 0.05 *p<0.01

Conclusion and discussion

In the past years, the relation between ethnic minorities' perceived discrimination and their integration in the country of settlement has attracted considerable research interest, especially in the United States. This study replicated earlier work for a European setting and elucidated the relationship between perceived unequal treatment and integration among persons of Moroccan and Turkish descent living in Flemish Belgium. Two opposing theories exist on how integration relates to experiences of discrimination. The assimilation theory assumes a negative relationship: the more minority group members are integrated, the less unequal treatment they perceive. The ethnic competition theory, on the other hand, supposes the opposite: more integration increases the odds of perceiving discrimination. To test the competing theories quantitatively, we carried out regression analyses using data from the *Flemish Integration Survey 2008*, a face-to-face survey among persons of Moroccan and Turkish descent living in three multicultural cities (Antwerp, Genk and Ghent).

Our analyses showed a mixed pattern of findings as no clear support was found for either the assimilation theory or the ethnic competition theory. There were differences between perceived personal discrimination and perceived discrimination of the ethnic group and regarding the (sub)dimensions of integration. The relation between social-cultural integration and perceived group discrimination leans in the direction of the assimilation theory: chatting with Flemish descendants living in the neighbourhood and having modern attitudes towards the emancipation of women, decreased among Moroccan and Turkish-origin people the perception of group discrimination. No relation was found between (any indicator of) social-cultural integration and personal experiences of discrimination.

With regards to structural integration indicators, the results were more ambiguous. The analyses revealed that having a high occupational status increases the odds of more feelings of personal discrimination, a relation that is in line with the ethnic competition theory. Minority group members who had experienced upward occupational mobility were presumably more conscious of the reality of discrimination on the labour market than did those who are at work in a low-status, less competitive and mainly 'co-ethnic' environment. A prosperous financial situation, however, was associated with perceiving less personal and less group discrimination, thus supporting the assimilation theory. Probably, minority group members with financial difficulties have more frustrations due to their socio-economic situation and therefore are more vulnerable to perceive personal and group discrimination.

This study made clear that the relationship between integration and perceived discrimination among Moroccan and Turkish descendants in Flemish Belgium is not a story of more or less, as both the assimilation and ethnic competition view assume. It is a complex relation in which

many factors operate and in which outcomes may depend on the specific dimension(s) of integration one investigates, the local context and the characteristics of the ethnic groups studied. Hence, also generalizations extracted from this study should be made with caution. Moreover, an important limitation of the present study should be acknowledged. As it is typical for a cross-sectional survey design, there is a problem of endogeneity: one cannot make inferences about causality. A significant relationship may indicate that integration affects the perception of discrimination. However, the opposite may be true as well. Perceiving personal or group discrimination may influence an individual's motivation or effort to integrate. A longitudinal study could solve the problem of potential reverse causality.

Notes

1. According to the municipal registers, in 2008 Antwerp had a population of 35,803 people with a Moroccan and 11,689 people with a Turkish background (out of a total population of 471,100). In Genk there live 3,025 people with a Moroccan and 10,632 people with a Turkish background (out of a total population of 64,287) and Ghent counts 3,637 people of Moroccan and 13,718 people of Turkish descent (out of a total population of 237,250).

2. As the survey was designed for policy making, the aim was to interview the same number of people from each ethnic group in each city. This would give sufficient respondents in each subcategory to make meaningful comparisons between ethnic groups, and to calculate the effect of the city context.

3. Respondents from the effective samples that could not be reached or refused were replaced by respondents with a similar age and gender from the reserve samples.

4. Occupational status: open question coded on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Occupations of the International Labour Organization.

Appendix

Table 4. Items perceived discrimination of the ethnic group *Flemish Integration Survey 2008*

Item
The police treat persons of Moroccan/Turkish descent *much more/more/neither more nor less/less/much less* severely than persons of Flemish descent.
Companies have a *much more positive/more positive/neither more positive nor more negative/more negative/ much more negative* attitude towards workers of Moroccan/Turkish descent than towards workers of Flemish descent.
Persons of Moroccan/Turkish descent are treated *much better/better/neither better nor worse/worse/much worse* by colleagues at work than persons of Flemish descent.
Areas where many Moroccan-/Turkish-origin people live are maintained *much better/better/neither better nor worse/worse/much worse* by the local authorities than areas where many Flemish-origin people live.
Persons of Moroccan/Turkish descent have *much more/more/neither more nor less/less/much less* opportunities to enrol their children in the school of their choice than do persons of Flemish descent.
People with a Moroccan/Turkish background are presented *much more positively/more positively/neither more positively nor more negatively/more negatively/ much more negatively* on television and in newspapers than people with a Flemish background.
Moroccan-/Turkish-origin people are rejected *much more/more/neither more nor less/less/much less* by house owners than Flemish-origin people when they want to rent a house.

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