The Integration of Descendants of Migrants from Turkey in Stockholm

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8 Conclusions

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Findings of the Swedish TIES project

Earlier Swedish research indicates widespread exclusionary attitudes and discriminatory treatment of people of migrant backgrounds from countries outside North-western Europe and North America (Mella & Palm 2007; Arai & Thoursie 2007). In line with these previous findings, chapter 5 on ‘perceptions of discrimination’ in this report indicates a tough climate facing those who are categorised as ‘Muslims’. After 9-11, these attitudes seem to have turned into overt hostility. The TIES data provide information about how Swedish schools were segregated during the period in which the respondents attended primary school. More than three out of four young people with a background in Turkey studied in schools where the share of children of migrants was more than 50 per cent, while about three out of four native children (the reference group) attended schools with almost no children of migrant background.

Over time, from the primary school to the secondary school period, there seems to have been an increase in the concentration of children of migrants from Turkey in schools with a higher number of young people with migrant backgrounds. The trend seems to be the opposite for the reference group. Whereas more than 60 per cent of the children of migrants from Turkey attended schools where at least half of the school population had a migrant background, less than 16 per cent of children of native parentage attended such schools (see chapter 3 on education).

The pattern of social relations and interaction of the descendants of migrants from Turkey shows that an overwhelming percentage of respondents reported that they socialised (their best friends) with descendants of non-Western migrants in and outside of the educational context. Only one in four reported having friends who were members of the reference group. The results also show that descendants of migrants from Turkey were less able to become involved in civic and political organisations compared to the reference group. In addition, an overwhelming number of descendants of migrants from Turkey have a partner with a non-Western migrant background.

The same pattern holds true for members of the reference group, who tend to live with a partner from their own group. In this regard our analysis
paints a picture of a low level of social interaction or relations between the descendants of migrants from Turkey and persons of native origin (the reference group). This eventuality can be understood as a consequence of discrimination in contact, as Loury (2002) labels it. Discrimination in contact is the unequal treatment of persons on the basis of race/ethnicity in contexts related to the more informal and private spheres of life (for example, friendship or partnership).

As an individual person, one always stands in relation to different social groups, e.g., a family, a peer group, a broader religious community or a nation, to each of which one may be a ‘member’. To construct one’s own unique identity one needs input from these various social groups and their shared identities (Jenkins 2008). Bourdieu (2005) suggests that one’s unique habitus is the product of an internalisation of dispositions to act in and to perceive social reality, which is transmitted to the individual by others. Such internalisation occurs when an individual is socialised into the cultural schemes, routines and dispositions common for and shared by members of different social groups (Jenkins 2008). As a consequence, an individual can identify strongly with a specific group, which to some extent also stimulates the act of differentiating oneself and one’s group from others (ibid.). Identification with a specific group logically entails identification with the specific forms of capital representative for this group. In brief, one of the most characteristic features of social reality is that individuals are part of and can rely upon different social networks which are crucial for both identity construction and achieving specific goals.

When descendants of migrants from Turkey live their lives in segregated suburban neighbourhoods and attend segregated schools, they are not in a position to join in and socialise with children of native parentage. Their friends will mainly be the children of non-Western migrants both within and outside of the educational context. Hence it is hardly surprising that an overwhelming number of them meet a partner with a non-native background. In addition, as our results demonstrate, they are involved in civic and political organisations to a lesser extent than their peers in the majority group. To sum up, the descendants of migrants from Turkey are rarely in a position to socialise in majority culture, become a part of social networks involving young people of majority origin, or to identify themselves with this larger group.

All these processes affect their identification with the country they are living in. This may be why they feel a weaker sense of belonging to the Swedish group than respondents of native parentage (see chapter 6).
What is the long-term effect of such attitudes and treatment on the performance of descendants of migrants from Turkey in education and the labour market? Before presenting these results, we need to stress that the majority of migrants from Turkey came to Sweden during the 1960s labour recruitment drive to take jobs that were no longer considered desirable by workers of native descent. The majority of these migrants came from rural areas and therefore had low educational levels on average. Considering this fact, the empirical findings presented in chapter 3 show that after controlling for respondents' socioeconomic background and age, the educational performance of descendants of migrants from Turkey is almost the same as that of the reference group. The results of the survey confirm the findings of previous international and Swedish studies of educational performance.

The relatively successful educational performance of young people with a background in Turkey must be considered as a positive result. Despite highly segregated schools and the perception of widespread discriminatory attitudes, these young people have been able to avoid 'downward assimilation' and becoming demotivated regarding educational achievement. Undoubtedly this is partly due to the expectations of and support from parents and older siblings during their school years (see chapter 3).

The results of the survey regarding the labour market performance of our respondents are presented in chapter 7. When it comes to being in employment, the results indicate that female respondents with parents born in Turkey are employed to a lesser extent than those in the reference group. However, there seem to be no significant differences between male respondents with parents born in Turkey and those in the reference group. Furthermore, both male and female respondents whose parents were born in Turkey seem to face a higher risk of dissociation from the labour market though (being neither in employment, education nor training). Another tendency is that young people with a migrant background in Turkey hold the same labour market thought position as their parents do (or did) – that is, working in the trade/service sector and manufacturing industry for young men and trade/service and health/care for young women. Jobs are either low-paid or the working hours are few.

The results of this survey confirm the findings of previous studies, which show that young people with roots in non-European countries encounter greater difficulties in the labour market than those of native origin. According to these studies, labour market disadvantages for descendants of migrants from non-European countries cannot be entirely explained by differences in education, command of the Swedish language or their parents' education or position in the labour market (Arai, Schröder & Vilhemsson
Our point of departure was to study systematically descendants of migrants from one country who had had a similar start in life. However, reality is often more complicated than designed research models. Migrants from Turkey and their descendants in Sweden have developed different kinds of community and feelings of belonging. They identify themselves in the survey as Turkish, Kurdish or Syriac (Syriani/Assyrian), although this latter categorisation or sense of ethnic belonging is controversial. The Syriani/Assyrian community is divided on the issue of how to identify themselves (see chapter 6). Our survey did not include questions about how these communities are organised, what resources were pooled by these collectives for young people and which kinds of support were provided by these communities.

Regarding the sense of belonging to Stockholm, i.e. the neighbourhood and city in which one grew up, the results presented in chapter 6 show that there is no significant difference between descendants of migrants and descendants of native parentage. Young people of migrant origin, however, disclose a weaker sense of belonging to Sweden than young people of native origin. Further examination shows that paradoxically, a weaker sense of belonging is likely to be more prevalent among those who have been through higher education and those who have jobs in the labour market. The same tendency is observed in chapter 5 (perceptions of discrimination), which shows that descendants of migrants who are more integrated according to our criteria are more critical of discrimination against migrants.

Unequal treatment, downward assimilation and the Swedish welfare regime

In this book we have sought to analyse the incorporation of descendants of migrants from Turkey into Swedish society. We have done this through an examination of this group’s educational achievements, labour market outcomes and patterns of social relations. We have compared the performance of the target group (respondents who are descendants of migrants from Turkey) with that of the reference group (respondents whose parents are native-born). We also examined perceptions of discrimination and the sense of belonging felt by descendants of migrants from Turkey.

In our introductory chapter we presented the ‘segmented assimilation theory’, which predicts that the majority of descendants of migrants achieve
either middle-class or working-class status, but that some are at risk of ending up with ‘those at the bottom of society, a new rainbow underclass’ (Portes & Rumbaut 2001: 45). This path, which Portes, Fernández-Kelly & Haller (2005) label ‘downward assimilation’, is a more likely eventuality for those whose stigmatised migrant background is a ‘mark of subordination’. The descendants of migrants from Turkey represent an interesting case for testing the validity of this theory in Sweden. Parents of this group, like the descendants of Mexican migrants in the United States, only had a few years of schooling and had acquired only limited urban cultural skills. In the public eye they are assumed to be ‘Muslims’ who, according to Vermeulen (2010: 1220), ‘are at the bottom of the “ethno-racial” hierarchy in Europe’.

Indicators of this ‘downward assimilation’ are, among other things, leaving school at a young age, long-term unemployment, poverty, criminality and incarceration. Such a life story is more likely to occur today than some years back, because of the harsher climate that migrants from non-Western countries (‘non-whites’) encounter, the decrease in job opportunities for migrants and their descendants consequential to the restructuring of the labour market and the continuous undermining of welfare institutions, which has created a large ‘underclass’ in many Western-European countries. Accordingly, doing well at school is perceived as ‘acting white’ and as a sign of ‘being disloyal to one’s group’ (Portes & Rumbaut 2001: 60).

Stepick & Stepick (2010: 1150) contend that this theory ‘could apply to the children of immigrants in any country, but it was developed specifically in reference to the US children of immigrants who arrived after 1965’. The segmented assimilation theory, developed mainly by American scholars, has therefore been employed by some researchers to look more closely at the integration of descendants of migrants in Western European countries (Vermeulen 2010; Silberman, Alba and Fournier 2007). The main focus in these studies is on ‘the theory’s two alternative “modes of incorporation”: downward assimilation, and upward mobility’ (Thomson and Crul 2007: 1032). More precisely, the main question in the European context has not been how some descendants of migrants are assimilated into the ‘underclass’, but whether the process happens at all (Vermeulen 2010: 1218).

On the other hand, Wacquant (2008) maintains that social marginality of migrants and their descendants in the old immigration countries of North-western Europe differs radically form the ghettos of the US, and therefore this notion of downward assimilation is not straightforwardly applicable to the European context. This distinction is first and foremost a consequence of the traditionally small and weak welfare regime of US society in comparison to the more developed welfare regimes established...
in European countries. As Schierup et al. (2006) mention, despite the many problems they face, inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in major European cities with a large share of people of migrant background still have access to social security services and are entitled to education, health care and labour market programmes, in contrast to the isolated inhabitants of the ‘hyper-ghettos’ in the US.

The Swedish case presents a migration policy that differs from policies pursued by other European states. In contrast to the situation in Central and Southern Europe, migrants in Sweden have historically not been treated as ‘guest workers’ The migration policy is characterised by the expectation that migrants will become citizens someday. Currently more than 75 per cent of the foreign-born residents are Swedish citizens (Schierup, Hansen and Castles 2006: 195). The Swedish welfare regime is often considered to be the most highly developed of its kind and on the whole it has been successful in handling poverty, at least up until the beginning of 1990s (Esping-Andersen 1996). Migrants have at the same time enjoyed full access to the Swedish welfare system (Schierup, Hansen & Castles 2006).

The results of this report make it clear that:

- The educational level of the descendants of migrants from Turkey is generally lower than that of their native peers. However, once variables pertaining to the socioeconomic background of individuals are controlled for, the significant differences between the two groups regarding educational achievements disappear. In other words, descendants of migrants have achieved the same educational goals as young people of the majority group given the same class background.

- The descendants of migrants from Turkey studied in segregated (in terms of class and migrant background) schools and neighbourhoods. Consequently, they have experienced segregated friendship networks during their school years. But their parents’ ambition, higher expectations and extra exertion have compensated for the negative effects of segregation.

- Both male and female respondents with parents born in Turkey seem to have a higher probability of being located in occupational categories: ‘unemployment’, ‘taking care of children and family’ and ‘sick/handicapped’. On the other hand, when we study those who have a labour market status not known to us (not employed or in education, not looking for jobs or doing military service, not on parental leave), we observe that after controlling for age, education and class background there are no significant differences between the target group and those with a native background (Behtoui 2012).
Another tendency is for descendants of migrants from Turkey to hold the same labour market position as their parents previously held. That is, young men find jobs in the trade/service sector and manufacturing industry while young women find employment in trade/service and health care. These jobs are in low-wage occupations and usually the paid working hours are few. The target group respondents consider themselves overqualified for their current job to a greater extent than respondents in the reference group. Our results confirm the findings of previous studies which show that despite similar educational achievements, descendants of migrants from non-European countries have not been able to find a position in the labour market on a par with their peers of native descent. This implies that unequal treatment of young people with migrant backgrounds is present in the Swedish labour market (Behtoui 2013).

The question we must now ask ourselves, on the basis of our findings, is whether we should conclude that descendants of migrants from Turkey are in a process of social exclusion and the formation of an ‘underclass’ in Sweden.

The points of departure for our analysis are different political structures vis-à-vis migrants and their inclusion in mainstream society, and differences in the institutional framework relating to the reception and incorporation of migrants in the TIES partner countries (also see Crul, Schneider & Lelie 2012).

As previous research shows, dismantling the welfare state, deregulating the labour market, destroying traditional forms of social solidarity (including trade unions) are not yet as far-reaching in Sweden as elsewhere, especially in the English-speaking world (see, for example, Harvey (2005: 115). Despite the latest negative developments, people (including migrants and their descendants) remain broadly attached to the welfare structure. In contrast to the traditionally small American welfare system, the more elaborate Swedish welfare regime and strong presence of public intervention have restrained (even if not wholly prevented) the marginalisation of people at the lowest levels of the social hierarchy. By and large, thanks to the institutions of a large and relatively robust welfare state, the more regulated labour market and still powerful trade unions, people situated on the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy enjoy a certain degree of social security and relative material welfare.

The ‘downward assimilation’ hitting some sections of the population of descendants of migrants in the American metropolis does not seem to apply to descendants of migrants from Turkey in Sweden. They do not form a distinct ‘migrant underclass’, at least not yet. Inequalities have certainly increased in Sweden during the last few years but other problems such as racialised poverty, long-term unemployment, low salaried jobs, and
criminality are still rather limited in Sweden compared to the situation in the US and in several other EU member states. Nevertheless, ‘the current situation is exceedingly ambiguous’ (Schierup et al. 2006: 229).

Having said this, however, we should not underestimate the real stigmatisation and discrimination hitting descendants of migrants in both schools and the labour market in Sweden. Unequal treatment hampers social mobility. It is more difficult for these young people (compared to those of native origin) to achieve a social status corresponding to their skills and merits. Achieving the same level of education as people of native origin and being incorporated into the labour market does not automatically mean that the descendants of migrants from Turkey are accepted and treated as social equals. The notion of ‘subordinate inclusion’ is a more appropriate portrayal of the specificities of incorporating migrants and their children in Sweden. ‘Subordinate inclusion’ characterises a situation in which stigmatised migrant groups are included in the institutional system in general, but placed in subordinate positions in all spheres of life, from education to the labour market, and from the marriage market to friendship and neighbourhood relations (Mulinari 2008).

Certain limitations restrict the generality of the findings of this report. First of all, our analysis includes only young, native-born people of foreign parentage (referred to in TIES terminology as the ‘second generation’). The literature in this field shows that young people who are born abroad and migrate at an early age tend to be more at risk (Thomson & Crul 2007: 1033). Secondly, this case study includes only the descendants of people who migrated from Turkey from the 1960s through to the 1980s. For a more comprehensive account of the incorporation of the descendants of migrants in Sweden, we should study the outcomes of other migrant groups who came later and who have been the target of more widespread prejudice, for example the descendants of migrants from Somalia who arrived in the early 1990s. Another important limitation of our cross-sectional data is that it is not possible to follow the young people in this study over time. More longitudinal research is needed to see how the process of integration in Sweden evolves over time.

References


