

Integration processes of immigrant groups to the host country’s society: towards a better understanding of acculturation processes of Turkish people in the Netherlands

Bachelor Thesis University College Groningen

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# Introduction

Recent events in the Netherlands have created tensions between Turkish immigrants and Dutch people. The most recent event is the visit of Turkish Minister of Family and Social Policies, Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya, who visited the Netherlands with the intention of hosting a talk for Turkish people at the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam (Het Parool, 2017). The talk served as a promotion for a referendum that would affect constitutional changes in Turkey. The suggested constitutional changes aimed to increase president Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s power in Turkey. Since 2014, Turkish people who do not live in Turkey are allowed to vote for the Turkish elections. In total, there are between 5,5 to 6 million Turks living abroad that are potential voters who, given their large numbers, could significantly affect the vote. Therefore, Turkish ministers and politicians including Kaya, travelled to other countries to host talks for Turkish people in order to win votes for the referendum (Anker, 2017).

However, such talks by foreign politicians are prohibited in the Netherlands due to the maintenance of public order. Therefore, Ahmed Aboutaleb, the Mayor of Rotterdam, decided to have Kaya escorted out of the Netherlands. Turkish prime minister Erdogan became furious and called the Netherlands a fascist country (NOS, 2017). Turkish diplomats and politicians criticised the Netherlands during a convention organised by the United Nations by arguing that the Netherlands had violated human rights (Het Parool, 2017). According to the Turkish representatives, human rights have been deteriorating and there are islamophobic trends going on in the Netherlands. As a result of the incident with Minister Kaya, Erdogan threatened to deport Dutch diplomats in Turkey and to ban Dutch airplanes from flying into the country. This further aggravated the relationship between Turkey and the Netherlands (NOS, 2017). The weekend after Kaya was forced to leave the country resulted in commotion where twelve demonstrators were arrested and seven people got injured (Anker, 2017).

It is important to realize that such events are not incidental and are part of larger developments that have taken place over the past century notwithstanding the start of the immigration of Turkish people to the Netherlands. There is quite a lot of public discourse around this topic which was stimulated by the events that occurred in the Netherlands such as the one mentioned earlier. These events were mostly interpreted as expositions of the integration problem that Turkish people have (Du Pré, 2016). There is a general opinion among Dutch inhabitants that Turkish people have failed to integrate (Het Financieel Dagblad, 2016). According to them, Turkish people have created a strong community in the Netherlands in which is independent, very structured and cohesive. More specifically, some Dutch ministers and politicians perceive Turks as integrating poorly because they do not adhere to Dutch values in their opinions (Kamerman, 2017). For instance, politician Sybrand Buma argued that the demonstration that was caused by Kaya’s escort is evidence for failed integration (Wakker Nederland, 2017).

Among political circles in the Netherlands as well as other countries, immigrants are usually perceived as ‘aliens’ that form a threat to the social cohesion of a country. This is particularly the case for immigrant groups that are perceived as low status, like the Turks (Tóth-Arends & Van de Vijver, 2004). These partially explain negative attitudes towards Turkish immigrants (Vedder, 2014). However, negative attitudes towards Turkish immigrants might also be clarified by the fact that Turks belong to a different religion than the majority of Dutch citizens. While Turkish people mostly engage with the Islam, Dutch people are less often religious and when they are, they mostly endorse Christianity. Dutch politicians clearly take a negative stance towards the Islam by pronouncing it as a religion that poses a serious threat to Dutch society, national identity, and culture (Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). According to Scroggins (2005), there is a cultural war taking place between Dutch and Muslim people which entails a culture of fear. Negative connotations and stigma with respect to Islam were demonstrated in a survey that was conducted, called the Pew Global Project. This survey found that 51% of the Dutch people that participated had unfavourable opinions with regards to Muslims (Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008). Gijsberts (2005) found that some Muslim practices are perceived as morally wrong by the majority of Dutch people. Moreover, Gijsberts concluded that 50% of Dutch people view the Western and Muslim lifestyles as too distinct from each other to go together. Dutch people believe that Muslims hamper fundamental democratic values such as freedom of speech and equality between men and women (Vasta, 2007).

Hence, part of the reason that Turkish immigrants are perceived as a threat by Dutch people is the religion. Various theories propose that fear and and perceptions of threat have the potential for generating prejudice towards outgroups, but specifically for immigrants (Coser, 1956; LeVine & Campbell, 1972). Therefore, Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands might also be viewed negatively as a consequence of their Islamic believes. Because Dutch people have negative attitudes towards Turkish immigrants, Turkish immigrants are prejudiced which likely impedes their integration process. However, Dutch people believe that integrating in the Netherlands is the responsibility of Turkish immigrants themselves and that they have failed to accomplish this (Vasta, 2007). The public debate around Turkish immigration is focussed on the perceived lack of socio-cultural integration which reflects and shapes the opinions of Dutch people (Velasco González et al., 2008).

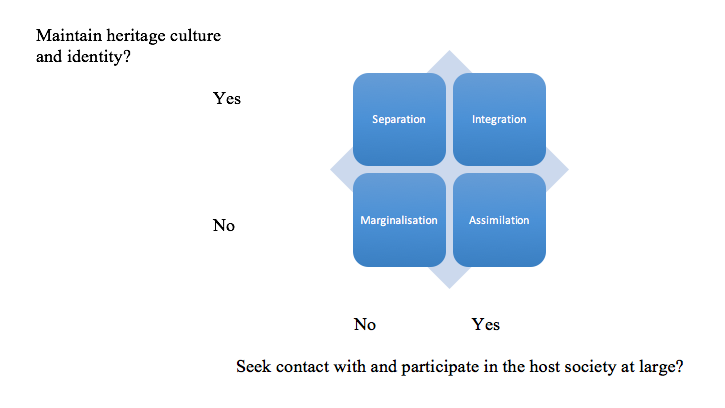
As can be inferred from the above, integration is a complex process that entails numerous aspects. This paper discusses integration processes of Turkish people in Dutch society using the lens of acculturation. The main scope of the paper is to identify and discuss parameters associated with acculturation such as cultural similarity, history, and causes of immigration.

## *Acculturation*

Whenever individuals migrate, they are faced with the challenge of adapting to the host society of that particular country. This process of adapting to the host society has been labelled ‘acculturation’ (Berry, 2005). Immigration therefore results in acculturation processes. Berry argues that acculturation occurs when two or more cultural groups and their individual members are in contact and results in cultural and psychological change. Due to the fact that acculturation entails intergroup contact, it involves potential conflict and so negotiation is demanded to accomplish adaptive outcomes for both cultural groups (Berry, 2005). Berry also argues that acculturation will continue to exist as long as there is intercultural contact between groups.

Furthermore, acculturation is dual in nature since it occurs both on the group level and the individual level. The group level concerns change in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices such as changes in clothing style, food and language. At the individual level, acculturation entails behavioural changes including changes in daily behaviour and physical and psychological well-being. The change that is experienced by the individual members of these groups has been defined as psychological acculturation (Graves, 1967). This concept adds that individuals that cross cultural borders are both influenced by the external culture as well as their own culture. Acculturation and its related cultural and psychological changes develop over a long period of time, ranging from years to generations or even centuries. Adaptations that manifest during this period can be predominantly psychological or sociocultural.

Individuals and groups differ in the particular way they deal with acculturation, these variations have been labelled acculturation strategies. Berry has defined these strategies based on two dimensions (Berry, 2005). The first dimension covers the maintenance of the heritage culture and its accompanying identity whereas the second dimension covers the relationships sought among groups. Taken together, this yields a fourfold model (see *Figure 1*) of acculturation strategies in which people can adopt the following strategies; assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki, 1989).



*Figure 1.* Adapted from‘Acculturation and adaptation in a new society’, by Berry, J.W., *International migration*, *30*(s1), 69-85.

## *Acculturation strategies*

*Assimilation*: occurs when a migrants’ own cultural identity and characteristics are poorly maintained and frequent interactions occur with host country inhabitants. This also includes adapting to the cultural values of the host country and so migrants pursuing assimilation generally have intermediate levels of stress and adaptation (Berry, 2005). Assimilation has been linked to a melting pot society, because there is interaction between different groups and their own heritage culture is not maintained.

*Integration:* similar to assimilation, integration involves migrants maintaining relationships with other groups such as host country inhabitants, but they do wish to preserve their own cultural values. Integration therefore requires negotiation, because migrants both wish to adapt to the host society and to preserve their own culture. Even though integration demands this balance, this acculturation strategy is associated with the least conflict (Berry, 2005). According to Berry, migrants that opt for this strategy experience less stress and are adapting better compared to those who pursue marginalization which will be discussed later. Integration has been linked to multiculturalism, because different cultures are able to exist simultaneously due to the fact that people can stick to their identity whilst adapting to the host society.

*Separation:* at the other end of the spectrum, migrants do not consider relationships with other groups as valuable. In the case of separation, migrants preserve their own cultural identity in combination with isolating themselves from the host country. Similar to assimilation, separation is linked to intermediate levels of stress and adaptation among migrants who adopt this acculturation strategy. Separation is linked to segregation because migrants decide to disengage themselves from society and to not adapt to the host culture.

*Marginalization:* as aforementioned, marginalization is characterized by migrants who isolate themselves from the host country society. Marginalization encompasses the perceptions that maintaining relationships with other groups and maintaining the original cultural identity are not valuable. Migrants therefore separate themselves from other groups while not attaching much value to their own culture. Hence, marginalization is associated with exclusion because migrants exclude themselves from the rest of society.

## *The Acculturation of Turkish people in the Netherlands*

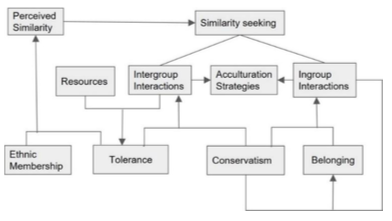
Studies conducted in the Netherlands have shown that Turkish immigrants state that they prefer to be integrated to the Dutch society and so they endorse the integration strategy (see Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2004; Van Oudenhoven, Prins & Buunk, 1998). Van Oudenhoven et al. (1998), for example gave their Turkish, Moroccan, and Dutch respondents four different scenarios in the form of fictitious newspaper articles where each of the four acculturation strategies was presented and were asked to indicate the extent to which they identified themselves with the person described in each scenario. Their results showed that both Moroccans and Turks were more likely to identify themselves most with an integrating person. Interestingly, however, the majority of the Dutch participants were of the opinion that Turkish and Moroccan groups prefer and practice separation. Similar were the findings of Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2004). Their research demonstrated that the majority of Turkish- Dutch people preferred integration which was followed by assimilation or separation with marginalisation being the least favoured strategy. Turkish-Dutch were defined as individuals who were born in Turkey or have at least one parent who was born in Turkey.

# The study of acculturation: a complexity perspective on acculturation

As can be inferred from the above, acculturation is a concept that entails numerous aspects. It can therefore be considered as a complex phenomenon because it consists of multiple interacting elements that possess behavioural states which can combine in ways that are hard to predict or characterize (Jager & Edmonds, 2015). Paolillo and Jager (2016) identified a number of processes that are relevant to acculturation and factored them in a theoretical model that they then tested via computer simulation with the scope of better understanding acculturation processes. Paolillo and Jager developed their model based on the following traits that agents[[1]](#footnote-1) in the model all possess to a certain extent:

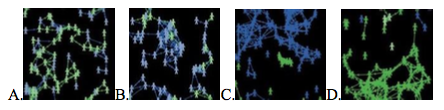
1. *Tolerance*: is defined as the extent to which agents accept intergroup reactions (i.e. interactions between their ingroup and the outgroup) and is based on the resources that a group possesses and the potential positive or negative effects that the interaction entails.
2. *Political ideology: conservatism versus liberalism:* conservatism is characterized by desiring similarity (explained below), a strict division in groups and avoiding the other ethnic group. Conservative agents therefore consider other agents as similar when they have the same ethnic status and a (low) tolerance level. Liberal agents, on the other hand, do not attach value to ethnic status and perceive other agents as similar when they have the same (high) tolerance level. Liberalism has core traits such as being open to the unknown and a high tolerance attitude which allows them to perceive people to be similar regardless of their ethnicity.
3. *Belonging:* this is used to refer to the attitude that an agent has with regards to interactions within one’s own group which is quantified as the extent to which the group is conservatively oriented. In addition, this variable measures any positive effect of the interaction and also any negative effect which is called rejection. An interaction with an agent of the ingroup can have a positive impact on the acceptance of the interaction. The only demand is that the receiver agent’s belonging should be equal or higher than its degree of conservatism. If this requirement is met, the outcome will be an increased degree of belonging for the initiating agent of the interaction. Rejection will result when the interaction is unaccepted and so belonging decreases.
4. *Legal status of migrants:* agents can either have a legal or an illegal status which has consequences for their chances to reside in the host country because of border patrols.
5. *Perceived similarity:* agents always aim to interact with similar agents. Perceived similarity is determined by the extent to which an agent is conservative or liberal and tolerant.
6. *Positive contact (inclusion) with ingroup vs. outgroup members and negative contact (rejection) with ingroup vs. outgroup members:* the model distinguishes various forms of inter- and intra cultural group contact. Within one’s own group, in-interaction or in-rejection might occur. In-interaction refers to interaction within one’s own group and is quantified as the number of interactions with one’s own group members. In-rejection is defined as rejection by own ethnic group members and is quantified as the number of rejections in one’s own group. Out-interaction and out-rejection are interactions occurring between different ethnic groups. Out-interaction describes the number of positive interactions with the other ethnic group whereas out-rejection addresses the number of rejections by members from another ethnic group.

As illustrated in Figure 2, Paolillo and Jager use a number of concepts in their model. For instance, each agent receives a fixed amount of resources that depends on their (il)legal status and ethnic membership. Moreover, Berry’s model of acculturation strategies serves as the basis for MigrAgent. The parameters that underlie the model result in the emergence of visual patterns that represent Berry’s acculturation strategies.



*Figure 2.* A Protoype of MigrAgent. Adapted from Paolillo, R., and Jager, W. (2016). *United we stand? Simulating acculturation processes in a migration context using MigrAgent.* Paper presented at the Social Simulation Conference, Rome, September 2016.

In terms of visual representation, every agent is colour-tagged to identify their ethnic membership and status. In addition, there is a border implemented which influences the accessibility of the host country for (il)legal immigrants and there is police patrol that can escort illegal migrants.



*Figure 3.* A visual representation of the networks that represent the acculturation strategies. Adapted from Paolillo, R., and Jager, W. (2016). *United we stand? Simulating acculturation processes in a migration context using MigrAgent.* Paper presented at the Social Simulation Conference, Rome, September 2016.

From A to B, the acculturation strategies shown are integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation of liberal migrants. By studying which networks emerge under which conditions, acculturation strategies can be clarified. Paolillo and Jager demonstrated that integration is the dominant acculturation strategy in conditions with the most liberal host and migrants. In contrast, separation is the dominating strategy in conditions with more conservative agents.

While the dynamics underlying acculturation strategies as identified by Paolillo and Jager (2016) can provide us with more insights into what causes the appearance of one acculturation strategy versus a different one, the model does not take into account some crucial factors that could affect integration of migrant groups to host societies. For the purposes of this research I look into two specific factors that were not taken into account in Paolillo and Jager’s model and which are largely absent from the literature around acculturation and integration more broadly.

Acculturation is not a process that happens in a vacuum and as such the context within which these complex processes occur should be taken into account. Several researchers have criticised the acculturation literature that forms the basis for Berry’s model. The main criticism is that demographics and other contextual factors such as the ethnic group and country of origin in question are not incorporated in Berry’s model (Berry, 1989). Berry’s model was therefore denounced for adopting a “one size fits all” approach because all immigrants are equally characterized by the same four acculturation categories and significant contextual factors that may be crucial to determining the acculturation strategies adopted are ignored (Rudmin, 2003).

Therefore, the first factor I want to shed more light to via this theoretical paper is the socio-historical context in which integration dynamics occur. Contact between the host society members and immigrants is unavoidably affected by the history of immigration of a particular group to the host society. Groups that were forced to immigrate in a different country like refugees for example are seen with a different light as opposed to economic immigrants. Research has shown that refugees are more favourably received by the host society compared to immigrants in general (O’rourke & Sinnott, 2006). Economic immigrants are received less favourably since host society members believe this will lower their wages.

Negative attitudes developed towards migrant groups unavoidably influence the nature of inter-cultural contact. As demonstrated in Paolillo and Jager’s model, negative out-interactions are a factor influencing acculturation strategies. A lack of interaction or negative interactions (out-rejections) can lead to more separatist acculturation strategies (i.e. separation, marginalization). For this reason, it is important to see how socio-historical factors can or have determine(d) the relationship between Turkish immigrants and Dutch society and by extension acculturation strategies deployed.

The second factor concerns cultural differences between the immigrant group and the host society. As aforementioned, cultural differences are important to take into account when it comes to the study of integration. Groups that are culturally similar to each other tend to stick together as the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1969) suggests. This theoretical principle proposes that individuals with whom one shares salient common characteristics are generally preferred over other individuals who someone does not share salient characteristics with. These characteristics entail aspects that distinguish individuals from each other such as interests, values, religion, group affiliation and language (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2005). Many of these characteristics are not merely idiosyncratic but also culture-specific. Thus, it is highly likely that cross-cultural contact involves individuals that are dissimilar from each other on some of these salient dimensions. The culture-distance hypothesis proposes that there will be more difficulties with cross-cultural interaction when the cultural gap between individuals is larger (Ward et al., 2005).

The principle that similar people are attracted to each other is a very important component of social network theory. The similarity-principle is referred to in this domain as ‘homophily’ which is the phenomenon that individuals might choose to affiliate with other individuals that show similar traits (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). As explained earlier, the similarity-principle is also embedded in the MigrAgent model and determines which clusters will be formed. Therefore, cultural similarities are crucial for studying acculturation strategies and the networks that emerge.

# This research

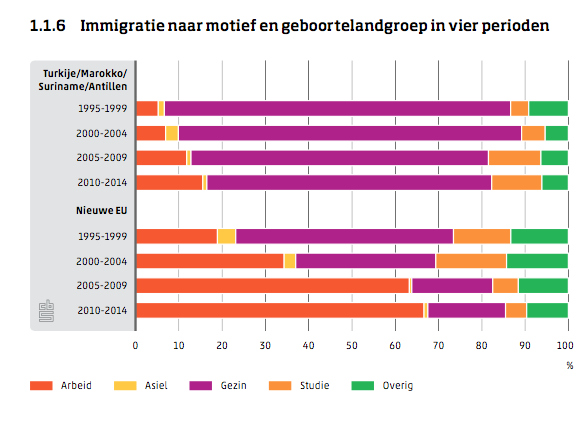
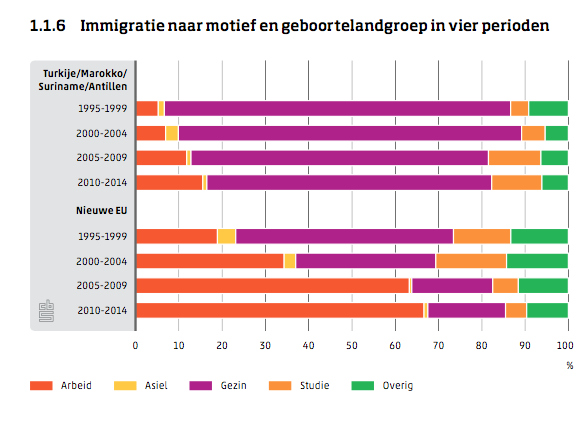
The purpose of this thesis is to discuss in detail two components that could potentially affect integration of migrant communities to the host society. These are (i) the socio-historical context within which integration processes unravel and (ii) the cultural similarities between the migrant groups and the host society. In my opinion, both of these factors govern or influence the nature of the relationship between the two groups and by extension integration. I discuss these two factors with specific reference to the case of Turkish immigration in the Netherlands.

# *Socio-historical context and integration: The history of Turkish immigration in the Netherlands and how it can or has influence(d) integration of Turkish people in the Dutch society*

Turkish immigration in the Netherlands commenced around the 1960’s, when there was serious scarcity in low-skilled professions at the Dutch labour market due to the economic boom after World War II. Dutch companies therefore decided to recruit employees from Mediterranean countries as a temporary solution. Low-skilled male workers from countries like Italy (1960) and Spain (1961) came as ‘guest workers’ to the Netherlands (Crul & Heering, 2008). After a while, it became apparent that more people needed to be recruited. Turks were recruited around 1964 as a result. These so-called guest workers mostly worked in textile industries, road construction and other sectors that require intense labour (Nicolaas & Sprangers, 2007; Van Amersfoort, 1986). Most of these guest workers settled in big cities such as Amsterdam and some cities in Twente and Brabant (Butter, 2000). Because these guest workers were initially recruited as a temporary solution, families were left behind since guest-workers believed that they would return after some years (Van Amersfoort, 1986). According to the census of 1971, 30.000 Turks were residing in the Netherlands which increased to 65.000 by 1973 (CBS, 2007). Around this time, many of the Spanish and Italian guest workers returned to their home country because of the improved economic situation while many Turks stayed. In fact, immigration from Turkey increased since 1973 which was partially due to illegal labour (Crul & Heering, 2008). However, the main reason for this increase in immigration was that many Turkish people engaged in family unification and family formation and thus many Turkish women immigrated to the Netherlands (Nicholaas & Sprangers, 2007). Their share in the number of Turkish immigrants quickly reached 50 per cent.

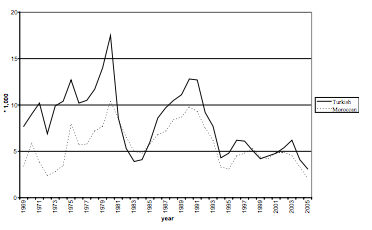
In 1983, 17.500 Turks immigrated to the Netherlands which is the highest peak that Turkish immigration has reached so far. As a result, Dutch immigration policies were sharpened by introducing a required visa and new rules that made family unification harder (Van Wissen & De Beer, 2000). Additionally, new policies were created which aimed to guide the immigration of high-skilled immigrants which prohibited the immigration of low-skilled immigrants which benefitted the Dutch labour market (Bruquetas-Callejo, Garce’s-Mascareñas, Penninx & Scholten, 2007). These interventions combined with the fact that the Dutch economy was in recession probably explain the significant decrease in immigration from Turkey. Given that many Turks had permanently settled in the Netherlands, the Dutch government created integration policies. An ethnic minorities policy report called the ‘Minderhedennota’ was written which had the purpose of improving the status of immigrants (Ministerie van Binnelandse Zaken, 1983). For instance, socio-economic equality was included in domains such as the labour market, education and housing and attention was paid to vulnerable groups including women and youth. A couple of years later, the recently implemented policies were condemned for being unsuccessful in integrating ethnic minorities in the labour market and education. The general opinion was that financially supporting migrant organisation was too much of a priority and led to a neglect of other domains. However, Turkish immigration started to increase again in the second half of the 1980s mainly because of the continuation of family unification. Around the 1990s, Turkish immigration decreased and also the proportion of Turkish women declined.

As can be inferred from the above, motives for Turkish immigration have changed over time. Between 1960 and 1980, most Turkish immigration revolved around labour opportunities in the Netherlands whereas family unification became a motive around the 1980s. Both of these motives still exist today, but other motives have increased in importance. For instance, study and work have become a more important motive for immigration since 1995-1999 which is depicted in Figure 4. This increase was at the expense of the family unification motive, which still remains the main motive for immigration. However, it should be noted that this figure represents motives for immigration for other immigrant groups as well. Figure 4 therefore does not shed much light to the specific motives of Turkish immigration, but it is an indication.



*Figure 4.* Immigration motives in relation to country of birth in four different periods. Adapted from Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2016). *Jaarrapport Integratie.* Retrieved from <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/publicatie/2016/47/jaarrapport-integratie-2016>

Currently, Turkish people form one of the biggest immigrant groups in the Netherlands. In 2016, there were 397.471 Turkish people out of a total of 3.7 million immigrants (CBS, 2016). The total number of Turkish people accounts for 2.3% of the total population of the Netherlands. The majority of the Turkish people (52%) are second generation migrants. This generation is quite young with an average age of 19, while the first generation is 47 on average. In recent years, the Turkish community only increased in number due to births of the second generation (CBS, 2016). Between 2011 and 2015, approximately 2000 Turkish people from the first generation emigrated from the Netherlands per year and so more Turkish people departed than settled. Figure 5 shows the number of Turks that immigrated to the Netherlands between 1969 and 2003 which is depicted by the bold line.



*Figure 5*. Immigration of persons with Turkish citizenship, 1969-2006. *Adapted from* Crul, M., & Heering, L. (Eds.). (2008). *The position of the Turkish and Moroccan second generation in Amsterdam and Rotterdam: The TIES study in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam University Press.

## *History of immigration and acculturation strategies*

The history of immigration is unique for each group of immigrants. The way immigration of a specific group to a host country advances largely affects demographic changes as was illustrated for Turkish immigrants earlier. It also has an impact on how immigrants are viewed by the host society and how they are treated by the official institutions of the host society, which in turn affects how they adapt to the host society (Schwartz et al., 2010).

In order to understand the acculturation process, it is essential to understand the context in which it takes place (e.g., Rohmann, Piontkowski, & van Randenborgh, 2008; cf. Crockett & Zamboanga, 2009). Factors that pertain to individuals that should be taken into account are for instance characteristics of individual immigrants, the countries of origin of the immigrant group, their resources and socio-economic status, the host country and the particular local community in which they settle, and how fluently migrants can speak the native language of the host country.

Given that there are differences within the group of Turkish immigrants with regards to country of birth and where they grew up, Turkish immigrants can be divided in smaller subgroups according to their generation and their motives for immigrating to the Netherlands. These divisions are essential to create because they sketch the particular context for the acculturation process of Turkish immigrants which in turn might affect the acculturation strategy that they will adopt. Therefore, the following section will discuss different immigration motives and how this impacts or may impact acculturation.

## *Temporary vs permanent immigration*

Almost all Turkish immigrants are voluntary immigrants which means that there are two general factors for immigration: 1) the push, the need or the desire to leave the country is bigger than the desire to stay which is the pull (Sabates-Wheeler, Sabates & Castaldo, 2008), and 2) the host country is in demand of labour that migrants can offer. Turkish immigrants of the first generation immigrated to the Netherlands with the intention to only stay temporarily for work and to return after a couple of years. Therefore, it is likely that they had little motivation to make an effort to integrate by for instance learning the language and seeking contact with native Dutch people.

## *Age of immigration*

Considering that the first generation immigrated to the Netherlands as (older) adults, they acquired Turkish cultural practices, values, and identifications (Schwartz et al., 2010). Research shows that individuals that emigrated as a young child have a higher likelihood of easily and fluidly acquiring host culture practices, values and identifications compared to individuals who migrate at an older age (Schwartz et al., 2010). Therefore, immigrants of the first generation are likely to experience the highest degree of difficulty with integration because they have vivid memories of their life prior coming to the Netherlands whereas the second generation of Turkish immigrants has not experienced life in Turkey.

Also, acculturation might be easier for second generation Turkish immigrants since they do not experience some issues with respect to migration that the first generation did experience such as pre-migration trauma, being undocumented, and not being able to speak the mother tongue of the host country (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Conversely, second generation immigrants are more likely to experience discrimination at a young age which can cause them to turn more to their ingroup and away from the outgroup (Verkuyten & Nekuee, 1999; Verkuyten & Brug, 2002). Since they are born and raised in the Netherlands, they already experience discrimination at a young age whereas first generation immigrants did not. Many studies have demonstrated that immigrants that belong to the second generation who experience discrimination are more likely to identify to a higher extent with their ethnic group than with their host country (Ersanilli & Saharso, 2011). Ersanilli and Saharso (2011) found that the effect of discrimination on identification with the host country is marginally significant. According to these researchers, discrimination should then lead to the adoption of more separatist acculturation strategies by this cohort.

All the reasons provided earlier might explain why Turkish immigrants of the second generation have experienced acculturation differently compared to Turkish immigrants that belong to the first generation. In addition, the reasons provided might also explain why only first generation Turkish migrants decided to return to Turkey in recent years because their acculturation process was more difficult (CBS, 2016).

## *Family status: single workers vs married couples*

Another subgroup of the Turkish community in the Netherlands has immigrated due to family formation or unification. These immigrants were mostly female and intended to settle permanently in the Netherlands. Hypothetically, it would therefore make sense to assume that they may have made more of an effort to integrate into Dutch society. However, research conducted by Kwak (2003) showed that the mothers of Turkish immigrant families exhibit the strongest Turkish identity. This might be explained by traditional family roles in which the primarily role of Turkish mothers is to take care of the children and perform household tasks. Hence, they spend most of their time at home and less time on seeking contact with the host society and culture.

Their roles as housewives could affect their choice for acculturation strategies since some studies have illustrated that the particular strategy adopted depends on life domains. The main difference here is between private domains, meaning at home, and public domains which are domains outside of home (Arends- Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2004). Acculturation strategies might be fluid in the sense that immigrants do not necessarily pick only one acculturation strategy. For instance, immigrants prefer cultural maintenance to a greater extent in private domains compared to public domains. Therefore, it could be hypothesized that Turkish women do not integrate as much as other Turkish immigrants because they do not have contact with the host country in work settings.

*Guest workers vs economic immigration*

Guest-workers and economic immigrants are differently perceived by the hsot society. Economic immigrants are immigrants in search of employment or better employment conditions and seek a better future in the host country. Therefore, they are seen as competition while guest workers usually are not. This perceived group competition is reflected in the negative attitudes that exist towards economic immigrants (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson & Armstrong, 2001). Group competition can be the result of resource stress which refers to the societal perception that a particular resource is limited. Resources can range from social and political power to economic advantages. In the case of Turkish economic immigrants, resource stress might be particularly experienced with respect to jobs since that is the primary reason that these Turkish people immigrate. Resource stress together with the perception that an immigrant group is a potential competitor result in perceived group competition because it contrasts the general idea that resources should be available in sufficient quantities to all groups (Esses et al., 2001). Perceived group competition often lead to zero-sum beliefs which reflect the idea that what the outgroup obtains is at the expense of what your own group obtains. Thus, the host society might feel deprived of resources due to the presence of an immigrant group and therefore negative attitudes towards immigration arise (Esses et al., 2001).

Even though guest-workers are also potential competitors, negative attitudes might appear to be stronger for economic immigrants. The main reason for this difference in perception is that guest-workers are only staying temporarily in the host country while economic immigrants intend to stay permanently. Another reason might be that guest-workers are usually recruited to fulfil low-skilled professions which might make them less of a threat to host country inhabitants. Nonetheless, there are also specific negative associations with regards to guest-workers. For instance, guest-workers only reside temporarily in the host country and so are not expected to engage in acculturation (Rodriguez, 2007). Economic immigrants, on the other hand, seek a better future in the host country and therefore it could be hypothesized that they are more motivated to acculturate compared to guest-workers.

These negative attitudes towards Turkish immigrants have implications for acculturation. A study conducted in Belgium showed that the perception of economic competition in combination with the perception that immigrants take a positive stance towards intergroup contact result in more negative attitudes which leads to a decrease in preferences for integration among immigrants (Zagefka, Brown, Broquard & Martin, 2007). Therefore, strong negative attitudes of the host society towards immigrants can result in the adoption of other acculturation strategies than integration. Economic immigrants might particularly experience adopting different acculturation strategies as it was hypothesized that they are received more negatively by the host society.

*Governmental policies*

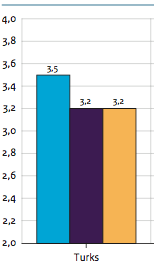
Initially, the government did not make any efforts with regards to the integration of these Turkish guest workers since it was assumed that they would stay temporarily (Entzinger, 2006). In fact, these immigrants were encouraged to maintain their heritage culture as it was seen as beneficial for their reintegration upon return in Turkey. This is reflected in for instance introducing Turkish in the primary school curriculum for immigrant children and the funding for Turkish associations.

Pillarisation was adopted as a strategy by Dutch authorities to manage Turkish immigrants which entails that society is divided according to different religions and ideological ideals with segregation as a result (Entzinger, 2006). Even though pillarisation was already renounced in Dutch society, it was expected to be advantageous for Turkish immigrants since they were perceived as a group that deviated from Dutch society. When Dutch authorities realised that the Turkish immigrants would stay permanently, they introduced multiculturalist policies such as the Minorities’ Policy (‘Minderhedennota’) which preserved the heritage culture and tackled socio-economic issues while pillarisation continued (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, 1983).

When these multiculturalist policies failed, immigration was becoming more and more of a burden for welfare, but expressing this feeling was a perceived to be almost racist (Entzinger, 2006). The integration of Turkish immigrants was heavily debated in political circles and political leader Wim Kok managed to shift the focus from respecting cultural diversity to promoting integration. Dutch authorities realised that part of the lack of the integration of Turkish immigrants was due to their relative unfamiliarity with the Dutch culture and language. Therefore, it was decided to launch a civic integration course called ‘inburgering’ in Dutch. Turkish immigrants are obliged to attend and pass this course. These interventions that had the purpose of promoting integration appeared to be quite successful in combatting the unemployment rate and in education (Entzinger, 2006). However, it is still debatable whether this outcome was the result of the ameliorated economy or indeed the social policies that were enforced. On the other hand, contact between Turkish immigrants and the host society had actually decreased during the 1990s which is most likely due to increased segregation in cities (Dagevos et al., 2003). This was caused by the fact that many native Dutch people moved to the peripheries of cities and immigrants moved to these available places in the city (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2004). Segregation in schools appeared to be even more problematic since immigrant children were not able to attend particular schools due to pillarisation. Publicly funded schools with a confessional orientation rejected children with a different orientation. As a result, schools were more segregated than neighbourhoods and so contact between Dutch and Turkish people declined.

At the start of the 2000s, the number of naturalisations via which a person becomes a Dutch citizen, of Turkish immigrants rose significantly. Another ongoing trend was the rise of the political right wing that responded to general feelings of dissatisfaction in Dutch society. Aversion towards immigration played a central role in their political program. After the most famous right-wing politician from that time, Pim Fortuyn, was murdered, his quite radical party gained in a lot of seats in the elections that occurred a couple of days later. The dominating perspective was blaming immigrants for their failed integration. A new approach to immigration therefore stressed that immigrants should make more efforts to integrate into Dutch society. New policies for instance hampered obtaining Dutch citizenship by making it more expensive which resulted in a rapid decline in the number of naturalisations. Furthermore, mandatory courses for integration were now charged and immigrants that failed the course received a fine and were excluded from the possibility to qualify for permanent settlement.

In brief, the initial focus on integration has faded to the background and surveys have found that the acceptance of cultural diversity among the Dutch population has decreased (Dagevos et al., 2003). This is in line with the decline in the degree of acceptance that is perceived by Turkish immigrants. A survey that was distributed in 2011 showed that Turkish immigrants feel that their acceptance has been decreasing during recent years (Dagevos & Huijnk, 2014). An explanation for this decline could be that cultural and religious differences are emphasized rather than socio-economic differences.



../Desktop/Schermafbeelding%202017-06-12%20om%2012.47.57.png

*Figure 6.* The perceived acceptance of Turkish immigrants according to Turkish immigrants. Adapted from Dagevos, J. & Huijnk, W. (2014). Segmentatie langs etnische grenzen. *C. Vrooman, M. Gijsberts en J. Boelhouwer (red.), Verschil in Nederland*, 251-280. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269407033_J_Dagevos_en_W_Huijnk_2014_Segmentatie_langs_etnische_grenzen>

The decrease in acceptance of Turkish immigrants is also shown by the assimilationist policies, which enforce adopting Dutch cultural norms, values and practices, that have replaced integration policies. While Dutch authorities are still referring to integration, it appears that this is defined as the extent to which immigrants conform to Dutch norms and values and stay loyal to the Dutch culture. Social and institutional participation do not seem to be essential to integration anymore.

Assimilationist policies affect which acculturation strategies are deployed by immigrants. Research conducted by Verkuyten (2010) showed that assimilationist ideals make an immigrant’s identity more salient which results in a positive association between ethnic self-esteem and global self-worth. Assimilation generally has a negative effect on well-being since this acculturation strategy prohibits immigrants from maintaining their own identity which most of them highly value. Because the feeling of identity is strongly related to ingroup identification, contact with the group that one identifies with results in a higher well-being. In this case, it means that Turkish immigrants achieve the highest well-being when they are surrounded by other Turkish immigrants. This research by Verkuyten (2010) therefore suggests that assimilationist contexts are likely to result in immigrants’’ adopting separatist strategies in order to escape threats to their group’s positive distinctiveness.

This history of immigration policies has inevitably affected the acculturation strategies of Turkish immigrants. Most importantly, the initial intention of the Dutch government to aim for a multiculturalist approach has fostered the marginal position of Turkish immigrants in society (Entzinger, 2006). Some important requirements for making multiculturalism successful were not met such as a high degree of similarity between the cultures and a limited role of the state. Therefore, several researchers have argued that Dutch multiculturalism has perpetuated the marginal position of immigrants’ in society. Low employment rates and educational levels also contributed to their marginal position since they became dependent on public support. Hence, Entzinger (2006) suggested that Turkish immigrants have adopted separation or marginalization accounts because of the immigration policies that are in place. Other researchers added that assimilative pressures that prevent immigrants from forming support networks or ethnic communications result in adaptation problems for immigrants (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001).

# *Cultural differences*

The second component that I study as a potential influence for acculturation is culture. Acculturation research often neglects culture since most studies focus on the behavioural aspect of acculturation such as language use and other cultural practices (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2010; Cuellar et al., 1995; Stephenson, 2000; Szapocznik et al., 1980). However, merely studying an aspect of national identity such as language only partially reflects cultural adaptation. Therefore, culture should be taken into account in broader terms when studying acculturation.

According to Chirkov (2009), adjusting Berry’s model in such a way that it takes circumstances of immigrants into account will result in a broader applicability to explain acculturation. The importance of cultural differences has been demonstrated by the cross-cultural psychology domain (Berry, 1997). There are powerful links between cultural context and the development of individual behaviour. Hence, cross-cultural psychology has increasingly examined how individuals who have lived in one particular cultural context transition to living their lives in another cultural context.

Schwartz, Montgomery and Briones (2006) showed that cultural values are expected to change due to acculturation. For the purposes of this research, cultural differences between Turkish and Dutch people will be studied as a component that could potentially influence the acculturation process of Turkish people. As Rudmin (2003) stated, the extent of ease or difficulty with which a migrant can integrate depends on how similar, both actual and perceived, the heritage and host culture are. For the purposes of this research, cultural differences between Turkish and Dutch people will be studied as a component that could potentially influence the acculturation process of Turkish people.

**Cultural similarity- Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultures**

Research has revealed that all cultures can be described via using some universal cultural dimensions. Geert Hofstede was one of the first researchers to identify these cultural dimensions. In his book, *Cultural Consequences*, he demonstrated that there are consistent differences between nations in dealing with values (Hofstede, 1980). What distinguished Hofstede from many other researchers, is that he studied cultural differences by means of a huge international database on cultural differences. As an employee of the multinational IBM, he used his connections to conduct a large-scale international study on cultural differences. Through a large questionnaire study among employees from different countries where IBM had offices, Hofstede studied cultural differences. The questionnaire that Hofstede uses is called the Values Survey Model (VSM) and tests which personal values are dominant in particular cultures. In 1980, when Hofstede first used the VSM for detecting cultural differences, his samples consisted of IBM employees in forty different countries (Hofstede, 2013). All his samples were matched because all participants of his study were similar in terms of measurable aspects except for their nationality. Meanwhile, many researchers have replicated his research by using adapted versions of the VSM with other participants than IBM employees. Hofstede concluded that his results could be clustered in six dimensions, including: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism versus Collectivism, and Masculinity versus Femininity.

The ***Power Distance*** dimension describes the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect unequally distributed power (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). Large power distance cultures therefore have a strong social hierarchy whereas a small power distance results in equality among members of a particular society. ***The Individualism versus Collectivism*** dimension deals with the degree to which cultures are focussed on the ‘I’ or on the ‘We’. Individualistic cultures are rooted in concepts that are important for individual’s identities such as self-actualization. In collectivistic cultures, individuals are not focussed on themselves, but on the greater social system to which they belong. The ***Masculinity/Femininity*** dimension is based on the dominance of masculine values including achievement and success and feminine values such as caring for others and quality of life. ***Uncertainty Avoidance*** is the extent to which people try to avoid uncertain and ambiguous situations because they feel threatened in such situations. Thus, cultures high in uncertainty avoidance encompass a strong desire among people for rules and structure and are less open to change which results in a little adoption of innovations. ***The Long-Term versus Short Term*** dimension entails whether a society has a pragmatic future-oriented perspective instead of a conventional historic or short-term perspective (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Long-term cultures are characterised by family life seen as a pragmatic arrangement and children are taught not to expect immediate gratification of desires or goals and learn thrift. The latter trait means that children learn how to deal carefully with resources rather than wasting them. In contrast, short-term-oriented cultures attach importance to respecting social codes and being a stable individual but also to immediate need gratification. Because of their oppositional stances, there could be tension between the two different social norms which creates a wide variety of individual behaviours. Minkov came up with the sixth and final dimension of Hofstede’s model called ***Indulgence versus Restraint***. Indulgence is characterized by a society that allows for gratification of basic human desires (Hofstede, 2011). The other side of the continuum of this dimension is restraint, and is related to suppressing gratification of needs. In these so-called restraint cultures, positive aspects of life such as happiness, freedom and leisure are not valued as much as in indulgent cultures and positive emotions are not expressed as openly. The restraint of gratification is maintained by strict social norms.

# A Comparison between Turkish and Dutch culture based on Hofstede’s dimensions

I retrieved the data concerning the Netherlands and Turkey so as to see where the two countries/ cultures rank on Hofstede’s dimensions. This was done to see how culturally similar or different the two countries are before discussing how this could potentially affect acculturation of Turkish immigrants to the Netherlands. Figure 7 shows the corresponding values on the six cultural dimensions for each country. The Y axis represents the scores which can range from 0 to 100 and the X axis represents the six different dimensions. I proceed to discuss the results for the two countries/ cultures. The discussion is followed by some assumptions/ extrapolations for pertaining to acculturation.

Figure 7. Hofstede, Retrieved March 6, 2017 from from https://geert-hofstede.com/netherlands.html. Copyright 1984 by Geert Hofstede.

*Power Distance*

With regards to power distance, it appears that there a clear discrepancy exists between the Dutch and the Turkish culture. In particular, Dutch people prefer equality and a decentralization of power and decision-making. According to Hofstede, control and supervision are generally disliked and so Dutch people appreciate being independent and prefer to implement a hierarchy only for convenience. Additionally, their aversion to power distance is also visible in the workplace, where Dutch employees call their managers by their first name and have informal relationships (Hofstede, 1984). Whereas both Dutch people disfavour centralized power, Turkish people seem to attach much value to this notion and thus rely on people that have authority over them. The Turkish style is defined by dependence, hierarchy, inaccessible superiors and the father figure is perceived as the ideal boss (Hofstede, 1984). Considering this clear desire for structure and control, it is not surprising that structures also exist in other areas such as the family unit. In addition, Turks are relationship-oriented which is reflected in the workplace where they show their emotions and prioritise feelings over objective facts (Metcalf, Shankarmahesh, Aycan, Larimo & Valdelamar, 2006). Turks also have an indirect communication style and treating business partners politely is considered as important.

As can be inferred from the above, Dutch and Turkish people are characterized by very different working styles which is due to their different position on the Power Distance dimension. This has some implications for the acculturation strategies that are deployed. First, the discrepancy between the communication styles might result in difficulties in relationships between co-workers. For instance, Dutch people mainly have informal relationships and call colleagues and managers by their first name as aforementioned. This transition to a more informally oriented work place may result in difficulties in adapting to a new work environment and so adjusting to the host culture. Also, difficulties with interacting with managers are likely to result in low quality relationships between employees and their bosses which create lower adjustment to the host culture (Jian, 2012). This notion is also incorporated in MigrAgent since low quality contact increases the likelihood for separatist acculturation strategies to emerge in the model.

However, Jian (2012) suggest that maintaining one’s heritage culture might also have the potential to enhance adjustment to the host culture through relationships between bosses and employees. One possible explanation for these contrasting statements about these relationships and acculturation is that people their ability to compartmentalize cultural knowledge differ. That means, Turkish immigrant workers display their own cultural norms and behaviours at home while the work environment is a public place where they might temporarily suppress these norms and behaviours. As a result, Turkish immigrant workers might adjust to the host culture at the workplace but not at home. An explanation might be that immigrant workers who retain their heritage culture might have a stronger dual awareness which might be beneficial in performing well at work.

*Individualism versus Collectivism*

With regards to this dimension, it is clear that the Dutch and the Turkish culture are again positioned on the extremes of the spectrum. The Dutch culture is highly individualistic which means that Dutch people are supposed to take care of themselves and immediate family only. In contrast, the Turkish culture is characterized as a collectivist minded country. Much value is attached to looking after others which creates a sense of ‘We’. Interestingly, preference for (in)direct communication is linked to individualism and collectivism. Individualism has been linked to a preference for direct communication while collectivism has been linked to a preference for indirect communication (Liu, 2016). Communication is therefore indirect for Turks and direct for Dutch people.

Differences in individualism and collectivism may have an affect on acculturation. First of all, Turkish immigrants that were born and raised in Turkey have a hard time understanding Western culture and the compulsory individualization it entails (Schwartz, Montgomery & Briones, 2006). In collectivist cultures such as the Turkish culture, individualization and self-direction are actually proscribed and youth are expected to adopt adult roles during or after adolescence (Arnett, 2000). Turkish youth may therefore be poorly prepared for identity development in the Netherlands. That means, they might not use the opportunity to explore and develop their identities that such a society offers to the fullest extent (Montgomery & Côté, 2003).

In addition to issues with regards to identity development, research conducted by Côté (1993) suggests that individuals who share ideals with the host society receive the most support by both formal and informal social institutions. Therefore, Turkish immigrants who are collectivistic might receive less or no support from social institutions such as school, the workplace and the government in the Netherlands compared to individualistic immigrants.

*Masculinity/ Femininity*

In terms of this dimension, the Dutch culture is highly Feminine and therefore considers success to be a good quality of life and caring for others is perceived as crucial. In the workplace, this translates to managers supporting their employees and involving them in decision-making. Dutch people are known for their desire for consensus which results in long discussions in order to reach a compromise. The Turkish culture is also Feminine in which caring and spending time together with family or friends has a central position and consensus is essential.

Considering that the Dutch and the Turkish culture are similarly oriented on this dimension, this dimension shows little cultural distance. Psychological adjustment is thus not essential for this cultural dimension and cultural conflict is unlikely to occur. Berry (1992) used the term ‘culture shedding’ to capture the process of unlearning aspects of one’s heritage culture in order to fit into the host culture. Since both cultures appear to be feminine, culture shedding is not demanded. Therefore, the acculturation process is expected to elapse a little easier.

*Uncertainty Avoidance*

The Dutch culture only exhibits a small tendency to uncertainty avoidance. Nonetheless, the Turkish culture has a strong preference for uncertainty avoidance which demonstrates a strong desire for laws and rules. The anxiety that uncertainty arouses is attempted to be reduced by traditional rituals such as the evil eye bead which serves as protection against the malevolent gaze.

Concerning implications for acculturation strategies, research has suggested that discrepancies between cultures in uncertainty avoidance may influence the decision-making process in the workplace (López-Duarte, Vidal-Suárez & González-Díaz, 2015). More specifically, employees that are high in uncertainty avoidance and transition to a work environment that is low in uncertainty avoidance may result in discretion to make decisions. Employees will particularly experience this when the host country is highly individualistic and low in uncertainty avoidance like the Dutch culture. Uncertainty avoidance therefore hinders the acculturation process of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands.

The discrepancy in uncertainty avoidance between the Turkish and the Dutch culture can also be linked to MigrAgent. Studies have shown that the psychological need to deal with uncertainty and threat is related to political orientation (Jost, Napier, Thorisdottir, Gosling, Palfai & Ostafin, 2007). Uncertainty avoidance is positively correlated to conservatism. MigrAgent distributes fixed values for conservatism and liberalism for each agent which consequently determines the outcomes of their interactions with other agents and so indirectly influences which acculturation strategies will emerge. As for Turkish immigrants, uncertainty avoidance is high and so they are more likely to be conservative. The Dutch culture is lower in uncertainty avoidance and so more likely to be liberal. The difference in political orientation hinders acculturation since agents are less similar and so less likely to accept each other. As a consequence, the likelihood is greater that separation and marginalization will emerge.

*Long Term Orientation*

The Long Term Orientation dimension illustrates that the Dutch culture is pragmatically oriented. Dutch people are flexible in adapting to new situations and show perseverance in achieving goals. However, the Turkish culture features in the middle of the scale so no dominant preference can be deduced.

Based on the finding that the Turkish culture is positioned in the middle of the spectrum, it is difficult to suggest implications for acculturation strategies deployed. Nonetheless, the fact that the Turkish culture scores lower than the Dutch culture is interesting, because it indicates that Turkey might be less flexible in adapting to new situations such as immigrating to an alien country. As a consequence, more difficulties may arise around the acculturation process. This dimension is also related to political orientation which affects acculturation as they are incorporated in MigrAgent. Since a long term orientation is characterized by flexibility and a pragmatic approach, it can be linked to liberalism because these people score higher on measures of aspects such as openness and cognitive flexibility in comparison to conservatives (Carney, Jost, Gosling & Potter, 2008). Conservatives, on the other hand, have strong urges for structure and closure compared to liberals. In other words, differences between the Dutch and the Turkish culture on this dimension make acculturation a bit harder since it decreases the similarity between agents in the model due to the higher likelihood of a different political orientation.

*Indulgence*

For the Indulgence dimension, the Dutch culture can be clearly categorized as an Indulgent culture. As a consequence, Dutch people have a positive attitude and are apt to be optimistic. They are fond of realizing their desires and impulses with regards to enjoyment and deviant behaviour is quite easily tolerated and leisure time is important. However, the Turkish culture has a greater tendency towards restraint with an intermediate score. Yasar (2014) demonstrated that indulgent behaviour is particularly popular among young Turkish people which suggests that indulgence levels might differ among Turkish generations.

Concerning this dimension, the Turkish culture adopts a position in the middle and so implications for acculturation are difficult to pinpoint. A potential implication for acculturation could be that Dutch people are more focussed on leisure time in comparison to Turks who would then be more focussed on work time. An empirical study conducted by Manrai and Manrai (1995) reflected this difference in time usage patterns. These researchers concluded that the time division for work versus social and leisure activities is perceived differently for high and low-context cultures. In low-context cultures such as the Dutch culture, people are more individualized and somewhat fragmented which results in less involvement with other people (Hall, 1976). High-context cultures such as the Turkish culture are characterized by the fact that people are deeply involved with one another and there is a structure of social hierarchy in place (Kim, Pan & Park, 1998). The main difference is that perceptions of social and leisure time are higher in low-context cultures compared to high-context cultures. This may hamper the acculturation process of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands since it indicates that their perceived importance of leisure time is lower than for work time which decreases their time for sociocultural participation in Dutch society.

# Discussion

The process of acculturation commences whenever immigration occurs and is affected by numerous elements such as the age of immigration, motives for immigration and cultural differences. However, contextual factors such as socio-historical context and culture are oftentimes neglected in the acculturation literature while there is evidence that they are essential to include (see Rudmin, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2010). These factors are also absent from the MigrAgent model that deals with acculturation of immigrant groups in the host society. In order to see whether these two components are indeed important to include in the study of acculturation, I performed an extensive literature review to investigate their potential influence on acculturation.More specifically, I utilized the acculturation process of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands as a case study. In addition, I linked my findings of the acculturation process of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands to the MigrAgent in order to make the model more comprehensive.

I demonstrated that including the socio-historical context and cultural differences is essential for studying the acculturation process of immigrants because both components allow for explaining and clarifying the particular acculturation strategies that emerged across different generations and segments of the Turkish immigrant community in the Netherlands. An example of how socio-historical context affects acculturation strategies is the motive for immigration. Guest workers immigrated for temporary work while economic immigrants came to the Netherlands to build a future (Crul & Van Heering, 2008). Considering this, it is unlikely that guest workers had motivation to integrate by for instance learning the language and seeking contact with native Dutch people. Economic immigrants are more likely to attempt to integrate due to their permanent residence. Similarly, cultural differences are able to clarify acculturation strategies deployed. For instance, research suggests that people who are high in uncertainty avoidance, such as Turks have a higher likelihood of being conservative (Jost et al., 2007). MigrAgent predicts that conservative people cluster to a high extent and this yields separation or marginalisation.

Even though MigrAgent currently lacks variables that are directly related to the socio-historical context and cultural differences, it is still useful for explaining acculturation and systematically studying conditions under which certain acculturation strategies emerge. Although the intention of this paper was to extend the model, my literature study also provides support to the model. For instance, homophily which is incorporated in MigrAgent is similar to the similarity attraction hypothesis which serves as the basis of the cultural (dis)similarity discourse. The knowledge and insights that were gained can also contribute to the MigrAgent model by extending it. For instance, the cultural background of immigrants and the socio-historical context in which they immigrate can be included in the model by fixing the variables in a way that it reflects a particular culture or socio-historical context. An example is the aforementioned notion that the Turkish culture is high in uncertainty avoidance positively correlates to conservatism (Hofstede, 1980). For the socio-historical context, I believe that extra parameters should be added such as introducing a parameter for negative attitudes of the host society towards immigrants which decreases perceived similarity and quality of contact and vice versa for positive attitudes.

Also, acculturation is a two-way process in which the importance of the role of the host country should be emphasized. In particular, the host country has the ability to facilitate acculturation via governmental policies around immigration and integration. Currently, Dutch people believe that Turkish immigrants are the source of the perceived integration problem (see Du Pré, 2016; Het Financieel Dagblad, 2016). However, Turkish immigrants are viewed negatively by Dutch society and are subject to negative stereotypes and even discrimination (Verkuyten & Nekuee, 1999; Verkuyten & Brug, 2002). Host society members determine whether immigrants will be received as positive or negative and also whether they encounter discrimination, stress, and hostility during their acculturation process (Schwartz et al., 2010). As a result, host society members create the fit between immigrants and the context which can be either poor or good which affects acculturation. Receiving immigrants in a more favourable manner will make the acculturation process easier. MigrAgent captures this notion that acculturation is a two-way process since it is based on perceived similarity and the quality of contact. Paolillo and Jager (2016) demonstrated that integration is most likely to emerge when both host society members and immigrants are liberal and so they must be open and flexible.

Considering that the integration problem of Turks is mostly based on perceptions of Dutch people and not facts, it could be questioned whether Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands actually have an integration problem. Especially because Turks usually prefer integration according to research (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2004). In fact, Dutch political philosopher Tamar de Waal claims that Turkish immigrants do not have an integration problem (Ten Hooven, 2016). According to de Waal, there are double standards for Turkish immigrants that make it incredibly difficult for Turkish immigrants to integrate in Dutch society because the standards for integration are way higher for Turkish immigrants compared to native Dutch people. De Waal also claims that the standards that Turkish immigrants have to meet for integration are becoming higher and higher. Civic integration for example is required and involves (language) courses that immigrants have to finance themselves. Not attending or failing these courses results in fines or in extreme cases losing one’s residence permit. Due to these barriers and double standards, it should be questioned whether Turkish immigrants actually have an integration problem.

*Limitations*

Although Hofstede’s dimensions of national culture are useful for comparing two different cultures, there are some limitations to this approach. Firstly, Hofstede used several instruments to collect his data which were adapted over time which make it hard to trace the specific instruments he used and at what point in time he gathered his data. Additionally, many of his subjects were IBM employees who are not very representative for an entire population in terms of for instance gender and age plus they are highly educated. Lastly, Hofstede’s data is based on native Turks that live in Turkey and not on immigrants and so using Hofstede’s data might not be the most ideal approach. However, Hofstede’s dimensions of national culture can still be used with sub-populations of an ethnic group such as Turkish people living in the Netherlands.

*Future research*

This paper has some implications for new areas for research and other approaches for studying this topic. First, Turkish immigrants are not a homogeneous group due to aspects such as different immigration motives. Turkish immigrants are a diverse group that deserves to be studied more thoroughly in terms of more specific categories rather than on the group level. Examining categories to a deeper extent will allow for more specific conclusions about acculturation strategies and are likely to account for differences in acculturation strategies of different segments of the Turkish community. Hofstede’s dimensions of national culture can still be used, but the population should then be divided according to segments such as, first or second generation, men versus women, Kurdish versus Turks, and secular versus religious.

Furthermore, there are numerous components left to be studied that can potentially influence acculturation such as religion. As mentioned earlier, there is a cultural war taking place between Dutch people and Muslims (Velasco González et al., 2008). Muslims in the Netherlands are usually portrayed as a danger to the Dutch identity and culture due to their Islamic orientation which results in negative evaluations by the host society. Therefore, it would be interesting to study how religion determines perceptions of threat and how this in turn affects the acculturation strategies that are deployed.

To conclude, socio-historical context and cultural differences are essential to include in future acculturation research. Additionally, while MigrAgent is already an appropriate tool for studying acculturation, it can become more apprehensive. As this paper has shown, this can be achieved by including both socio-historical context and cultural differences. By adding these two components to the study of acculturation, more knowledge can be gained in acculturation that is crucial in an era of immigration.

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1. Agent is a term that refers to electronic individuals that participate in het simulation but in real terms agents refer to citizens who are characterized by different traits. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)