

Belgian-Turks  
A Bridge  
or a Breach  
between  
Turkey and  
the European  
Union?



King Baudouin  
Foundation

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# Belgian-Turks A Bridge or a Breach between Turkey and the European Union?



A study commissioned by the King Baudouin Foundation

Conducted by

Ayhan Kaya, Associate Professor, Director of the Centre for Migration Research, İstanbul Bilgi University and  
Ferhat Kentel, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, İstanbul Bilgi University

December 2007

# Who are the Belgian-Turks, the people of Turkish origin who live in Belgium?

This is a pertinent question, given that Belgian-Turks form one of the largest immigrant communities in our country and one which has developed down several generations during the last four or five decades. The answer, however, is neither simple nor straightforward: despite an image that is all too often stereotyped, immigrants of Turkish origin and their descendents form a heterogeneous group, whatever the criteria considered (political, socio-economic, religious or cultural), so that it would be more prudent from the start to refer to Turkish communities in Belgium.

It would be pointless to deny that interest in the subject also lies in the questions raised by the Muslim identity of these groups and the “relationship difficulties” sometimes experienced, as in October 2007, when some neighbourhoods in Brussels with a high Turkish presence were severely shaken by serious incidents. Then there is the contentious Euro-Turk question: do the Turks in Belgium represent a “bridge” or a “breach” between Turkey and the European Union?

It was here that the King Baudouin Foundation saw a number of arguments in favour of conducting qualitative and quantitative research that would enable us to gain a better understanding of these communities, with a view to making an innovative contribution to the debates open in both Belgium and Europe on the sensitive questions raised by significant Turkish immigration.

A possible line of investigation presented itself when the Foundation learned of the “Euro-Turks” study that had been conducted in France and Germany. The interest of conducting similar research in Belgium, and notably of adopting the idea of bringing researchers from the country of origin and asking them to take a completely fresh look at people of Turkish origin, was evident.

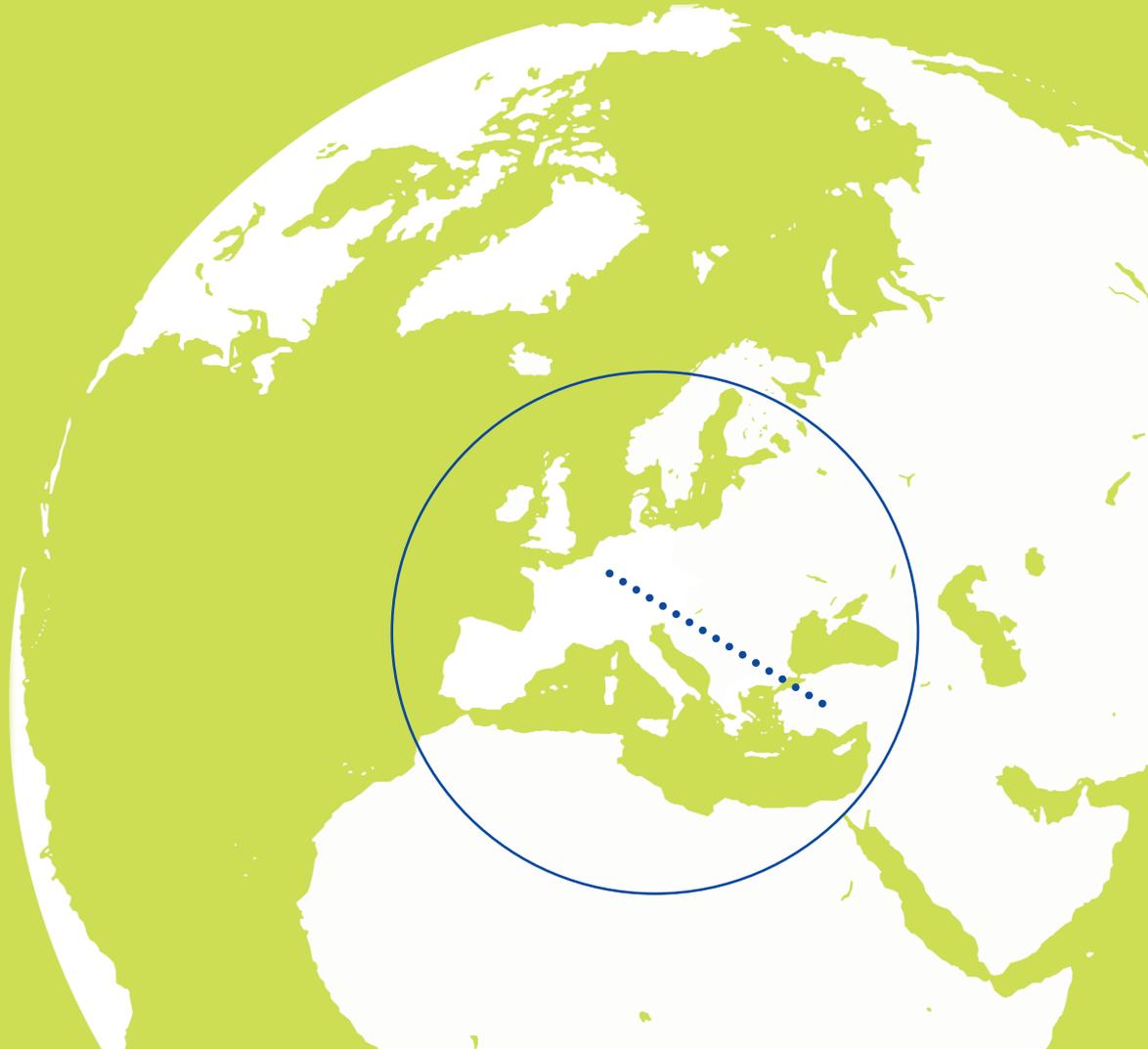
There was no shortage of arguments in favour of the research: the possibility of comparing conclusions from research in Belgium with those highlighted by the authors of the studies conducted in Germany and France and the opportunity of enabling Belgian-Turks to speak to researchers from their country of origin were but two good reasons. The Foundation did not hesitate to assign this important mission to the Center for Migration Research of the Bilgi University of Istanbul.

This, therefore, was the ambition for the research. You will read that the results were fascinating and surprising. On the one hand because the research dealt with such a wide range of issues, such as the relationships that Belgian-Turks have with Turkey and Europe, with Belgium, its citizens and institutions, with questions of identity and integration, where Islam - at both personal and public levels - plays an essential role. On the other hand, because the study highlights the contrasting experience of those within the Turkish communities in Belgium, any monolithic vision that one might have had quickly begins to fade.

The conclusions of this research will not fail to provoke debate because the researchers have delivered a sometimes highly personal interpretation of the data collected and the socio-political context on which light is thrown. Therefore, the King Baudouin Foundation has already planned to stimulate and support a number of debates in 2008, at both Belgian and international levels, around the broad lines set out.

The Foundation did not embark upon this project without taking certain safeguards. We have had the good fortune of being able to count on the collaboration of a Steering Committee and, in particular, on the help of Belgian researchers, Ural Manço, Altay Manço and Sami Zemni, who have been of great help to the research team at the Bilgi University of Istanbul. We should like to express our warmest thanks to them all.

*The King Baudouin Foundation*



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We are very grateful to a number of friends who helped us during the field research in Belgium. Tuncay Fincan and Ufuk Mestanoğulları are two of them. We should also like to express our thanks to the many Belgian-Turks who accepted to tell us their stories concerning immigration, integration, European Union and other issues, frankly and fully.

Sami Zemni read the manuscript and gave us insightful information about migration issues in Belgium. His critical and constructive criticism was always encouraging and we appreciated his assistance tremendously. Liz Harrison read and re-read the manuscript several times, not only to proofread, but also to give constructive criticisms regarding the content and we would like to express our thanks to her.

*Ayhan Kaya and Ferhat Kentel  
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# Table of contents

	Foreword
	Steering Committee Islam and Muslims in Belgium
	Acknowledgments
PART I	<b>Objectives and methodology on page 7</b>
	Background to the research
	The research objectives
	Fieldwork, methodology and sample
	Presentation of the report
PART II	<b>The global and local context on page 13</b>
	The overall socio-political context: the “securitisation” of migration
	The migratory process in Belgium
	The integration of immigrants
	Flemish and Walloon approaches to the integration of immigrants
	Discontent of republicanist and multiculturalist integration regimes
PART III	<b>Sample profile: demographic data on page 25</b>
PART IV	<b>Belgian-Turks and social classes on page 33</b>
PART V	<b>Homeland vs. ‘hostland’ on page 39</b>
	Discrete life worlds of migrants originating from Turkey: hostland vs. homeland
	Questioning the concept of “Euro-Turks”
	Perceptions of Turkey
	Perceptions of Belgium
	The politics of distinction: local election candidacy in the age of Islamophobia
	The importance of cultural self-respect in deepening integration
	Comparative images: ‘homeland’ vs. ‘hostland’
	Making and unmaking communities to cope with structural challenges
	The community and women
	Habitats of meaning for Belgian-Turks
PART VI	<b>Europe and European Union on page 65</b>
	A holistic or a syncretic Europe?
	Belgian-Turks’ perspectives on relations between Turkey and the European Union
	EU membership and migration prospects for Turks
PART VII	<b>Multiple identities and alternative modernities on page 71</b>
	Europeanness: a constant process of being and becoming
	Symbolic religiosity: the individualization of Islam among younger generations
	Digitalized religion in a virtual diaspora
	Euro-Islam: the revival of honour in an age of structural outsiderism
	Enforced religiosity: the institutionalization of Islam
	‘Imported’, or ‘national’, brides and bridegrooms
PART VIII	<b>Conclusions on page 87</b>
	Bibliography on page 91

# Objectives and methodology

## Background to the research

This research has been undertaken against a background of sometimes heated discussions about Turkey's membership of the European Union in both Turkey and EU member states, as well as some political unrest in Turkey and neighbouring countries. The research has, however, also been conducted at a time when Turkey has been reaping the benefits of its own relatively quiet revolution over the last decade, which has witnessed a transformation of its economic, political and judicial environment. Given the nature of today's media and communications, changes and discussions, whether positive or negative, impact on both majority and minority communities in Turkey and across Europe, including migrant communities such as the Euro-Turks living in Belgium and elsewhere in the EU. The major catalyst for much of this change was the Helsinki Summit of December 1999, when European Heads of State and Government offered Turkey the concrete prospect of full membership of the European Union, four decades after its application for association with the European Economic Community in July 1959 and just two years after the EU had rejected Turkey's application for membership during the 1997 Luxemburg Summit.

The perspective of EU membership offered in Helsinki has radically transformed the political establishment in Turkey, opening up new prospects for a multitude of ethnic, religious, social and political groups. Kurds, Alevis, Islamists, Circassians, Armenians and other groups have become true advocates of the European Union in a way that affirms the pillars of the political union as a project for peace and integration (Kaya, 2004). The EU provides an incentive for such groups to coexist in harmony, moving from a stance dominated by a *retrospective past*, coloured by ideological and political disagreements, to an environment in which ethnic, religious and cultural differences are democratically embraced as part of a *prospective future*. The EU as a 'peace project', which has been able to settle deep-rooted animosity between Germany and France and, more recently, between Germany and Poland, is now debated in the Turkish media, with the EU being characterised not only as a *peace-making* political union, but also one that *exports* peace.<sup>1</sup> The 1999 Helsinki Summit decision also stimulated a stream of reforms in Turkey, designed to fulfil the Copenhagen EU membership criteria. In fact, the country achieved more reforms in the two or so years after Helsinki than during the whole of the previous decade, including the right to broadcast in one's mother tongue; freedom of association; the limitation of military control and influence on the judiciary, education, budgetary decisions and the media; the extension of civil rights to officially recognized minorities (Armenians, Jews and Greeks); reformation of the Penal Code; the abolition of the death penalty; release of political prisoners; the abolition of torture by the security forces; and greater protection for the press.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, strict anti-inflationist economic policies have been successfully enforced along with the International Monetary Fund directives; institutional transparency and liberalism have been endorsed;<sup>3</sup> formal nationalism and

- 1 During her recent visit to Ankara, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dora Bakoyani, expressed her wish to see Turkey and Greece taking the same lines that France and Germany had once taken towards peace and stability: <http://www.basinkonseyi.org.tr/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=644>
- 2 Hitherto, there have been nine series of harmonization reforms along with the Copenhagen political criteria. The dates of the reforms are as follows: 1st on 19 February 2002, 2nd on 9 April 2002, 3rd on 3 August 2002, 4th on 11 January 2003, 5th on 23 January 2003, 6th and 7th in July and August 2003, and 8th and 9th on 10 December 2003. For a detailed description of the reforms see: Özbudun and Yazıcı (2004); Akagül and Vaner (2005: 130-136); and Behhabib and Türküler (2006: 218-233). Özbudun and Yazıcı (2004: 15) rightfully state that, "of the eight Constitutional amendments, the one with the most far-reaching effects on fundamental rights and liberties was that of 2001." However, one should note that harmonization reforms actually date back to a 1993 Constitutional amendment, which abolished the state monopoly in radio and TV broadcasting. Another wave of harmonization occurred in 1995, when the ban on NGO political activities was also lifted. Finally, in 1999 the state security courts became civil courts and the privatization of public enterprises was recognized.
- 3 IMF policies have never received such strong public support in Turkey. It is claimed that the main reason behind this public support is the way the economic reforms have been displayed by the AKP elite. The AKP announced publicly that the reforms were required by the EU harmonization process. Such a political tactic has successfully softened historically disputed IMF regulations in the country. (See Güney Çoban, "Yeni Sosyal Politikalar: Neoliberal paradigmadan Avrupa Paradigmasına", Centre for European Studies Bulletin, <http://www.bilgi.edu.tr/+OtherSites/docs/CESBulletin6.pdf> 2006).

minority nationalism have been precluded; and socio-economic disparities between regions have been dealt with.

The prospect of EU membership has also provided the Turkish public with an opportunity to come to terms with its own past, a sort of Turkish “*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*”.<sup>4</sup> Two widely debated conferences on the “Ottoman Armenians during the Demise of the Empire” and the “Kurdish Question” were organized at the Istanbul Bilgi University, in September 2005 and March 2006 respectively, paving the way for public discussion of two subjects that had hitherto been taboo in contemporary Turkish history. These and other conferences, and indeed the very fact that such conferences could be organized in contemporary Turkey without encountering major public intervention, bear witness to increasing acceptance of diversity. This transformation corresponds to a discursive shift, which officially recognizes Turkey as a multicultural country. That is to say that *multiculturalism is no longer just a phenomenon in Turkey: it is also an officially recognized legal and political fact*. Nevertheless, despite these encouraging signs, much remains to be done in Turkey and laws that have been passed need to be implemented.

Outside and indeed inside Turkey, the debate regarding Turkey’s EU membership continues. Within EU member states, both the political establishment and the general public are aware of the fact that Turkey’s membership of the Union will further stimulate discussions about “European identity” and “the limits of Europe”. Some recent debates have disfavoured Turkey’s membership on account of its size, its overwhelmingly Muslim population and socio-economic conditions that are below the European average (Kubicek, 2005), whilst other arguments emphasize Turkey’s undemocratic and patrimonial political culture. Nobody can deny the fact that it will be difficult for the Union to absorb Turkey in the short term. However, a more constructive discourse needs to be generated with regard to Turkey’s full membership in order to revitalize one of the fundamental tenets of the European Union, that of “a peace project”. There is no doubt that a peace project requires constructive rather than destructive criticisms. The discourse developed by the Independent Commission on Turkey is constructive, and thus deserving of admiration.<sup>5</sup> The decision taken by the Union on 17 December 2004, and reconfirmed on 3 October 2005, to start accession talks with Turkey immediately, has also reinforced the Turkish public’s faith in the EU.

It is against this complex but encouraging backdrop to Turkey’s application for membership of the European Union that this research project was conceived, in an attempt to see whether Belgian-Turks could provide a bridge between Turkey and the European Union.

### **The research objectives**

In order to find out if migrants of Turkish origin living in Belgium can provide a bridge between Turkey and the European Union, it is crucial to have up-to-date data about the Belgian-Turk community living in Belgium, not only in terms of their socio-demographic profile, but also in terms of their attitudes and behaviour with regard to all three entities involved, namely Belgium, Turkey and the European Union itself. There is a common belief in western European countries that migrants of Turkish origin and their children do not integrate into the social, political, economic and cultural life of their settlement countries, or that the political motivations of Turks in their countries of settlement are shaped primarily by their homeland. However, recent indications, including academic research, show that contemporary migrants of Turkish-origin and their descendants in Western Europe can no longer be considered simply as temporary migrant communities, living with the ‘myth of returning’, or as passive victims of global capitalism. Rather than the stereotypical image of Turks as conservative, religious, veiled, poor,

- 4 For a detailed overview of the German “*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*” (coming to terms with the past), see Ernst Nolte, “*Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will*”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (June 6, 1986); Jürgen Habermas, “*Eine Art Schadensabwicklung. Die apologetischen Tendenzen in der deutschen Zeitgeschichtsschreibung*,” *Die Zeit* (11 July 1986); and Jürgen Habermas, “*Vom öffentlichen Gebrauch der Historie*,” *Die Zeit* (7 November 1986).
- 5 The Independent Commission on Turkey was established in March 2004 with the support of the British Council and the Open Society Institute. The Commission is composed of Anthony Giddens, Marcelino Oreja Aguirre, Michel Rocard, Albert Rohan (Rapporteur), Martti Ahtisaari (Chairman), Kurt Biedenkopf, Emma Bonino, Hans van den Broek and Bronislaw Geremek. Their purpose was to examine the major challenges and opportunities connected with Turkey’s possible accession to the Union. They met regularly for intensive discussions, visited Turkey and analyzed expertise from various sources. Close contact was maintained with European institutions. The Independent Commission’s work programme did not include issues under review by the European Commission for its forthcoming Progress Report on Turkey (Giddens et al., 2004).

non-integrative and even violent, there is increasing evidence of Turks who have become permanent settlers, active social agents and decision-makers in their adoptive countries. Today's German-Turks, for instance, have little in common with the "guest-worker stereotypes" of the past. They are a recognised and highly active section of the German population. Moreover, Euro-Turks, like Turks in their homeland, are increasingly exposed to a myriad of information through the Internet, audiovisual and printed media, as well as through their own travel. Attitudes and behaviour are therefore likely to be changing. This was indeed confirmed by the authors of the present report in the attitudes and behaviour of German-Turks and French-Turks in research conducted in 2003-2004 in Germany and France respectively. This previous research study, similarly entitled *Euro-Turks: A bridge or a breach between Turkey and the European Union?* has provided much of the inspiration for the present study's aims and its methodology and reference to it will be made throughout the report on Belgian-Turks.

The overall objectives of this research are therefore to provide an up-to date portrait of Belgian-Turks regarding:

1. their socio-demographic profile;
2. their attitudes and behaviour with respect to Belgium, their 'hostland';
3. their attitudes and behaviour vis-à-vis Turkey, their 'homeland';
4. and their attitudes towards the European Union.

In particular, the research aimed to investigate:

- whether Belgian-Turks have developed certain political commitments vis-à-vis the European Union and Europeaness;
- what sort of political culture Belgian-Turks have generated in the West;
- what incorporation strategies they have developed regarding their country of settlement;
- and what are their thoughts on critical issues such as citizenship, democratisation, political participation, human rights, equality, justice and the law, religion, multiculturalism, interculturalism, integration, coexistence and political institutions.

Given that sociological and anthropological research on immigrants in Belgium is rather limited compared to other European Union countries (although a small number of social scientists are working on the subject, cf., *inter alia*, Martiniello, Rea, Manço and Manço, Bousetta, Jacobs, De Raedt, Kanmaz, Zemni, and Lesthaeghe), the research also set out to contribute to the academic body of knowledge on migration and immigrants. Finally, it was hoped that further assessment of public opinion among Belgian-Turks might help establish whether these communities could provide Turkish society with new opportunities and prospects to create a more open and democratic society in Turkey.

## **Fieldwork and methodology**

The research was conducted in three phases:

1. An **extensive literature review** involved examining related literature on Euro-Turks in general and Belgian-Turks in particular, including recently submitted MA and PhD dissertations and work from Turkish, Belgian and Belgian-Turkish scholars.
2. **Qualitative research** comprised 9 focus groups and 48 depth interviews. 6 focus groups were conducted in Brussels, 1 in Charleroi, 1 in Beringen, and 1 in Ghent. Participants in the first three groups, held in Brussels, Charleroi and Beringen in October 2006, were opinion leaders, social workers, politicians, businessmen, academics, students, artists and representatives of ethno-cultural and religious associations. The other six groups, held in Brussels and Ghent in March 2007, were with young people, women, employed and unemployed individuals

as well as members of religious communities. The depth interviews were with members of the general public, whose everyday tactics in response to national strategies<sup>6</sup> will be given special emphasis throughout the research.

**3. Quantitative research.** Finally, a quantitative survey involving 400 structured interviews was carried out in January 2007 by Research Solution and the Veri Research Company ([www.veriarastirma.com](http://www.veriarastirma.com)). The questionnaire for this phase was elaborated by the two principal researchers, in collaboration with the King Baudouin Foundation, adviser Ural Manço and academic colleagues. A *quota sample* was used, with variables of age, gender, occupation and province set to represent the three Belgian administrative regions of Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels Capital. The quantitative survey was controlled and verified by Altay Manço, a leading expert on Belgian-Turks. Further details of the sample are given below.

The interview lasted 35-40 minutes and comprised 115 questions in 6 sections: a) demographics, b) orientation towards the homeland, c) orientation towards the 'hostland', d) orientation towards the European Union, e) philanthropic matters, and f) identity-related issues. Interviewees were allowed to choose their language of response.

Fieldwork was conducted by Belgian company Research Solution, in collaboration with the Veri Research Company based in Istanbul. The selection of bilingual interviewers (Flemish/French and Turkish) and methods of interview were supervised by the Veri Research Company, which also organized orientation programmes for the interviewers in Charleroi, Ghent and Brussels to equip them with essential interviewing techniques and background information to the survey.

**Table 1. Sample distribution by region**

Belgium	Number of Respondents	%
Brussels .....	112	28.0
Province of Antwerp .....	58	14.5
Province of East Flanders .....	66	16.5
Province of Limburg .....	76	19.0
Province of Liège .....	48	12.0
Province of Hainaut .....	40	10.0
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2. Sample distribution by gender and age**

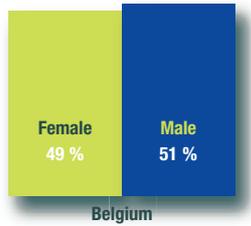
Gender/Age (Nr.)	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Male .....	21	58	66	23	33	201
Female .....	21	66	60	21	31	199
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>400</b>

**Table 3. Sample distribution by age and employment**

Employment/Age (Nr.)	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Employed .....	0	57	71	22	8	158
Unemployed .....	42	67	55	22	56	242
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>400</b>

<sup>6</sup> For further information about the tactics of everyday life strategies see De Certeau (1984).

**Figure 1: Gender distribution of the structured interviews**



**Table 4. Age distribution**

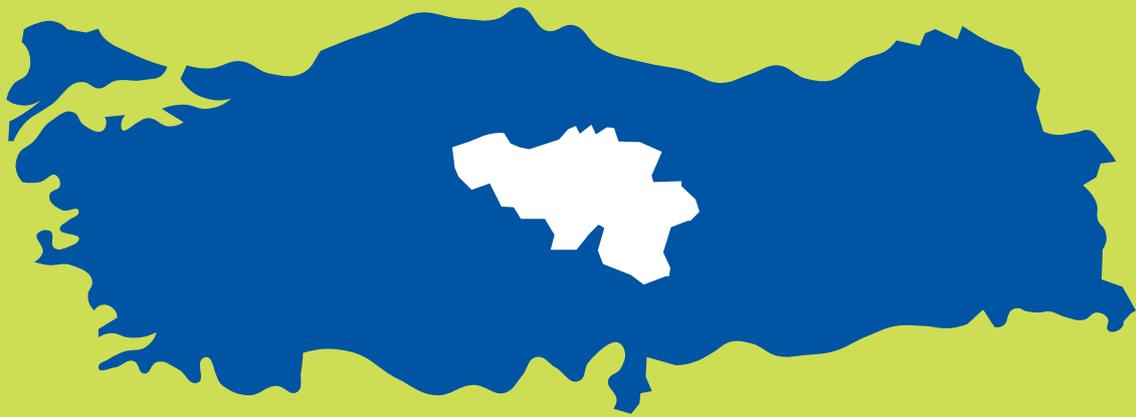


Age interval	Nr. of interviews	Percentage
15-19	42	10.5 %
20-29	124	31.0 %
30-39	126	31.5 %
40-49	44	11.0 %
50+	64	16.0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

**Presentation of the report**

A note is needed on the contextual use of the terms ‘Euro-Turk’, and ‘Belgian-Turk’ in this work. Such identifications have recently been used by migrant-origin subjects themselves to refer to their identities. In their previous study, the authors of the present report found that 60% of German-Turks identified themselves as European-Turkish or Turkish-European (Turkish-German, or Turkish-French), and some 70% of French-Turks defined themselves as such. Such hyphenated identification usefully addresses a hybrid cultural identity in the world of research. These terms are helpful to us for two reasons: firstly, they distance the researcher from essentialising transnational migrants and their descendants as ‘Turkish’; and secondly they underline the transcultural nature of these diasporic subjects (Kaya and Kentel, 2005). However, the research also reveals the difficulties of labelling migrants and their children with Turkish origin as being ‘Euro-Turks’ since the label sounds as though it carries ethnic connotations.

All decimals in the data have been rounded up (or down) to the nearest whole number for the purpose of the report.



## The global and local context

### The overall socio-political context: the “securitisation” of migration

During the 1960s, migration was a source of content. More recently, however, migration has been framed as a source of fear and instability for nation states in the West. What has happened since the 1960s? Why has there been this shift of opinion? Reasons such as de-industrialization, rising productivity, unemployment, poverty and a neo-liberal political economy can be enumerated to answer this question, but one should also not underestimate the influence of enormous demographic changes, prompted by the dissolution of the Eastern Block. 1989 signalled the beginning of a new epoch that resulted in massive migration flows of ethnic Germans, ethnic Hungarians, ethnic Russians and Russian Jews from one place to another. Political instability and ethnic conflicts in the former Eastern Block (USSR and former Yugoslavia) encouraged some ethnic groups to migrate to western European countries where they could find ethnic affinities. The mobility of millions of people has stimulated nation states to ethnicise their migration policies in a way that approved the arrival of co-ethnic immigrants, but disapproved the status of existing immigrants. Nation states were not suitably equipped to absorb the spontaneous arrival of so many immigrants. Thus, the post-Communist era has brought about a process of re-homogenisation in western states such as Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands. This period of demographic change in Western Europe has occurred parallel to the rise of heterophobic discourses such as the ‘clash of civilizations’, ‘culture wars’ and ‘Islamophobia’, as well as with the reinforcement of restrictive migration policies and territorial border security *vis-à-vis* the nationals of countries outside the European space.

Current usage of the term ‘security’ goes beyond its conventional limits. Security used to be defined in political/military terms as the protection of a state’s boundaries, its integrity and its values against the dangers of a hostile international arena (Doty, 2000: 73). Nowadays, however, security concerns are not only reduced to protecting states against ideological and military threats: they are also related to issues such as migration, ethnic revival, religious revival (Islam), identity claims and sometimes supranational entities such as the EU. Lately, migration has been presented in the Western public space as a security threat that must be dealt with. One could argue that modern states tend to extend the fear of ‘migrants’ and ‘others’ by categorising, stigmatising and coupling migration together with major problems (Doty, 2000: 73; and Huysmans, 1998 and 2006). This tendency is reinforced by the use of racist and xenophobic terminology that dehumanises migrants. One can see this racist tone in the term ‘influx’, which is used to mean large numbers of migrants.

The securitisation of migration became a key issue after 9/11. The security discourse conceals the fact that ethnic/religious/identity claims of migrants and their reluctance to integrate actually *result from* existing structural problems of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, xenophobia, heterophobia, nationalism and

racism: they are not the *reason* for such problems. It seems to us, and to several other researchers, that states tend to employ the discourse of securitisation as a political technique that can integrate a society politically by staging a credible existential threat in the form of an internal or even an external enemy, an enemy that is created by security agencies (such as the police and the army) by categorising migration together with drug trafficking, human trafficking, criminality and terrorism (Huysmans, 1998, 2006).

Security is no longer limited to the protection of national boundaries. Today, the term 'security' has a broader meaning than it had during the Cold War era, when it was linked to military and ideological threats. In other words, issues become security issues through a process of social construction, namely "securitisation" (Doty, 2000: 73). As the main rationale of the security discourse seems to have shifted from protecting the state to protecting society, so protection of society against any kind of 'evil' has become the pillar of the security discourse in a way that has popularised the term security in all spheres of life. Immigration resulting from poverty and anti-democratic regimes in the countries of origin has become one of the principal worries of western countries. Immigration has been defined as a threat, not to the survival of the state, but to societal security. Ethnic and/or religious revivals, which appear among some migrant groups as a reaction to poverty, unemployment, insecurity and institutional discrimination, seem to be decoded by the state as a challenge to societal security and social cohesion, a challenge that must immediately be stifled. This research aims to reveal whether ethnic and religious revival should be translated as the *reason* for continuing problems such as xenophobia, discrimination and conflict, or as an *outcome* of these problems.

Recent research on the securitisation of migration (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998; Doty, 2000; Sassen, 2003; Huysmans, 2006; and Düvell, 2006) rightfully draws our attention to the fact that, at official level, modern state institutions address only an insignificant correlation between undocumented migration and the problems of global poverty, debt, health, environment and unemployment fostered by the neo-liberal economic model (Sassen 2003). In this regard, one should underline that the true nature of the contemporary global crisis actually derives from the process of de-industrialization or post-industrialization, which has turned the uneducated and unqualified masses into the new 'wretched of the earth' to use Frantz Fanon's (2005) terminology. Furthermore, William Walters (2006) eloquently reveals that nowhere in the official programmes of regulating immigration do the complex histories of Fortress Europe's economic, geopolitical, colonial and postcolonial entanglements in the regions and borderlands that are now designated 'countries of transit' and 'countries of origin' appear. Instead, we are presented with an external force of 'illegal immigration', rooted in regional disorder, for which the EU is then positioned as a benign framework of protection and prevention (Walters, 2006).

The architects of EU policies on justice and home affairs described in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 have indeed contributed to a "discourse of othering". Referring to Jacques Rancière and Slavoj Žižek, Walters (2006) states that the leaders of the European Union countries engage in a kind of 'ultra-politics', which frames anti-illegal immigration activities as a battle between "us and them", with sometimes a struggle to death. Framing the issue like this puts it outside the space of dialogue and forecloses the possibility of politics and citizenship. The discourse of "othering" *vis-à-vis* migrants is also apparent in the "statisticalising" of illegal migrants. Statistical data on illegal migrants usually draw security forces' attention to refugees and asylum seekers originating from Third World countries, who travel in those 'boats' and 'trucks' that have become indispensable images in our daily news media. However, recent studies have examined and decoded some of these data and they have revealed that most of the so-called illegal

migrants are not actually 'boat people' or 'truck people' suffering inhuman conditions. Instead, the figures actually hide "overstayers", people who remain in countries even after their visas have expired (Walters, 2006). Interestingly enough, most of the illegal migrants in Australia are British overstayers, whilst in the UK it is the Americans and not the Africans or Asians. Düvell (2006) cites studies that suggest that for all the media frenzy generated by images of boats disgorging desperate travellers on Italy's islands and shores, only 10% of the irregular migrant population arrived in Italy by boat (Düvell 2006: 17).<sup>7</sup>

The problem lies in the very nature of the EU, which has been developing like a territorial state over the last 20 years so to speak. In this regard, maps that display the routes undertaken by 'illegal migrants' to get into the EU have been employed as ideological tools in order to territorialize the European space in a way that permits European subjects to easily internalise territorial Europe. Maps can also frame others as "enemies". This is the most cunning and radical version of ultra-politics. As Žižek (1998) defines it, this is "an attempt to de-politicise conflict by way of bringing it to an extreme, via the direct militarisation of politics: the 'foreclosed' political returns in the real, in the guise of the attempt to resolve the deadlock of the political conflict, by its false radicalisation, i.e. by way of reformulating it as a war between 'Us' and 'Them', our Enemy, where there is no common ground for symbolic conflict."

Another important issue to be underlined is the way in which the phenomenon of migration is being discussed in international documents, which basically highlight statistics, the demographic deficit and the West's labour deficit, rather than addressing the social, cultural and humanitarian aspects of migration. Referring to the UN Report on Replacement Migration (1997), one could argue that in these kinds of reports, migration is problematised and statisticalized through its probable impact on total fertility rates and potential support ratios against a space of demographic and social processes (Walters, 2006). Within this discursive space, the question of Europe's security is framed not in terms of dangerous flows transgressing its borders, but as the challenge of declining fertility rates and their consequences for economic productivity and the sustainability of welfare systems.

<sup>7</sup> The Detention Statistics Summary of the Detention and Offshore Services Division (DIAC) of 13 April 2007, for instance, shows that there were 528 people in immigration detention, including 81 in community detention. Of these 528 people, 69 were illegal foreign fishers. Other than the illegal foreign fishers, 367 of the people in immigration detention were detained as a result of compliance action, i.e., overstaying their visa or breaching the conditions of their visa, resulting in a visa cancellation. Of the 528 people in immigration detention, only 10 were unauthorised boat arrivals and 46 were unauthorised air arrivals. See the web page of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship of the Australian Government, <http://www.immi.gov.au/managing-australias-borders/detention/statistics/immigration-detention-statistics.pdf>. Statisticalizing of illegal migration has clearly been employed as a tool for the implementation of the politics of fear in Australia in order to "fight against the Islamic cancer in our body politic", as stated by John Stone (2006), a former National Party senator.

**Table 5: Net migration in western countries**

Country:Net migration (per 1000 people)	
Netherlands .....	2.72
Denmark .....	2.52
United Kingdom.....	2.18
Germany .....	2.18
Italy .....	2.06
Austria.....	1.94
Norway.....	1.73
Sweden .....	1.66
European Union.....	1.50
Belgium.....	1.22
Russia .....	1.03
Spain.....	0.99
Czech Republic .....	0.97
Finland .....	0.84
France.....	0.66

(Source: 2006 CIA World Factbook)

It should also be noted that "immigrant-bashing" is becoming a social sport at a time when net migration is close to becoming negative in several countries

including France, Germany, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands. This fact also makes the securitisation of migration a rather nonsensical process. One can recall how conservative political circles raised the 'Polish plumber' issue in France on the eve of the European constitutional referendum in 2004, even though the total number of plumbers of Polish origin in France at that time was only 640, an insufficient number to threaten the domestic labour market. By typecasting migration and emphasizing its disruptive consequences, the media also play a role in the securitisation of migration. Migration is often presented as an imagined alien enemy that undermines a society's culture, saps scarce resources, steals its jobs and introduces alien customs and religions (Shapiro, 1997: 1).

### **The migratory process in Belgium: From *Gasterbeiders* (guestworkers) to *Vreemdelingen* (foreigners)**

Having gained its independence in 1830, Belgium evolved over the years towards a federal structure. Five key reforms of the state took place between 1970 and 2001 to create today's federal, composed of three linguistic/cultural communities (French, Dutch and German respectively) and three regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital). The federal state competencies include foreign affairs, defence, justice, finance, social security, as well as an important part of public health and domestic affairs. The Flemish-speaking population is around 6 million, the French-speaking population approximately 3.4 million, and the German-speaking people around 70,000 people. Bilingual Brussels has some 1 million inhabitants. The regions have developed rather different kinds of belongingness to Belgium as a result of historical, cultural, economic and political differences between the communities.

Despite cultural differences, Belgium maintained its political unity rather successfully in the aftermath of World War II, even to the extent of creating a model that flourished as the Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg), which in turn itself became a model for Europe-wide integration. What is probably the charm of the Belgian model of unity is that it does not underline what is cultural and national, but rather highlights what is political. One should bear in mind that there was a practical need for such political unity against the two historically hegemonic powers of France and Germany.<sup>8</sup> The lack of a homogeneous national culture in Belgium has brought about a popular mindset of mixing, which lays emphasis on tolerance towards others.

In the nineteenth century, Belgium was a country of immigration. At the end of the century, Belgian mining companies started to recruit foreign labour, mainly from Poland, Italy, Hungary, Morocco, Algeria and the Balkans. In 1923, 10% of miners were foreigners and in 1927 14% of them were Muslims. This first North African migration to Belgium was an extension of that to France. However, the economic crisis of 1929 ended this movement. Since that time, Belgians have had a tendency to make foreign workers scapegoats as the main source of unemployment. Algerians were the first group of foreign workers to be sent back to their country of origin (De Raedt, 2004: 14). On 31<sup>st</sup> March 1936 a royal decree introduced the establishment of a work-permit programme. The rationale behind this decree was to protect the Belgian labour market against the intrusion of foreigners as well as to secure employment in the industrial sectors where there was insufficient autochthon labour power. Immigrant labour was therefore perceived as being an additional workforce that temporarily supplemented the deficit in local labour: the workers were called 'guestworkers' (*gastarbeiders*, or *travailleurs étrangers*), and they tended to be unqualified. The Foreigner Police (*police des étrangers*) controlled immigrant entry, the length of their stay and their expulsion when their employers no longer needed them. In 1937, immigrants represented 4.1% of the population and in 1938-1939, between 20 and

<sup>8</sup> The treaty establishing the Benelux Customs Union was signed in 1944, by the governments of the three countries in exile in London, and entered into force in 1947. It ceased to exist in 1960, when it was replaced by the Benelux Economic Union. It was preceded by the (still existent) Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union, established in 1921. The Benelux failed to establish stronger institutions, because the three member states joined larger economic and military organizations - NATO in 1949, the EEC in 1957 (which later became the EU). Inter-Benelux relations, such as sample border checks, lead to the Schengen Agreement (1985/1990) which virtually abolished border checks between Schengen signatory states. In essence, Benelux has been a role model and testing ground for the EEC/EU; many of its treaties are extensions of Benelux policy (Fitzmaurice, 1996).

25% of the miners working in Limburg and Wallonia were foreigners, most of whom were Polish, Italian, Spanish, or Jews who had escaped Nazi persecution (Lewin, 1997: 17). In the aftermath of World War II, instead of recruiting foreign labour from its colony, the Congo, Belgium signed bilateral recruitment treaties with Italy (from 1946 to 1960), Spain (1956) and Greece (1957). Immigration from these three countries was stopped between 1958 and 1961. Italians constituted the majority of those workers and these are now less regarded as 'foreigners' by Belgians. Belgium went through a new wave of immigration between 1961 and 1970 when more than 260,000 foreigners entered the country. In 1964, Belgium made an official request to enlist foreign labour from Morocco and Turkey and bilateral recruitment agreements were signed in 1969 and 1970 with Tunisia and Algeria (Martiniello and Rea, 2003) (Table 6).

**Table 6. Foreign population in Belgium, by region (2004)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Belgium .....	891,980	897,110	861,685	846,734	850,077	860,287
Brussels .....	272,146	273,613	262,771	260,040	260,269	263,451
Flanders .....	289,065	293,650	280,962	275,223	280,743	288,375
Wallonia .....	330,769	329,847	317,952	311,471	309,065	308,461

Source: National Institute of Statistics (INS), 2005

Immigration to Belgium was facilitated between 1963 and 1967 after mitigation of the application of the 1936 royal decree through collaboration between the Ministry of Justice and the Foreigners Police. Employers were given the right to recruit immigrants via a work permit issued in the country of origin or via a work permit obtained in Belgium after entering the country with a tourist visa. Belgium was rather more liberal in granting migrants the right to migrate with their families in those days. The policy had specific objectives: firstly to fill the demographic deficit and secondly to attract immigrants to Belgium instead of their going to rival countries such as Germany, France and the Netherlands. This policy of familial grouping has also served to keep immigrants' salaries within the Belgian economy instead of money being sent to their countries of origin (De Raedt, 2004: 15).

### The integration of immigrants

The 1967 economic recession brought an end to issuing work permits to tourists. This was also the time when the country was introduced to clandestine migration. Previously, it had been left to gatekeepers in the voluntary sector, especially Catholic institutions, to assist foreign workers and their families in trying to incorporate into Belgian society. Labour unions played an equally important role in this process. Later, in 1965, the *Consultative Council on Immigration* (CCI) was established with the inclusion of representatives from central ministries, regional economic councils and provinces with numerous immigrant residents.<sup>9</sup> The CCI was later followed by the establishment of the *Liaison Committee for Immigrant Worker Organizations* (CLOTI), which would bring together labour union representatives and immigrant workers' own associations. These institutional activities later extended into Flanders in the late 1960s (Ireland, 2000: 251-252). On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1974, following the 1973 oil crisis, Belgium officially declared the end of any kind of immigration based on work. Days before, on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1974, Islam had been recognized in law as an official religion. It has been argued that this decision, enacted just before the planned visit of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia to Belgium, was a gesture to oil-exporting countries (Blaise and de Coorebyter, 1997). Even though most Belgian-Muslims are of Moroccan or Turkish origin, the first debates on the Islamic presence were held between Belgian and Saudi Arabian diplomats and officials. Later, the Turkish and Moroccan embassies also played an essential role in the institutionalisation process of Islam in the country, a process that can be divided into three historical stages.

<sup>9</sup> CCI was later named as the Consultative Council of Populations of Foreign Origin and concluded its mission in 1991.

During the first phase, between 1974 and 1989, Belgian, Turkish, Moroccan and Saudi states were more involved in creating an Islamic presence in the country through direct official interventions.<sup>10</sup> Such unconcealed control from abroad disturbed many Belgian-Muslims. Later, in the 1990s, the Belgian state changed its polity towards Muslims, as the Belgian-Muslims faced significant structural problems including discrimination, high unemployment, criminality, exclusion and social deprivation. In the second phase, between 1989 and 1995, Islam became part of a larger mixed, or rather ambiguous, polity combining the Walloon class-based integration policies and the Flemish identity-based multiculturalist policies (Ireland, 2000: 252). At this time, the Royal Commission on Migrant Policy actively intervened in the institutionalization of Islam in Belgium by ending the authorization of the Islamic and Cultural Centre (ICC) that had been established by Muslims in 1968. The Council of Experts, set up by the Royal Commission on Migrant Policy, recognized a Technical Committee in 1990, charged with appointing or reappointing teachers for Islamic instruction, to begin in the school year 1990-91. This decision terminated the ICC's authority to appoint teachers, a decision that was tantamount to government intervention in the organizational structure of Islam, since legally only the governing body of a religion is authorized to nominate teachers.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, in the third phase between 1995 and 2000, a more technical and judicial approach towards Islam was substantiated. This was a phase that corresponded to the rise of Muslim claims in the public space. During this period, Muslims were asked to organize elections for the *Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique*. In the first elections, held in 1998, Moroccans were over represented in the Muslim Council. However, in the 2004 elections, Turks were broadly mobilized to become candidates and to vote. The result was that 40 of the 68 members of the Council elected were Belgian-Turks and 20 Moroccans. Moroccan participation in the elections dramatically declined due to the fact that elected members of the Council were subject to confirmation by the Belgian government.<sup>12</sup>

After the end of immigration in 1974, responsibility for the integration of immigrants and labour market issues was transferred to the regions and the linguistic communities, which had gained cultural autonomy in 1971. Belgium was the forerunner in Europe in starting a public debate to secure immigrants' residency status and grant them political rights in 1969, i.e. the right to vote and to stand for local elections. *Consultative Communal Councils of Immigrants (Conseils Communaux Consultatifs des Immigrés, CCCI, Stedelijke Migrantenraden)* were set up in several cities to act as liaison committees between immigrants and the city authorities (Martiniello, 1997: 108-110). Although these Councils were functional in orientating immigrants to the Belgian way of life in a way that dissuaded them from getting involved in the political life of their countries of origin, they ended up becoming clientalist multicultural organizations that imprisoned migrants in their own inward-looking communities. Younger generations, however, preferred to participate in established Belgian political structures. The discussions about granting immigrants the right to vote in local elections ended when the Christian Democrat – Liberal government of 1981 – 1987 refused to agree to this. Calls for collective integration of immigrants through granting them political rights were later transformed into efforts at individual integration through personal naturalization (De Raedt, 2004: 16). Then, the Minister of Justice, Jean Gol, initiated new legislation, which was to shape the pillars of Belgian immigration law. The Gol Law, enacted on 28 June 1984, had three specific objectives: a) to limit illegal immigration; b) to repatriate some immigrants and c) to integrate other immigrants by naturalization. The new legislation brought equality for migrant men and women before the law, allowed mothers to automatically transmit their Belgian nationality to their children and reinforced the principle of meriting Belgian nationality. This liberal intervention meant that candidates for naturalization were subject to enquiries in which they had to prove their attachment to Belgium. Granting voting right to immigrants has been a pivotal issue of the political agen-

**10** The involvement of the Saudi-based Muslim World League (MWL), also known as Rabita, in financial support for the Muslim organizations in Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands in the late 1970s and early 1980s, caused a great uproar in Turkey in the second half of the 1980s. Popular journalist Uğur Mumcu (1987) revealed that the Turkish state authorities, including President Kenan Evren's office, approved the fact that the MWL was paying the salaries of Turkish imams serving in European countries. This secretive link caused political turmoil in Turkey, characterized by its secular structure. The MWL group was founded in 1962 in Saudi Arabia and is the most important and influential Wahhabi organization in the world, effectively serving as the inspirational centre for Islamic extremists worldwide. MWL conducts its work through branch offices and affiliate organizations established in countries all over the world.

**11** For further detail on this specific period see, Meyer and Sunier (1997: 101), Dassetto (ed.) (1997), Torfs (2000), Foblets and Overbeeke (2002), and Boussetta and Maréchal (2003).

**12** For a detailed analysis of the institutionalization of Islam in Belgium see Zemni (2006).

da since the beginning of this decade. Socialists in the government exerted pressure on the federal parliament to pass the law. Unlike the Flemish political parties, all of the Francophone political parties were in favour of the new bill, even the Liberals who were traditionally opposed to it. The bill was passed by the Senate and the law came into force on 19 February 2004. Immigrants were then granted the right to participate in local elections on condition that they could furnish proof of five years' residency in Belgium, registration to vote and that they engaged, in writing, to respect the Belgian Constitution and the laws of the Belgian people (ibid.: 27, fn. 41).<sup>13</sup>

The Gol Law was slightly amended on 3 September 1991 in order to relieve the requirements of naturalization. From then on, third generation children of immigrants have been automatically naturalized. A new law, enacted on 1 March 2000, eased the naturalization process even further. According to this new law, candidates no longer have to prove their allegiance to Belgium. The National Institute of Statistics recorded that 239,834 foreigners opted for Belgian Nationality between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2004. In 2000, 61,981 foreigners became Belgian citizens; in 2001, 62,982; in 2002, 46,417; in 2003, 33,709; and in 2004, 34,745 (See Tables 7 and 8).<sup>14</sup> In short, Belgium encouraged individual integration through naturalization. This policy was codified as the Gol Law of 1984, its amendment in 1991, and the current Belgian Law of 2000. Non-autochthon Belgian citizens have recently started to become very active in politics. A great part of them have run for office as candidates of the Socialist Party (*Parti socialiste, PS* and *Socialistisch Partij en Anders, Sp.a*). After the 18 May 2003 elections, nine seats in Parliament were occupied by Belgians of non-European origin; five seats out of 150 in the Chamber of Representatives; four out of 71 in the Senate; and one of the Secretaries of the State. Allochtone<sup>15</sup> Belgians are becoming more and more involved in local and national politics in Belgium.

**Table 7. Number of naturalized foreigners between 1996 and 2004**

Year	Number of naturalized foreigners
1996 .....	24,581
1998 .....	34,034
2000 .....	61,981
2001 .....	62,982
2002 .....	46,417
2003 .....	33,709
2004 .....	34,745
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>354,341</b>

(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2004)

By the 1980s, Belgian immigration had become almost entirely Moroccan and Turkish, with large Turkish communities developing in Limburg and Ghent, and the largest number of Moroccans in Antwerp. These communities mostly settled in the industrial parts of Flanders, separated from Belgian society in cultural enclaves with almost no naturalization and where the migrants and their descendants tended to be viewed as temporary and culturally distinct *gastarbeiders*. The segregation of culturally different *gastarbeiders* lasted almost to the 1980s, when the process of de-industrialization started. In contrast to the French HLMS (*habitation à loyer modéré*), there is no public sector housing in the suburbs of Belgian cities and this explains why there have been almost no problems like those experienced in the Parisian suburbs in recent years. Problems caused by social exclusion tend to occur mainly in the city centres of Antwerp and Brussels. Most communities live alongside each other without really interacting.

**13** In the Netherlands, immigrants have been allowed to vote in local elections since 1994. Currently, no other European country apart from Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and the Scandinavian countries, has yet granted migrants the right to vote.

**14** The number of naturalized Belgian-Turks is as follows: 17,282 in 2000; 14,401 in 2001; 7,805 in 2002 and 5,186 in 2003. Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2004.

**15** The term *allochtoon* is a Dutch word originating from the combination of two Greek words: 'allo' (other) and 'khton' (earth/land). The term literally refers to someone originating from another country. In common usage, the term corresponds to those persons, at least one of whose parents, or grand-parents, was not born in Belgium, with lower social economic status.

**Table 8. Number of naturalized Belgian-Turks between 1990 - 2003**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of naturalized Belgian-Turks</b>
1990 .....	706
1991 .....	1,020
1992 .....	4,044
1993 .....	3,415
1994 .....	6,263
1995 .....	6,925
1996 .....	7,066
1997 .....	7,835
1998 .....	6,932
1999 .....	4,402
2000 .....	17,282
2001 .....	14,401
2002 .....	7,805
2003 .....	5,186
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>93,282</b>

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2004

Compared with Moroccans, Turkish-origin migrants are more marked by their rural origins, by their familial character and by a certain cultural reification that helps preserve their language and customs. Turkish migrants tend to set up their own solidarity networks ranging from hometown fellowship associations to businessmen's associations. Turkish migration tends to be chain migration and was initially conceived more as a temporary family project, whereas for the politically motivated Moroccan emigration (especially for Berbers), there was less likelihood of return from the very beginning (Lesthaeghe, 2000: 19-20; and Manço and Kanmaz, 2005). Furthermore, as Altay Manço states, North African families can be credited with having made a considerable effort with regard to their children's schooling (Feld and Manço, 2000). While the educational level of young North Africans' fathers is hardly any higher than that of Turkish parents, students from North African families seem to have bridged much of the schooling gap between them and most other (European) immigrant groups in Belgium. This has an obvious impact on the success of entry into working life: 37% of the Turkish workforce is unemployed and the situation is even more troubling in the Walloon Region (40%), which is experiencing an employment crisis (Manço, 2004). Belgian-Turks on the other hand seem to have more property than the Moroccans. They are also quite involved with Turkish print media and audio-visual broadcasting both from Turkey and from Belgium.

It should be noted that there is a limited interaction between Belgian-Turks and Belgian-Moroccans. Ethno-cultural boundaries between Turks and Moroccans are reinforced by certain mutually denigrating stereotypes: Turks call Moroccans 'desert' (*çöl* in Turkish) and cockroach (*cafard* in French) whilst Moroccans call Turks 'onion' (*oignon* in French). However, it seems that there is a tacit agreement between Moroccans and Turks on anti-racism. Implicitly referring to xenophobic tendencies among the Flemings, both Turks and Moroccans refer to those who perform racist acts as 'Flemish'. If one looks closely at relationships between communities, it can be said that there have been important changes over time. For instance, during interviews conducted in Beringen, conflicts between the communities, which were ingrained in the memories of our interlocutors, were brought up and some reported that such conflicts had been much higher in previous times: Turks had fought a lot with Italians and had often fought with Greeks during the Cyprus war. What is really interesting is that Turks had also fought between themselves, aligning themselves in function of regions, as *Karadenizliler* (fellows of the Black Sea Region) and *Kayserililer* (fellows of the city of Kayseri). Even more inter-

esting is that Turks of Beringen had also fought with Turks living in another city (Heusden) close to Beringen. These fights symbolize the struggle to take hold of a location to which they have newly come, a struggle that cannot be completely internalised and mastered. Such tensions also show how communities that are constantly constructed and deconstructed can never become homogenized.

### **Flemish and Walloon approaches towards the integration of immigrants**

The Flemish Community subsidises migrant self-organisations in Flanders and Brussels. To be eligible for funding an organisation has to be oriented towards emancipation, education and integration; it has to function as a meeting point and must fulfil a cultural function. In addition, the organisation has to operate using (also) the Dutch language, if not all the time, then at least at executive level. It should be underlined that the creation and functioning of 'Flemish' migrant self-organisations has been very actively stimulated by the Flemish Community Commission (VGC) and that this has given an important boost to immigrant associational life in Brussels and Flanders. In the second half of the nineties, the Flemish Community Commission even gave the *Intercultureel Centrum voor Migranten* (ICCM) organisation the task of co-ordinating and supporting the 'Flemish' migrant self-organisations. Recent financial support by the (Flemish) government has also been a boon to immigrant associational life.

Characterized as they are by a republicanist form of integration policy, the Francophone and Walloon governments have been unwilling to recognise the participation of immigrants in society as distinct ethno-cultural groups. Although in practice often directed primarily towards immigrant groups, policy initiatives are often framed in such a way that immigrants are not specifically defined as target groups. The same can be said of several measures undertaken by the Region of Brussels-Capital. However, the large numbers of foreign residents and the de facto residential concentration of ethnic minorities have nevertheless forced officials in Brussels towards a more multicultural stance. The Brussels Parliament, the Flemish Community Commission (VGC), the Francophone Community Commission (COCOF) and the Common Community Commission (GGC) have thus drawn up a special charter, the *Charte des devoirs et des droits pour une cohabitation harmonieuse des populations bruxelloises*, which stipulates the ground rules for coexistence of the various groups in Brussels. In addition, a 'mixed' consultative commission on immigrant issues in Brussels was created in 1991 and began functioning in 1992. The mixed commission had consultative powers on issues of particular relevance and/or importance to immigrant communities, including education, employment, housing, living conditions, relations with the police, problems associated with non-implementation of laws, the teaching of Islam, local political participation, the rights and position of women in society and refugees. It is worth mentioning that instead of starting its second term in 1995, the mixed commission was split into two separate mixed commissions: a Francophone commission and a Flemish commission (Bousetta et al., 2005).

**Table 9. Flemish and Francophones policy approaches towards people of immigrant-origin**

#### FLEMISH APPROACH

##### **Policy emphasis for integration of settled immigrants**

- recognition of the existence of ethno-cultural minority groups
- general and category policies
- cooperation with, and support of, immigrant self-organization

##### **Policy for newcomers**

Citizenship trajectories (include language courses)

##### **Foreign inspiration**

- Dutch (and Anglo-Saxon) ideas of group-based multiculturalism
- Dutch model of inburgering

#### FRANCOPHONE APPROACH

##### **Policy emphasis for integration of settled immigrants**

- individualistic approach
- general policies using socio-economic indicators
- only indirect targeting of immigrant groups (for instance, in certain neighbourhoods)

##### **Policy for newcomers**

No specific policy (but punctual projects are being financed)

##### **Foreign inspiration**

French assimilationist/republican model

Source: Jacobs and Rea (2006): 14.

For over a century, as long as Belgium was still a unitary state, the Flemish suffered francophone cultural domination, articulated through social practices and incorporated in state institutions. The celebration of cultural peculiarity has been the cradle of Flemish political identity and led to the creation of the federal state. In 1998, the Flemish government formalized its new policy line through the Minorities Decree (*minderhedendecreet*). However, an important point of difference with the Dutch system is that there is no explicit recognition of particular ethnic communities (as in 'Turkish' or 'Moroccan') as 'official' ethno-cultural minorities, which should be distinguished from each other. The Flemish government is also taking some assimilationist/integrationist steps, the so-called citizenship trajectories (*inburgeringstrajecten*), in which Dutch language lessons and lessons of introduction to Flemish/Belgian society are to be taken by certain categories of immigrants. This scheme, once again copied from the Netherlands, became compulsory for most non-EU newcomers to Flanders from April 2004 and optional in Brussels.

Conversely, for the Francophone elites, the discursive preference for the French assimilationist position has a strategic significance. Ethnic difference is only applauded in the case of individual success and so support for ethnic diversity is thus limited to meritocratic multiculturalism. As a general principle, conformity and adaptation to the Belgian-Francophone culture is expected. In a federal state in which they now hold the minority position and are heavily dependent on Flemish (financial) solidarity, the Francophone establishment is faced with an assertive Flanders that pleads for more and more autonomy and questions its responsibility to maintain solidarity with its Francophone compatriots. Self-organization of ethnic minorities is not endorsed. Ethnic associations may get funding for broadly defined activities like education, sports or citizenship, but there is a refusal at discursive level to subsidize any activities with a dimension of ethno-cultural identity.

## **Discontent with republicanist and multiculturalist integration regimes**

One can claim that the ideologies of both republicanism and multiculturalism have so far proved that migrants have been imprisoned in a cultural, ethnic and religious discourse by states in a way that distances them from attempts to represent themselves through the legitimate political institutions of national and local governments. Bomb attacks in Madrid and London and the murder of Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands have led some Europeans to revisit the popular sport of “multiculturalism bashing”. Many of those who criticize multiculturalism have short-sightedly become supporters of mono-culturalism and assimilation. However, one should understand that the problem has very little to do with cultural integration or assimilation of migrants and seems to lie elsewhere. The problem is actually a lack of political will by the receiving states to take measures that will integrate migrants economically and politically, i.e. provide them with material grounds where they can have an equal access to the labour market, and with political grounds where they feel encouraged to elect and be elected in local, national and European elections. It is challenging to examine the three regions of Belgium in this respect and compare them through the dichotomy of multiculturalist and republicanist policies of migrant incorporation.



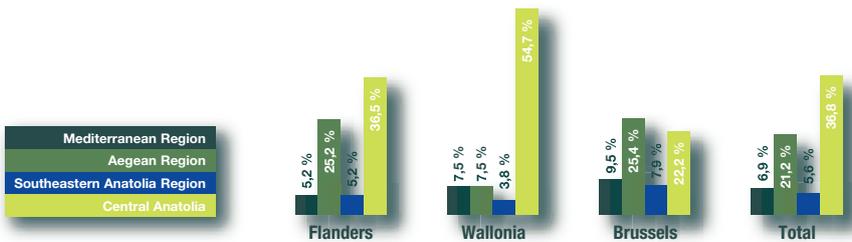
## Demographic data

The population of Belgian-Turks is around 200,000 if one includes all the ethno-cultural communities originating from Turkey such as the Sunni-Turks, Alevi-Turks, Zaza-Kurds, Kirmanchi-Kurds, Armenians, and Assyrians. This part of the report sets out the demographic structure of Belgian-Turks with regard to their social, economic, civil and educational status in Belgium.

**Figure 2. Where were you born?**

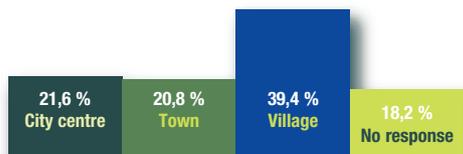


**Figure 3. Where do you come from in Turkey?**



More than half of Belgian-Turks (58%) were born in Turkey and 42% were born in Belgium. 37% of those born in Turkey originate from Central Anatolia, 21% from the Aegean region, 7% from the Mediterranean region and 6% from Anatolia.

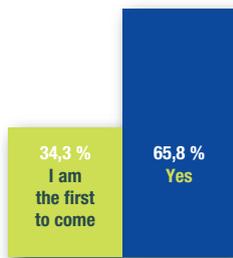
**Figure 4. Where were you born in Turkey?**



A great number of the Belgian-Turks born in Turkey are of rural origin (39%), whilst 42% are from cities or towns in Turkey. The data indicate that many Belgian-Turks are uprooted peasants who have been turned into proletarians.<sup>16</sup> The high number of interviewees who refrained from responding to this question (18%) is also worth mentioning. This is mostly because some of the interviewees were not able to classify whether their place of origin was rural or urban.

<sup>16</sup> Oscar Handlin's (1973) classic account of "the uprooted" points to the peasants who were turned into proletarians in the American context.

**Figure 5. Is there anybody in your family who preceded your coming here?**



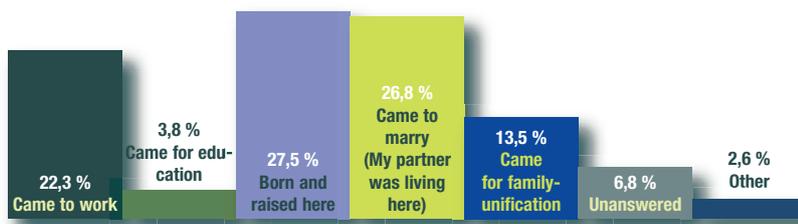
66% of Belgian-Turks stated that there was somebody else in the family who came to Belgium before them, whereas 34% indicated that they were the first to come to Belgium. This indicates that chain migration through family reunification and marriage has been the main form of migration among Belgian-Turks.

**Figure 6. Who was the first migrant in your family?**



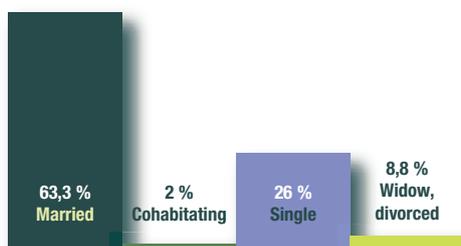
Parents (50%) form the highest percentage among relatives preceding the interviewees, indicating that there are a large number of second-generation Belgian-Turks. The number of grandparents of Belgian-Turks is also remarkably high (25%), indicating a rising number of third generation descendants in Belgium. In this respect, Belgium is identical to Germany and France.

**Figure 7. What is your reason for coming to Belgium?**



41% of Belgian-Turks reported that they came to Belgium for the purpose of family unification (marriage, 27% and family reunification 14%), whilst around a quarter (22%) came to Belgium to work. Just over one quarter of Belgian-Turks in our sample (28%) were born in Belgium.

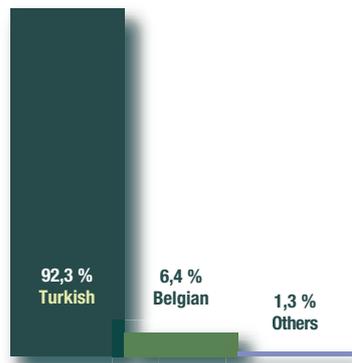
**Figure 8. What is your marital status?**



Two-thirds of those we interviewed (63%) were married and 26% were single. However, what is remarkable in Belgium is the number of divorcees (9%). The

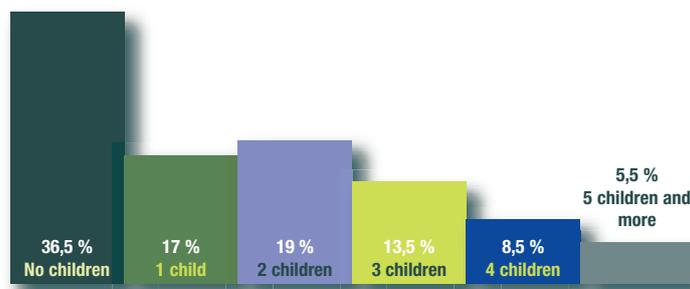
corresponding figure is around 5% among German-Turks and French-Turks. In terms of cohabitation without formal marriage, Belgium and France have a similar proportion of 2% (German-Turks 0.8%).

**Figure 9. Is your partner Turkish?**



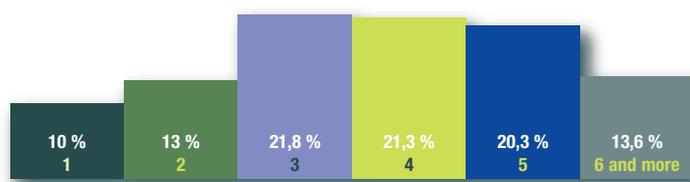
Today, those who marry their children to Belgian men or women are very rare. Most of those we interviewed are married to persons of Turkish origin (92%) whilst only 6% are married to Belgians. Marriage to Belgians is at a similar level to the figures for German-Turks marrying Germans and French-Turks marrying French partners (6%). Intermarriage is known to be one of the indicators of amalgamation and recently this appears to be on the increase among Euro-Turks.

**Figure 10. Do you have children?**



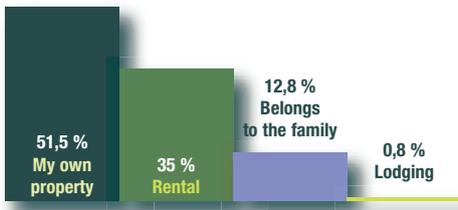
Belgian-Turks tend to have more children than German-Turks and French-Turks. 50% of Belgian-Turks have between one and three children, compared to 47% of German-Turks and only 44% of French-Turks.

**Figure 11. How many people are there in your household?**

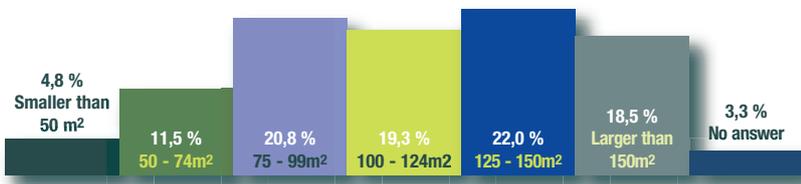


Generally speaking, Belgian-Turkish households have 3, 4 or 5 members. The number of single household Belgian-Turks (10%) is identical to that of French-Turks, but it is rather higher than among German-Turks (6%).

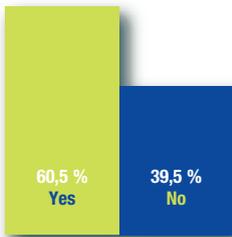
**Figure 12. Do you own the house you live in?**



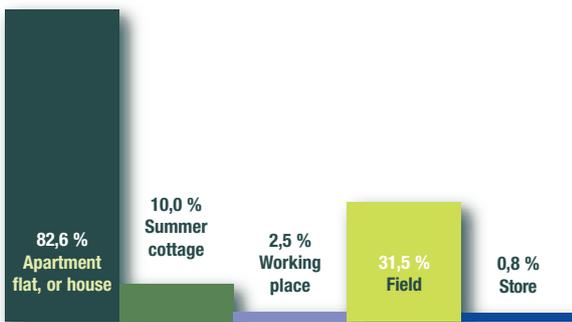
**Figure 13. How many m<sup>2</sup> is your house?**



**Figure 14. Do you own property in Turkey?**

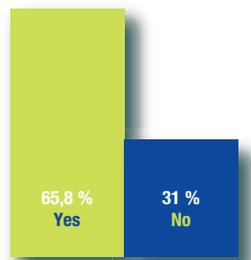


**Figure 15. If yes, then what kinds of property do you have?**



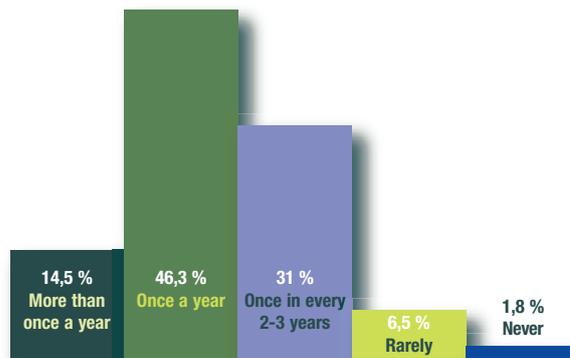
Belgian-Turks seem to be well integrated into the Belgian housing market, with 64% living in their own properties and 35% living in rented accommodation. In contrast, among German-Turks and French-Turks 83% live in rented accommodation and only 14% own their own home. 32% of Belgian-Turks live in houses of between 50m<sup>2</sup> and 100m<sup>2</sup>. This is 83% for German-Turks and 73% for French-Turks. A remarkable 60% of Belgian-Turks own some property in Turkey, with four-fifths (83%) of these owning houses, 10% owning a summer cottage and 31% land. A similar proportion of Belgian-Turks invest in their country of origin to the German-Turks (66%) and French-Turks (80%). There may be several explanations for this. It may be that it is more reasonable to invest in property in Turkey, just as other European citizens are increasingly doing the same. As Bianca Kaiser and Ahmet çduygu (2005) stated in their work, there were more than 20,000 German properties registered in Turkey in 2000. Investments made by Euro-Turks in Turkey do not necessarily spring therefore from their 'alleged unquestionable' orientation to the homeland: it may also be a rational form of investment as for European citizens who invest on the Turkish Riviera.

**Figure 16. Do you have a car?**



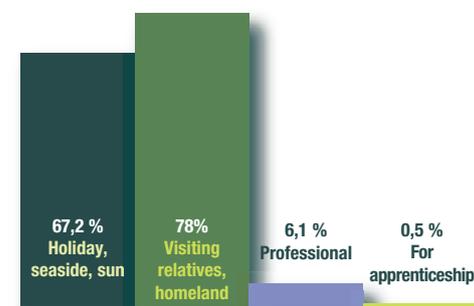
Automobile ownership among Belgian-Turks (60%) is slightly lower than among French-Turks (69%), but is similar to that among German-Turks (61%).

**Figure 17. How often do you go to Turkey?**



The high proportion of Belgian-Turks visiting Turkey at least once a year (61%) confirms previous research findings that Euro-Turks have a great sense of attachment to Turkey. The figure for Belgian-Turks is higher than that for French-Turks (46%) but similar to that for German-Turks (66%). The difference may result from the fact that Germany and Belgium are better connected to Turkey than France is in terms of transportation facilities.

**Figure 18. What is the purpose of your visits to Turkey?**



The main reason for Belgian-Turks to visit Turkey is to visit relatives (78%) and for holidays (67%). Belgian-Turks actually differ from both German-Turks and French-Turks in terms of their family and material connection to Turkey. Almost all German-Turks (94%) are likely to go to Turkey to visit their relatives and hometowns. Among the French-Turks the figure is 87%. This may be explained by different migration patterns: Belgian-Turks and French-Turks have experienced chain migration, whereas German-Turks have experienced non-chain migration. Chain migration may result in moving the entire extended family to the country of destination and it may also bring about a weakening of other family ties with the homeland. There is a considerable difference between the three countries sur-

veyed with regard to holiday trips to Turkey: 67% of Belgian-Turks, 56% of French-Turks, but only 47% of German-Turks go to Turkey specifically for a holiday. It seems that a lack of family connections in the homeland is likely to be compensated by visits to holiday resorts on the Mediterranean Riviera. This is a great indication of the volume and dynamics of *transnational space* between/beyond Turkey and Belgium/Germany/France. However, the transnational space between/beyond Turkey and Germany is much greater than that between Turkey and Belgium.<sup>17</sup> Euro-Turks often remain actively involved in their homeland by maintaining kinship and friendship ties, but also by remaining involved politically, economically and culturally in the larger homeland society. For Euro-Turks, transnationalism is aided by geographic proximity that makes frequent trips home feasible. They have also become global villagers who take advantage of communication and transportation technologies to forge transnational identities. Belgian-Turks, however, have become more involved in Turkish politics since the acceleration of the European integration process of Turkey after the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Regular visits to Brussels by Turkish politicians, community leaders, businessmen, NGOs, representatives of religious associations, university professors, students and public officers have brought Belgian-Turks into closer contact with Turkey again.

<sup>17</sup> The volume of transportation, trade, communication, politics, and academic studies between Turkey and Germany indicates that the transnational space between the two countries is highly developed and efficient compared to the one between Turkey and France.

**Table 10. Levels of Belgian-Turks speaking, understanding, writing and reading Turkish (%)**

	Flanders Speak	Flanders Read	Wallonia Speak	Wallonia Read	Brussels Speak	Brussels Read	Total Belgium Speak	Total Belgium Read
	Understand	Write	Understand	Write	Understand	Write	Understand	Write
Little .....	1 %	3 %	5 %	5 %	1 %	5 %	2 %	4 %
Fair .....	4 %	8 %	8 %	11 %	1 %	5 %	4 %	8 %
Well .....	36 %	33 %	24 %	23 %	28 %	27 %	31 %	29 %
Very well .....	59 %	55 %	63 %	57 %	69 %	62 %	63 %	57 %
No Reply .....	1 %	2 %	1 %	5 %	1 %	2 %	1 %	3 %

The table above shows that Brussels-Turks speak, understand, write and read Turkish better than Walloon-Turks and Flemish-Turks.

**Table 11. Levels of Belgian-Turks speaking, understanding, writing and reading French (%)**

	Flanders Speak	Flanders Read	Wallonia Speak	Wallonia Read	Brussels Speak	Brussels Read	Total Belgium Speak	Total Belgium Read
	Understand	Write	Understand	Write	Understand	Write	Understand	Write
Little .....	26 %	30 %	7 %	13 %	18 %	23 %	20 %	24 %
Fair .....	22 %	17 %	25 %	17 %	25 %	21 %	24 %	18 %
Well .....	12 %	13 %	27 %	32 %	19 %	13 %	17 %	17 %
Very well .....	5 %	4 %	38 %	28 %	36 %	36 %	21 %	19 %
No Reply .....	35 %	37 %	3 %	10 %	3 %	6 %	19 %	22 %

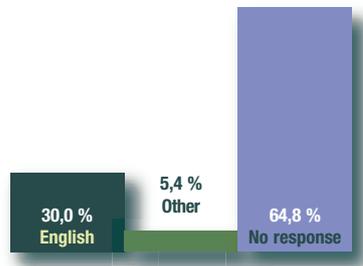
Not surprisingly, Brussels-Turks and Walloon-Turks speak, understand, write and read French better than the Flemish-Turks, but what is also striking is the high level of competence in the French language among Flemish-Turks.

**Table 12. Levels of Belgian-Turks speaking, understanding, writing and reading Dutch (%)**

	Flanders Speak	Flanders Read	Wallonia Speak	Wallonia Read	Brussels Speak	Brussels Read	Total Belgium Speak	Total Belgium Read
	Understand	Write	Understand	Write	Understand	Write	Understand	Write
Little .....	9 %	13 %	22 %	23 %	28 %	27 %	17 %	19 %
Fair .....	17 %	16 %	7 %	6 %	18 %	17 %	15 %	14 %
Well .....	32 %	28 %	3 %	3 %	9 %	11 %	19 %	18 %
Very well .....	36 %	37 %	1 %	1 %	16 %	13 %	23 %	22 %
No Reply .....	6 %	7 %	67 %	67 %	29 %	32 %	26 %	27 %

We can observe from tables 11 and 12 that Brussels-Turks' competence in French seems to be much higher than their competence in Dutch, whilst 'Flemish-Turks' competence in French is much higher than Walloon-Turks' competence in Dutch.

**Figure 19. What is your third spoken language?**



The competence of Belgian-Turks in foreign languages is rather remarkable. 30% of Belgian-Turks reported their competence in English (vs. 36% of German-Turks and 24% of French-Turks). Flemish-Turks have a greater competence in a third language such as English compared to Walloon-Turks. Brussels-Turks' competence in English is higher than that of others.



## Belgian-Turks and social class

Both the qualitative and quantitative data show that Euro-Turks are no longer solely manual workers working in low-skilled jobs and lacking any agency to represent them in the public space. On the contrary, they have many politicians, artists, artisans, businessmen, poets, novelists, bureaucrats, journalists, singers and teachers representing them in one way or another in the public space. Most Euro-Turks no longer need the tutelage of their Belgian, German, French and Dutch mentors to represent them in the public space; rather they are being represented by their own organic intellectuals. This has, of course, something to do with the fact that Turks are mobilizing socially upwards, and now have a large number of middle-class people in their communities. However, there is also a parallel phenomenon to this in the rising numbers of unemployed people who have been unable to find any formal job. A number of these have the right to social security benefits from the state but an increasing number are not eligible for state aid because they were not in a position to contribute to the welfare system because of chronic unemployment. Unemployment is of course an outcome of global and local economic factors and the process of de-industrialization, as well as social factors such as education.

The socio-economic levels of Belgian-Turks change in accordance with the generations. The common discourse of the first generation was how they suffered at the beginning of the migratory process in the 1960s and 70s. Although a similar discourse was used by following generations, there was an important difference that was commented upon by both older and younger generations:

“Back then, we were ignorant and illiterate, we had just left our villages. We did not know how to help our children, we couldn’t speak the language. Our children progressed. They looked after their children better than we did. Now, I can see the positive change. New generations are more engaged in education and there are several people who are actively involved in local and national politics.”

Some of the youngsters did not agree with their older compatriots about the hardships experienced in the past. In response to an old man who talked about the hardships he had gone through in the past, a young man teased him: “What kinds of problem did you have? You just wasted your time in the coffee houses... You just waited for the job to come to you. You didn’t spend enough energy to find a job.” There is, of course, tremendous poverty resulting from the process of de-industrialization. The discrepancy between those with and those without property displays the heterogeneity of Belgian-Turks:

“Things are becoming more and more difficult. Industrial life is becoming harder. The service sector is getting bigger and bigger. Taxes are very high. There are even some couples that work for a total salary of 1500 – 2000 euros. I see people who have to borrow 100 euros at the end of the month, because they cannot survive with their own salaries. Consumption is high and life is too expensive here...”

The heterogeneity of the Belgian-Turks leads to the impossibility of their mobiliz-

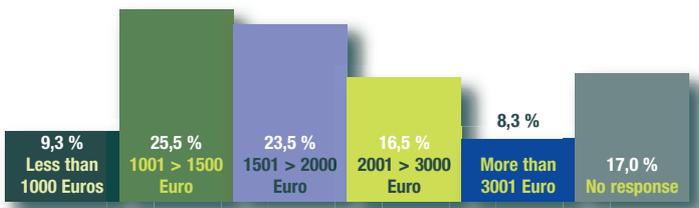
ing as a single social class. Another striking feature of Belgian-Turks is the type of relationship they generate with newly arrived migrants in Belgium. Entrepreneurs of Turkish origin tend to exploit newcomers with low wages and difficult working conditions. This indicates that poverty is something migrants experience in shifts. A Bulgarian-Turkish migrant woman who recently came to Brussels was timidly complaining about how her Turkish boss in the coffee house treated her and about the low salary she was earning. The inclusion of new migrants in the labour market is something that the former migrants complain about. German-Turks complained about the former East German, Polish or Romanian workers; and the Belgian-Turks grumble about the Bulgarians: “Now that the Bulgarians are here, they share our bread...”

The situation of Belgian-Turkish youngsters is also somewhat disconcerting: they seem to be highly attracted by the possibility of receiving unemployment benefits when they reach 18 years old.

“I want to be a football player. I have played football for the last ten years... When the teachers ask their students about what they want to be in the future, most of them say that they want to live on unemployment benefits.”

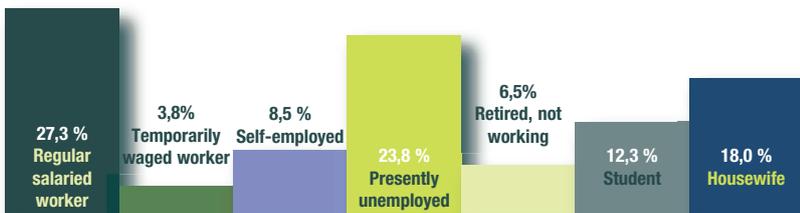
Individuals exist with tactics that are part of at least a two-layered strategy and they oscillate between the two. Although there are tensions, pessimism, identification and control mechanisms brought about by these strategies, they benefit from both and they transform both. Drawing on Michel de Certeau (1984)'s notions of 'strategies' and 'tactics', migrant-origin Turks who live under certain strategies (ideologies) existing simultaneously in Belgium such as integration, nation and community, are in a position to transform these strategies with their lived experiences and applied tactics. In other words, while consuming the manufactured strategies, they produce something new. In a way, they have the potential capacity to transform the national politics of integration, nation and community.

**Figure 20. What is your monthly household income?**



The figure above indicates that Belgian-Turks are relatively better off than both French-Turks and German-Turks. While 21% of German-Turks and 15% of French-Turks earn less than €1000 per month, only 9% of Belgian-Turks fall into this category.

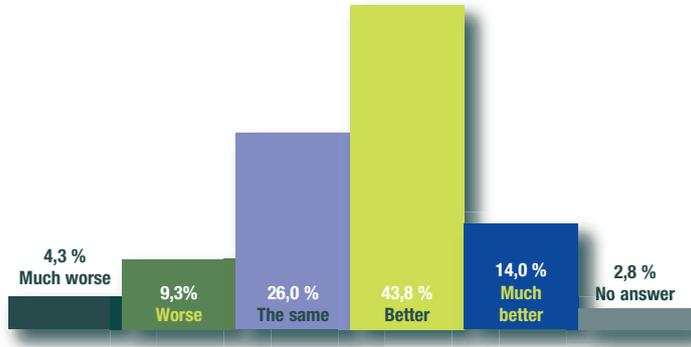
**Figure 21. What is your present job status?**



More than a quarter of interviewees (27%) were regularly paid workers. However, this figure is lower than for both French-Turks (36%) and German-Turks (32%). The second largest group is the unemployed (24%, vs. 22% among German-Turks and 7% among French-Turks). The third largest group, 18%, is housewives

(25% French-Turks and 23% German-Turks). The high unemployment rate among Belgian-Turks does not necessarily mean that Belgium has a much bigger unemployment problem than France: the difference may be explained by Belgium's welfare state system, which provides the unemployed with better unemployment benefits. The number of self-employed and temporarily working people among Belgian-Turks is respectively 9% and 4% (French-Turks 11% and 8%; and German-Turks, 4% and 2%).

**Figure 22. How do you find your economic and social conditions compared to those of your parents?**

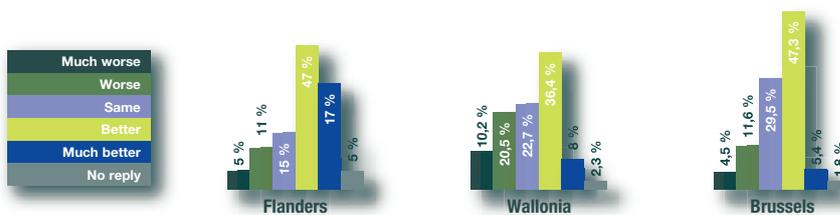


**Figure 23. How do you find your recent economic and social conditions compared to the last decade?**



Figures 22 and 23 above show that, on balance, the majority of Belgian-Turks, like the French-Turks, believe their prosperity is “better” or “much better” now compared to the condition of their parents and compared to the last decade. Over half of Belgian-Turks say that their economic and social conditions are “better” or “much better” than in the last decade. German-Turks complain more about their recent socio-economic status, with only 44% saying things had got better for them over the last decade.

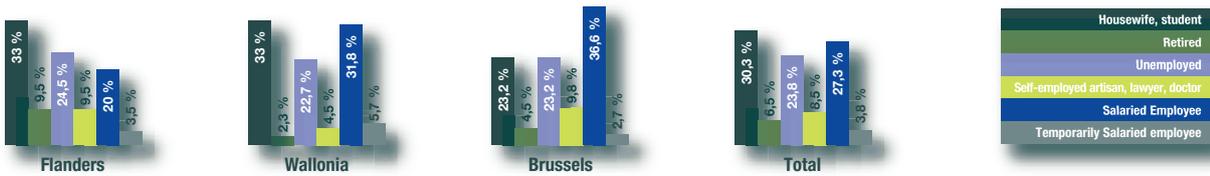
**Figure 24. How do you find your recent economic and social conditions compared to the last decade? (By region)**



However, an analysis by region shows that the Flemish-Turks seem to be more content with their socio-economic status than Walloon-Turks and Brussels-Turks. 31% of Walloon-Turks believed that their socio-economic conditions have worsened, compared to 16% of Flemish-Turks and 16% of Brussels-Turks. This

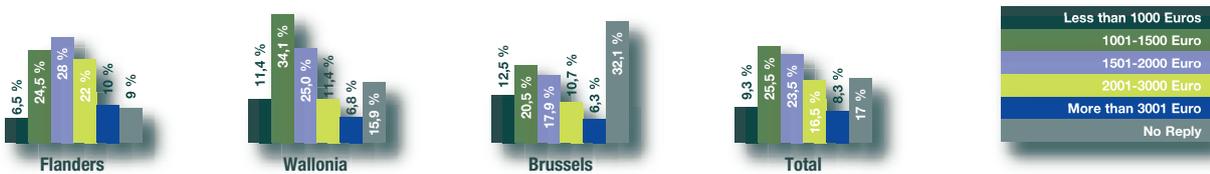
may reflect some of the more generally experienced economic problems in Wallonia over recent years.

**Figure 25. Socio-economic status I: Occupational status**



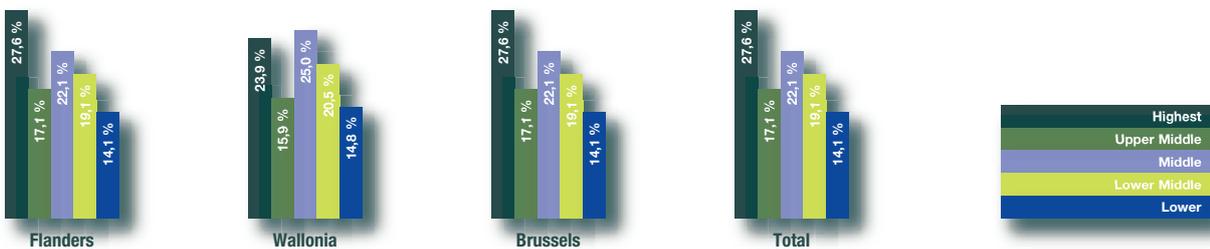
The data above show that unemployment among Belgian-Turks in general is 24%, with levels broadly similar across the three Belgian regions. However, there are differences between the regions with respect to the level of salaried employees (20% Flanders, 32% Wallonia, and 37% Brussels) and the proportion of self-employed people (5% in Wallonia compared to almost 10% in Flanders and in Brussels).

**Figure 26. Socio-economic status II: income distribution**



Almost half (45%) of Walloon-Turks, 31% of Flemish-Turks and 33% of Brussels-Turks reported that they were earning less than 1500 euros per month. Around 10-15% refused to answer the question about income (in Brussels, this figure rose to over 30%).

**Figure 27. Socio-economic status III: social class**



Flemish-Turks are proportionately more represented in the higher social classes than Belgian-Turks in other regions.

**Figure 28. Socio-economic status IV: educational status**



Educational status of the Belgian-Turks indicates that in Wallonia there are proportionately more going to occupational schooling in order to earn a profession

(Figure 28) and there are rather more going on to higher education than in Flanders.

Illiteracy is somewhat higher in Wallonia and Brussels than in Flanders. The findings of this research confirm previous findings of the PISA 2003 research. What is striking is the level of difference between Flanders and Wallonia with regard to the success of second-generation children with migrant origin. A report published by the King Baudouin Foundation (2006: 11) reveals that of migrant-origin children learn the local language better in Wallonia than in Flanders<sup>18</sup>:

“In the French Community, similar trends to those found in other countries are observed: the second generation does better than the newcomers. If one looks at data within the newcomers, which the OECD has not done, it can be seen that children who arrived before the age of six (and who have thus only been schooled in the Belgian school system) have better results than children who arrived in Belgium when they were older. In the Flemish Community, a strange phenomenon is observed: the second generation has a lower score than the newcomers. After further analysis, one notes the influence of pupils who have come from the Netherlands who inflated the results of the group of “newly arrived immigrants”.

According to the study ‘Performances des élèves issus de l’immigration en Belgique selon l’étude PISA’, led by Andrea Rea, professor at the Institute of Sociology at the ULB (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and Dirk Jacobs, lecturer at the ULB Institute of Sociology, at the request of the King Baudouin Foundation, it appears that the Belgian educational system for immigrant children still has to make a considerable effort with regard to the democratisation of its education, which does not currently favour social mobility. The language spoken at home and the socio-economic group of the parents (profession and educational level) can only partly explain the differences between autochthons and pupils from immigrant families.

<sup>18</sup> See King Baudouin Foundation (2006). “Pathways to success in education for young migrants: identification of factors critical to success within a European context”, Report on the seminar held in Brussels on Wednesday 6 December 2006: 11-12. Available at <http://www.kbs-frb.be>



## Homeland vs. 'Hostland'

The quantitative and qualitative research data below indicate that Belgian-Turks present a quite different picture from how they are perceived both by Turks in Turkey and by the Belgians. Belgian-Turks no longer essentialize their homeland as a final destination of return and they no longer fit into the stereotypical image developed by the receiving society. They are integrating into the political, cultural and economic spheres of life in Belgium in a variety of slightly different ways in the three regions. Hence, both Turkish and Belgian societies need to reconsider their perspectives regarding Belgian-Turks. This is also true for other communities of Euro-Turks living in European countries (Kaya and Kentel, 2005).

### **Discrete life worlds of migrants originating from Turkey: hostland vs. homeland**

Similarly to French-Turks, some Belgian-Turks also speak of the fact that they came to Belgium because they could not make it to Germany. When Turkish migration to Belgium started, Germany had already gone a long way down the road to recruiting Turkish workers. Several of the Belgian-Turks we interviewed even said that they were planning to go on to Germany after spending a few years in Belgium. Migration to Germany has always been regulated by the German state, while the Belgian state delegated this to individual companies willing to recruit foreign labour. It was these companies that prompted those first migrants to recommend to their fellow countrymen that they come to Belgium. Belgian-Turks originating from the same region in Turkey tend, therefore, to concentrate in particular places in Belgium (Manço, 2004, 2005; Manço and Kanmaz, 2005). The Turkish population residing in Schaerbeek for instance originates predominantly from Emirdağ, a district in the central Anatolian city of Afyon, whilst the adjacent Ambiorix Park area has a mixed population of Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds, North Africans and Surinamese, as well as local Belgians. Chain migration and its traditional solidarity networks essentialise ethno-cultural borders in a way that inhibits ethnic and cultural interaction even among migrants from the same country. Solid ethnic boundaries among Belgians, non-Belgians, Europeans, non-Europeans, Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Alevis and others who live in Belgium, especially in Brussels become very visible. Without doubt, the socio-political fault lines between ethnic Turks and non-Turks originating from Turkey have something to do with the deep-rooted antagonism embedded in their common history.

Nevertheless, ethnic boundaries do not always necessarily pose an obstacle to the integration of migrants. In their edited volume of *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Dirk Jacobs and Jean Tillie (2004) claim that there is a positive correlation between ethno-cultural membership and political participation. The denser the network of associations of a particular ethnic group, the more political trust they will have and the more they will participate politically. Referring to the situation in Germany, Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, the contributors of this volume state that voluntary associations create social trust, leading to greater political trust and higher political participation (Jacobs and Tillie, 2004: 421). Furthermore, they also claim that ethnic media contribute to the political activities of migrant-origin communities in the wider society (Ibid.: 422). Hence, ethnic

associations could also be channelled into a pathway leading to further political participation of migrant-origin groups.

It should not be forgotten, however, that increasing efforts of the Turkish state in Belgium, particularly in Brussels, alongside the European Integration process over the last decade have made a great impact on the partition of groups with Turkish origin. Official attempts of the Turkish government to form a Turkish lobby in EU countries have resulted in the Turkish communities with different political and ideological standpoints, competing with each other in their claim to be the representative of the Turkish-origin population. These ethnic organisations and/or persons searching for recognition by both the countries of destination and origin, tend to heighten their orientation to the homeland and to work for the political and economic interests of the homeland. Such transnational political networks result in Turkish minority organisations emphasizing the axis of Turkishness as a direct result of the hegemonic ideology of the Turkish nation state.

For example, the Turkish Embassy in Brussels was very active in mobilizing Belgian-Turks to become candidates for, and to vote in, the 2004 election of members of the Superior Council of Muslims in Belgium (*Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique*). A young professional man interviewed in Brussels complained about the ways in which the Turkish state has become so active regarding religious affairs:

“The Turkish Republic was actively involved in the elections so that they could have several members elected for the Council. I regret to say that the so-called *secularist* Turkish Republic did nothing for us so far, but it has become very much involved in religious matters.”

An older man also expressed a certain resentment towards the Turkish state:

“The Turkish state never helped us. We have always felt abandoned. We managed everything ourselves. We even managed our corpses. The first association dealing with taking corpses from here to Turkey was opened here in Belgium. We learned to become self-sufficient here.”

There were also strong complaints about official Turkish institutions such as the consulates. A young man commented:

“One can see very clearly that the Turkish consulates are just humiliating and ripping us off”

The quantitative data confirm that Belgian-Turks do not much appreciate the efforts of official Turkish organizations such as the embassy and the consulates. Only 7% of Belgian-Turks reported that they appreciate the efforts of official Turkish bodies in Belgium.

## Questioning the concept of “Euro-Turks”

The rise of nationalist tendencies within the community paradoxically corresponds to the fragmentation of the community. As the community diversifies and its members disperse in different directions within Belgian society, the most efficient strategy to cement this fragmented structure turns out to be nationalism, although this may have different interpretations. Nationalism is a common reference both for Hasan, a man who introduced himself as ‘multicultural’, and also for his coffee house friends, who oppose the Belgianhood that Hasan adopts. Let us listen to Hasan, who is proud of his Belgianhood and multiculturalism:

“We were not sad when Hrant Dink was murdered (the Armenian-origin Turkish intellectual and journalist from Istanbul). We did not know him. We said ‘The water jug is broken on the way to the water (*Su testisi su yolunda kırılır*).’ Here there was no one who proclaimed the slogan ‘We are all Hrant!’ that was publicly cried at Hrant’s funeral...”<sup>19</sup>

The Schaerbeek-Turks have a common revulsion to the PKK (the Kurdish Workers Party). Everybody recalled the DEHAP congress in Ankara during which some Kurdish youngsters pulled down the Turkish flag. Schaerbeek is known for its supporters of the Grey Wolves, the youth branch of the MHP. They openly demonstrate their sympathies by driving around in cars bearing Grey Wolves

<sup>19</sup> Journalist Hrant Dink was assassinated on the 19th January 2007 by a 17 year-old Turkish ultra-nationalist. More than 100,000 people attended his funeral in Istanbul (23 January 2007).

stickers. The 'importance' of the homeland and the 'dangers' it encounters unify the community:

"We used to have a huge country covering three-quarters of the world. Now it has shrunk to a small territory. Now they want to invade that too. That means that we have the problem inside our own society. We have many traitors... Look at the ones who set fire to our flag, who shoot at the houses of officers and who wear masks on the birthday of Apo (Öcalan, the PKK leader)..."

One respondent who, like the others, was not sad about Hrant Dink's death and complained about the PKK traitors took us aside and explained that whilst he agreed with the others regarding the PKK and Hrant Dink, he had a disagreement about 'Islam' and 'Europeanism'. He wanted to give us the 'right information' about Belgium and especially Schaerbeek:

"Go to the Atatürkist Association (ADD) and speak to them. They will give you more beneficial information. The information here is not helpful..."<sup>20</sup>

Another young man voiced his feelings about the ADD too:

"ADD supporters live in their own world. They cannot integrate into the wider society. They are not part of the public. They are 'disguised leftists'..."

Thus, as the community that was established after the first wave of migration and based on the traditional ties, dissolves and fragments, the community is restored by 'Turkish nationalism'. However, this new community seems unable to prevent fragmentation: paradoxically, nationalism turns out to be the discourse of further fragmentation.

What is peculiar to Belgium, more than any other European Union country, is the extent to which migrants from Turkey are divided in their everyday lives, with different institutions, discourses, tactics and meeting places. What makes Brussels so different is the visible concentration of Kurds, Alevis, Armenians and Assyrians adjacent to Turks from Emirdağ a district of the central Anatolian city of Afyonkarahisar. This frontier between the Turks and the others has become more marked as a result of domestic problems in Turkey, which intensified prior to the 2007 electoral cycle. The murder of Hrant Dink by a 17 year-old Turkish ultra-nationalist, and the increasing visibility of minority claims alongside the European integration process have deepened animosity between these groups. The attack, allegedly made by Turkish nationalists, on the Kurdish Cultural Centre of St. Joost on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 was the outcome of such an escalation of violence and animosity.<sup>21</sup> This nationalist mood is a relatively recent phenomenon that was not very visible in 1999 at the time of the Helsinki Summit. In fact, at that time, almost all segments of Turkish society in the homeland and the diaspora embraced the EU as a peace project. Nationalism in Turkey has rather become visible over the last two years, along with the rise of political tensions, the anti-AKP alliance of mainstream political parties and the army, violence, poverty, xenophobia and racism.

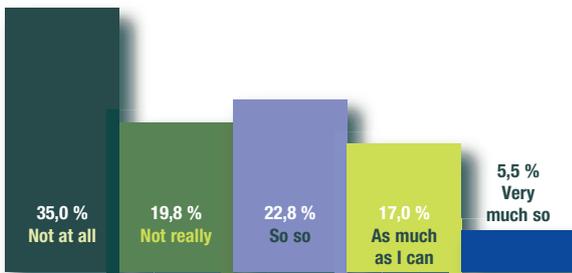
Compartmentalized communities tend to generate their own solidarity networks without communicating with others. What happens is that multiple transnational communities are created whose existence transcends territorial national boundaries. The Alevi<sup>22</sup> network is a good example of this. The Alevi Cultural Centre of Brussels (*Centre socio-culturel Alevi de Bruxelles* or CSAB) was established in 2003 and is one of four Alevi associations in Belgium (Charleroi, Brussels, Antwerp and Limburg). The CSAB has connections with diasporic Alevi organizations in other EU countries as well as with those in Turkey. Alevis have also become active agents and consumers of global flows.<sup>23</sup> They have generated their own solidarity networks, TV stations<sup>24</sup> broadcasting from Germany to the rest of the world and to the homeland, radio stations broadcasting from Turkey, and numerous Internet sites<sup>25</sup> which have created a niche economy peculiar to the Alevis among Euro-Turks in general. Kurds, Zazas, Armenians, Assyrians, Kemalists, nationalists and gays have all similarly developed their own survival strategies in diaspora.

- 20** The Brussels Atatürkist Association (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği, ADD) was founded in 2001. The history of the chain of Atatürkist Associations goes back to 1989. The ADD headquarters are in Ankara. The ADD has recently become very active in organizing a popular alliance in the form of public demonstrations against the rising power of the Justice and Development Party.
- 21** A street fight started between Kurds and Turks on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April after a fire the night before on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, which Kurds blamed on Turkish immigrants. Police used water cannon on Sunday to disperse the crowd, which in turn threw stones and bottles at police vehicles. See, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2007/04/02/nb-07](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2007/04/02/nb-07)
- 22** Alevism is a heterodox religious identity which is peculiar to Anatolia. It is practised by some Turkish and Kurdish segments of Anatolian society. Turkish Alevis used to concentrate in central Anatolia, with important pockets throughout the Aegean and Mediterranean coastal regions and the European part of Turkey. Kurdish Alevis were concentrated in the north-western part of the Kurdish settlement zone between Turkish Kurdistan and the rest of the country. Both Turkish and Kurdish Alevis have left their isolated villages for the big cities of Turkey and Europe since 1950s. Alevism publicly started to declare their religious identity especially after tragic incidents in Turkey when 37 Alevi artists were massacred in Sivas (July, 1993) and 15 Alevi people were murdered in an Alevi neighbourhood of Istanbul (Gaziosmanpasa, March 1995). For further details see Kaya (1998) and Kaya (2001).
- 23** The term 'global flows' is used by Arjun Appadurai to explain how individuals, capital, technology, ideas and images travel across national borders. Appadurai summarizes these flows as Ethnoscapes, Technoscapes, Finascapes, Mediascapes and Ideoscapes. For further information see, Appadurai (1996).
- 24** The major TV channels broadcasting for the Alevis are Su TV, Düzgün TV, and Yol TV. These channels were set up in Germany by individual entrepreneurs, who have successfully created a self-sustaining Alevi economy. Reaching out to a large number of the Alevi population all around the world, this sector has become extremely attractive for other mainstream entrepreneurs.
- 25** Internet sites like [www.kistik.com](http://www.kistik.com), [www.molebutton.com](http://www.molebutton.com), [www.nurhak.com](http://www.nurhak.com) illustrate the ways in which young generations rediscover their roots through the internet in a way that connects them to the villages of their parents, which they have probably never seen before. For a further discussion on the reproduction of Alevi solidarity networks across the diaspora see, Erman (2007).

## Perceptions of Turkey

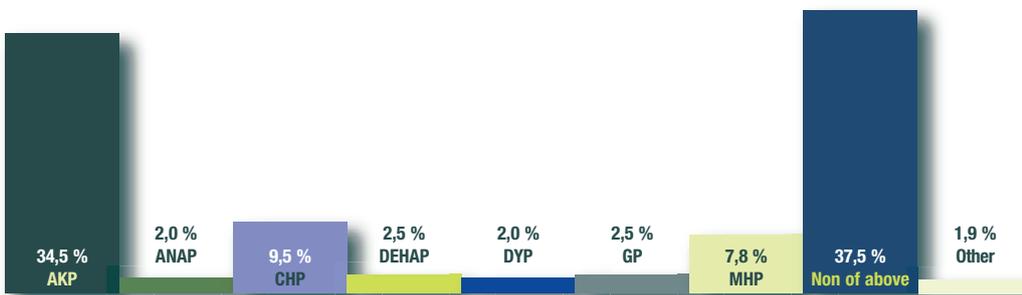
Belgian-Turks' orientation towards Turkey in various spheres of life is shaped by factors such as religiosity, ethnicity, gender, social status, the length of stay abroad and social capital. There is a stereotypical belief in Turkey and in Belgium that Euro-Turks in general are extremely concerned with the political, social, economic and cultural affairs of their homeland, and that they are not engaged in the domestic life of their countries of settlement. The data below indicate that such assumptions are actually stereotypes and, far from being blinkered and romantic, Euro-Turks in fact are rather interested in their country of adoption and even in their politics.

**Figure 29. To what extent are you interested in politics in Turkey?**



55% of Belgian-Turks are “not” or “not really” interested in politics in Turkey, which is higher than the corresponding number of German-Turks (42%) and French-Turks (50%), contradicting the stereotype that Belgian-Turks in particular, and Euro-Turks in general, are closely attentive to homeland politics, and not at all interested in the domestic politics of their countries of destination. On the contrary, there are plenty of Belgian-Turks, German-Turks and French-Turks who reported an interest in the politics of their receiving country as well as in EU and world politics.

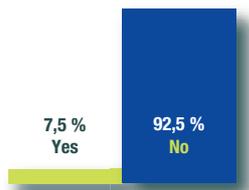
**Figure 30. Which political party in Turkey do you affiliate with?**



Overall, most Belgian-Turk support is for the AKP (34%, vs. 32% in Germany and 35% in France), but the level of support is higher among Flemish-Turks (39%) than among Walloon-Turks (27%). One could deduce from this that Flemish-Turks are more affiliated with communitarian and religious values than Walloon-Turks. Similar to Germany and France, support for the CHP remains relatively low in Belgium (10%). Support for the MHP is also almost similar across the three countries (8%). On the other hand, quite a high percentage of people do not affiliate with any political party in Turkey (38% in Belgium, 33% in France and 30% in Germany). Once again, we see that Belgian-Turks are relatively more disengaged in homeland affairs than Turkish-origin people in Germany and France.

- AKP** (Justice and Development Party)
- ANAP** (Motherland Party)
- CHP** (Republican People's Party)
- DEHAP** (People's Democratic Party)
- DYP** (True Path Party)
- GP** (Young Party)
- MHP** (Nationalist Action Party)
- SP** (Felicity Party)
- ÖDP** (Party for Freedom and Support)
- BBP** (Great Unity Party)
- IP** (Labour Party)

**Figure 31. Have you voted in general elections in Turkey at all since settling in Belgium?**



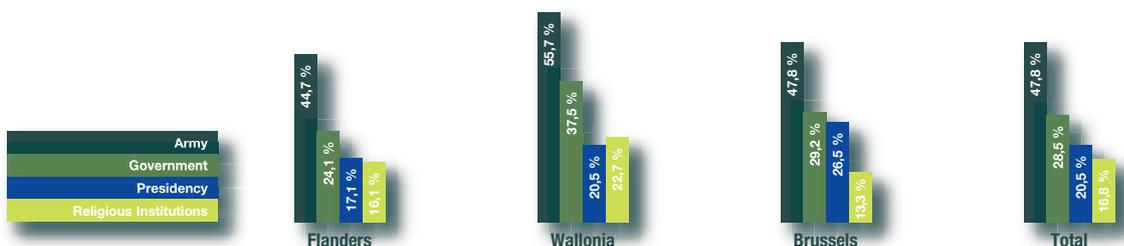
8% of Belgian-Turks reported having voted in Turkish general elections (vs. 25% of German-Turks and 8% of French-Turks). The high percentage of German-Turks who have voted in Turkish general elections after settling in Germany is partly a result of greater political mobilization among the German-Turks than in the two other countries. *Milli Görüş* (the National View Association) mobilized many of the Turkish electorate to vote in a number of elections in Turkey whereas in Belgium and France *Milli Görüş* has not been less active because of the lower number of potential voters there. The lower percentage of Belgian-Turks voting in general elections in Turkey may also reflect the fact that affiliation with radical religious formations such as *Milli Görüş* and *Islamic Capital* has decreased recently, or it may be that orientation towards Turkish politics is gradually fading.

**Figure 32. What is the greatest problem in Turkey? (Multi-response)**



The items most often mentioned by Belgian-Turks as “Turkey’s greatest problem” were “democracy and human rights” (13%), “poverty and inflation” (12%), “corruption, nepotism and bribery” (13%) and “separatism and terror”. It is interesting that Belgian-Turks mention “pressure on religiosity in the name of secularism” less (4%) than the German-Turks (12%) and French-Turks (7%) do. There are some interesting regional differences in Belgium with regard to the perception of problems in Turkey. For instance, Flemish-Turks underline the issues of ‘unemployment’ and ‘corruption and nepotism’ as the greatest problem in Turkey, whilst Brussels-Turks and Walloon-Turks mention ‘separatism and terror’, in line with the statist discourse dominant in Turkey. This discursive difference also indicates that Flemish-Turks seem to be less constrained by the official strategies of the Turkish state.

**Figure 33. Which institution in Turkey do you trust most? (Multi-response)**

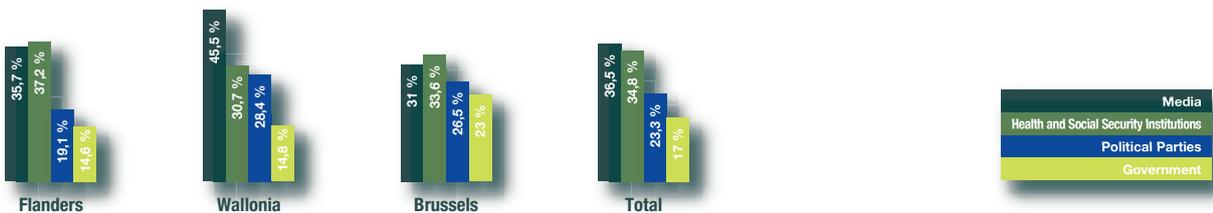


Unlike the German-Turks and French-Turks, the institution Belgian-Turks trust most in Turkey is the army, mentioned by nearly a third of respondents (48%),

compared to 26% of German-Turks and French-Turks. It is interesting to compare these findings with research data from Turkey and EU countries. Surveys in Turkey indicate that the Turkish public also finds the army to be one of the most reliable institutions – an institution which is believed to provide stability, the status quo, authority and hierarchy in a relatively unstable country. Eurobarometer surveys across EU countries reveal similar findings, concluding that the army is perceived to be one of the most reliable institutions.

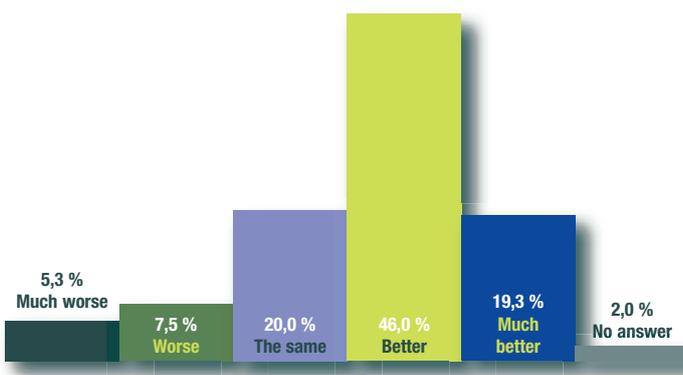
Government is the second most trusted organisation in Turkey by Belgian-Turks (29%), compared with 43% for German-Turks and French-Turks. Presidency is the third most trusted institution by Belgian-Turks (21%) compared to 14% of German-Turks and French-Turks. Religious institutions in Turkey are mentioned by only 17% of Belgian-Turks as the most trusted institution vs. 33% by German-Turks and French-Turks. Trust in the presidency and the army is greater among Brussels-Turks and Walloon-Turks than among Flemish-Turks. Walloon-Turks and Flemish-Turks however, have relatively more trust in religious institutions than is the case in Brussels. There is some similarity between the attitudes of the Turkish public in Turkey and the Turks in Brussels and Wallonia, both of whom seem to hold similar attitudes along the religiosity/secularism divide and the decentralization/centralization divide. Flemish-Turks, on the contrary, seem to be less engaged in such divides and have a much more diverse set of references in life, probably due to their better socio-economic status. Flemish-Turks seem to be more realist with respect to their interpretation of the socio-political state of Turkey.

**Figure 34. Which institution in Turkey do you trust least? (Multi-response)**

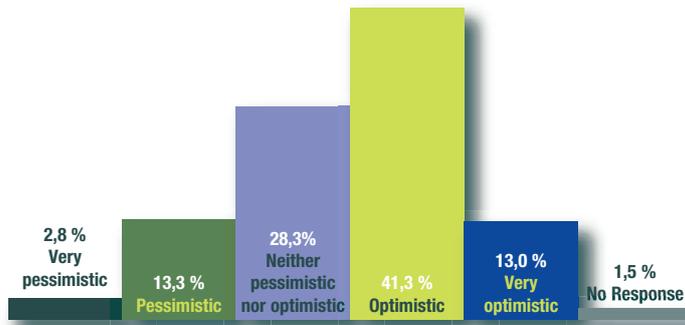


Media (37%) followed by the health and social security institutions (35%) seem to be the least trusted institutions in Turkey mentioned by Belgian-Turks, exactly as for German- and French-Turks (respectively 51% and 28%).

**Figure 35. Do you think Turkey has become better or worse compared to previous years?**



**Figure 36. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about Turkey's future?**



The Belgian-Turks we interviewed express great optimism about progress in Turkey: 65% believe that Turkey has got better compared to previous years (vs. 62% German-Turks, 65% French-Turks) and 54% express some optimism about Turkey's future. Similar findings have been recorded in Turkish public opinion polls. Although Euro-Turks are not so optimistic about their future in their countries of settlement, they have a firm belief that Turkey has better prospects. Younger generations aged between 15 and 29 are particularly optimistic about Turkey and they are pleased with the fact that Turkey has recently become internationally successful in all sorts of areas such as sports, music, the economy, democratization, human rights and European integration. Groups with higher socio-economic status are also more optimistic about the current and future state of Turkey.

**Perceptions of Belgium**

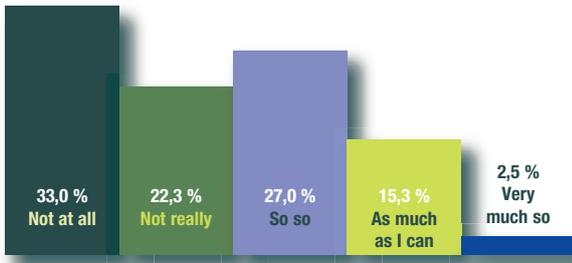
Turkish migrants and their children in the West are officially defined in Turkey as either 'gurbetçi', or 'Yurtdışındaki vatandaşlarımız' (our citizens abroad). Euro-Turks are stereotypically defined by the Turkish people in Turkey as either 'Almanyalı' or 'Almancı' (German-like), no matter where they come from. Both terms carry rather negative connotations in Turkey. Recently, Euro-Turks have raised their voices to complain about the paternalist approach of the Turkish state towards them. They no longer want to be perceived as passive, obedient, needing support, and cash cows for providing foreign currency for the homeland. Constituting a group of around 4 million people in the West, they would rather be more active in Turkish – EU relations and supportive of Turkey in adapting to new EU regimes.

**Figure 37. Do you have Belgian citizenship?**



The number of Belgian-Turks who either have Belgian citizenship or are planning to apply is around 90 % (59% in Germany and 74% in France). This high number indicates that Belgian-Turks are open to integration and political participation. The low number in Germany is due to the fact that, until 2000, Germany used to have a less liberal citizenship law. With the introduction of a more liberal citizenship law vis-à-vis migrants and their descendants, the number of German-Turks opting for naturalization went up from 300,000 over the previous seven years to more than 800,000 (Kaya and Kentel, 2005).

**Figure 38. To what extent are you interested in politics in Belgium?**



55 % of Belgian-Turks said that they are not interested in Belgian domestic politics. About a quarter reported some interest (as in Germany and France). The lack of interest in domestic politics is identical across the three regions of Belgium.

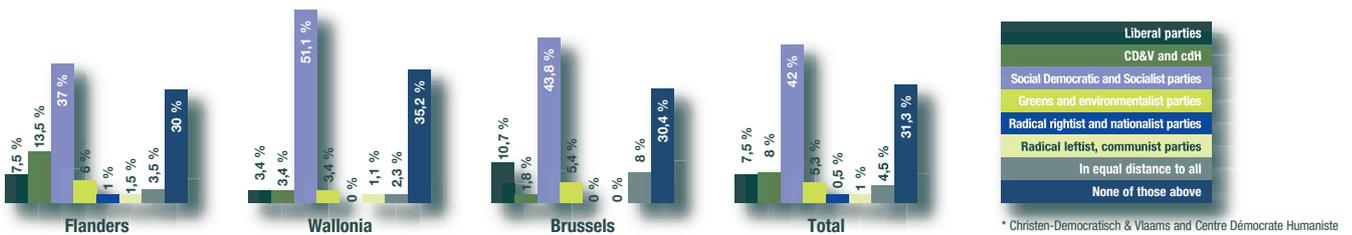
**Table 13. To what extent are you interested in politics in Belgium?**

**(By socio-economic status)**

Expressing interest as	Highest class	Upper Middle	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower class	Total Belgium
Not at all	25 %	34 %	29 %	39 %	47 %	33 %
Not really	21 %	12 %	29 %	24 %	24 %	22 %
So-so	31 %	34 %	25 %	22 %	22 %	27 %
As much as I can	20 %	16 %	15 %	13 %	8 %	15 %
Very much so	4 %	4 %	1 %	2 %		3 %

Those who have higher social economic status are relatively more interested in Belgian domestic politics than other groups.

**Figure 39. Which political party in Belgium are you more affiliated with?**



The figure above indicates that Belgian-Turks are relatively more affiliated with left-wing political parties such as the Social Democrats and Socialists (41%). Support for CD&V in Flanders is also quite strong with 13% mentioning this group compared to 4% in Wallonia and 2% in Brussels for cdH. The qualitative research showed that the perspective of political parties vis-a-vis Turkey’s EU membership is also becoming more influential in the political behaviour of the Belgian-Turks (as it is for the German-Turks and French-Turks).

**Table 14. Which political party in Belgium are you affiliated with more?**

**(By birthplace)**

Who feel more affiliated to	Birthplace Turkey	Birthplace Belgium	Total
Liberal parties	7 %	9 %	8 %
CD&V and cdH	7 %	10 %	8 %
Social Democrat and Socialist parties	43 %	39 %	42 %
Greens and environmentalist parties	7 %	7 %	5 %
Radical right and nationalist parties	1 %	0 %	1 %
Radical left and communist parties	2 %	0 %	1 %
Equally to all	4 %	5 %	5 %
None of the above	29 %	35 %	32 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

The analysis by birthplace above shows that second and third generation

Belgian-Turks tend to support Social Democratic political parties, although there is also a tendency among those born in Belgium to support Liberal parties and CD&V and cdH.

**Table 15. Which political party in Belgium are you more affiliated with?**

(By socio-economic status)	Highest class	Upper Middle	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower class	Total Belgium
<b>Supporting</b>						
Liberal parties .....	10 %	10 %	7 %	7 %	2 %	8 %
CD&V and cdH .....	11 %	10 %	4 %	8 %	6 %	8 %
Social Democrat and Socialist parties....	39 %	44 %	44 %	44 %	39 %	42 %
Greens and environmentalist parties.....	8 %	4 %	4 %	4 %	6 %	5 %
Radical right and nationalist parties.....			1 %	1 %		1 %
Radical left and communist parties.....	2 %		1 %		2 %	1 %
Equally to all .....	6 %	3 %	5 %	2 %	6 %	5 %
None of those above .....	25 %	30 %	34 %	34 %	39 %	32 %

Lower social classes seem not to be engaged with any political party; middle classes are more affiliated with Social Democrat and Socialist political parties; and higher social classes are closer to Social Democrat parties and CD&V and cdH. A majority of Belgian-Turks in our sample (around 80%) said that they were not affiliated with any ethnocultural or religious associations. There may be several reasons for this. Recent revelations concerning incidences of corruption in religious organizations and *tariqats* are likely to have impacted on membership of such organizations.

**Figure 40. Which institution do you trust most in Belgium? (Multi response)**



The most often mentioned institution of trust in Belgium was health and social security institutions (48% vs. 43% among German- and French-Turks). Older generations in particular trusted these institutions. There was a sharp difference between Belgian-Turks and German-Turks on the one hand, and French-Turks on the other, with regard to their appreciation of Turkish official institutions such as embassies and consulates (7 % Belgian-Turks, 10 % German-Turks; and 20 % French-Turks).

**Figure 41. Which institution do you trust least in Belgium?  
(Multi response)**



When asked about the institutions they least trusted, Belgian-Turks mentioned most media (31%) and then the Belgian political parties (28%). German- and French-Turks most distrust official Turkish institutions (29%) and then German/French political parties (28%).

**Table 16. What is the primary problem you face in Belgium?  
(Multi response, by region)**

Mentioning Belgium	Flanders	Wallonia	Brussels	Total
Discrimination (Being treated as an alien)	35 %	25 %	31 %	32 %
Racism .....	34 %	27 %	20 %	29 %
Unemployment.....	27 %	34 %	27 %	28 %
Contradictory moral values.....	19 %	21 %	35 %	24 %
Lack of Dutch/French language .....	15 %	18 %	13 %	15 %
Disrespect to our religion .....	18 %	10 %	13 %	15 %
Disrespect to our Turkishness.....	13 %	3 %	12 %	11 %
We are unable to protect our language and culture.....	10 %	9 %	12 %	10 %
Loneliness and non-communication.....	7 %	13 %	10 %	9 %
Widespread drug use.....	8 %	10 %	6 %	8 %
Poverty .....	6 %	1 %	3 %	4 %
Exploitation of our labour.....	5 %	3 %	2 %	4 %
No reply .....	5 %	26 %	15 %	13 %

The most important problems faced by Belgian-Turks in Belgium were reported as being discrimination (32%) and racism (29%). Important regional differences were evident. While Flemish-Turks underlined discrimination and racism, Brussels-Turks cited most the contradiction of moral and religious values, whilst Walloon-Turks emphasized unemployment, indicating that Brussels-Turks are more concerned by communitarian issues. Among German- and French-Turks the two main issues mentioned were feeling of being treated like an alien (39%), and the contradiction in moral values (34%).

**Table 17. What is the primary problem you face in Belgium?  
(By gender)**

Mentioning	Female	Male	Total Belgium
Unemployment	31 %	26 %	28 %
Lack of Dutch/French language	17 %	13 %	15 %
Disrespect to our Turkishness	8 %	14 %	11 %
We are unable to protect our language and culture	8 %	13 %	10 %

**Table 18. What is the primary problem you face in Belgium?**

**(By age group)**

Mentioning	Age group 15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total Belgium
Contradictory moral values	17 %	23 %	25 %	34 %	23 %	24 %
Unemployment	29 %	28 %	37 %	21 %	16 %	28 %
Discrimination (Being treated as an alien)	36 %	32 %	29 %	34 %	31 %	32 %
Disrespect to our religion	24 %	16 %	14 %	7 %	13 %	15 %
Disrespect to our Turkishness	10 %	15 %	11 %	2 %	8 %	11 %
Loneliness and non-communication	7 %	9 %	9 %	11 %	8 %	9 %
Widespread drug use	12 %	6 %	9 %	9 %	8 %	8 %
Exploitation of our labour	10 %	2 %	2 %	5 %	3 %	4 %
Racism	29 %	25 %	32 %	25 %	31 %	29 %
Poverty	0 %	5 %	4 %	5 %	5 %	4 %
We are unable to protect our language and culture	10 %	8 %	6 %	14 %	20 %	10 %
Lack of Flemish/French language	10 %	15 %	11 %	32 %	17 %	15 %

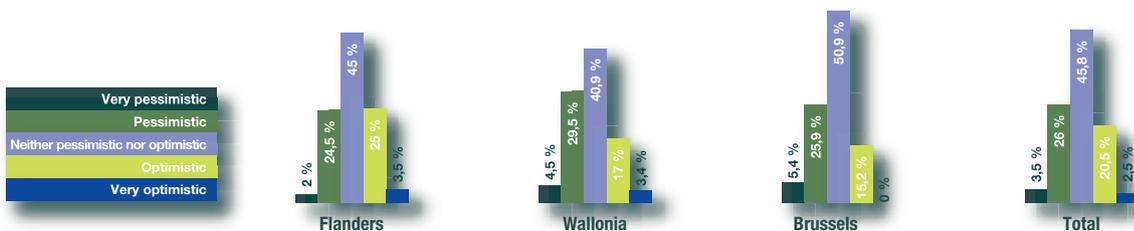
**Table 19. What is the primary problem you face in Belgium?**

**(By socio-economic status)**

Mentioning	Highest	Upper Middle	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower	Total Belgium
Contradictory moral values	23 %	17 %	29 %	31 %	16 %	24 %
Unemployment	26 %	25 %	36 %	29 %	22 %	28 %
Discrimination (Being treated as an alien)	26 %	42 %	34 %	28 %	31 %	32 %
Disrespect to our religion	16 %	16 %	13 %	12 %	20 %	15 %
Disrespect to our Turkishness	14 %	10 %	4 %	11 %	16 %	11 %
Loneliness and non-communication	9 %	14 %	8 %	9 %	2 %	9 %
Widespread drug use	7 %	9 %	5 %	9 %	12 %	8 %
Racism	29 %	27 %	25 %	33 %	29 %	29 %
We are unable to protect our language and culture	12 %	4 %	10 %	9 %	18 %	10 %
Lack of Flemish/French language	16 %	10 %	21 %	14 %	14 %	15 %

The cross-analyses shown above crystallize the problems expressed by Belgian-Turks with regard to the various groups of the Belgian-Turk population. It is mostly women and older people who cite the problem of 'lack of French/Flemish language', whilst it is mainly youngsters who complain about discrimination in everyday life (being treated as an alien). Those who complain that they face racism, disrespect of their religion and disrespect to Turkishness are more likely to be in the lower socio-economic groups.

**Figure 42. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of Belgium?**



While there is pessimism among Belgian-Turks about the future of Belgium (30%), there is also optimism (23%), although almost half of those interviewed said they felt neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Walloon-Turks and Brussels-Turks are somewhat more pessimistic than Flemish-Turks.

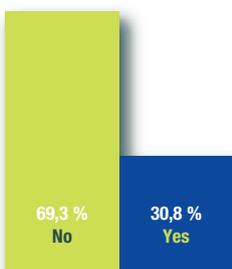
**Table 20. Do you think Belgium has become better or worse compared to previous years? (By age group)**

Saying Belgium is	Age group	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total Belgium
Much worse .....		7 %	7 %	10 %	7 %	3 %	7 %
Worse .....		48 %	38 %	46 %	39 %	33 %	41 %
The same .....		24 %	33 %	30 %	39 %	28 %	31 %
Better .....		19 %	18 %	11 %	14 %	28 %	17 %
Much better .....		2 %	1 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	2 %
No reply .....			3 %	2 %		5 %	3 %

Table 20 above highlights that more than half (55%) of the younger age groups, notably those under 30, think that Belgium has become a worse place than in previous years, whilst almost one third (31%) of the 50+ age group think it is better compared to previous years.

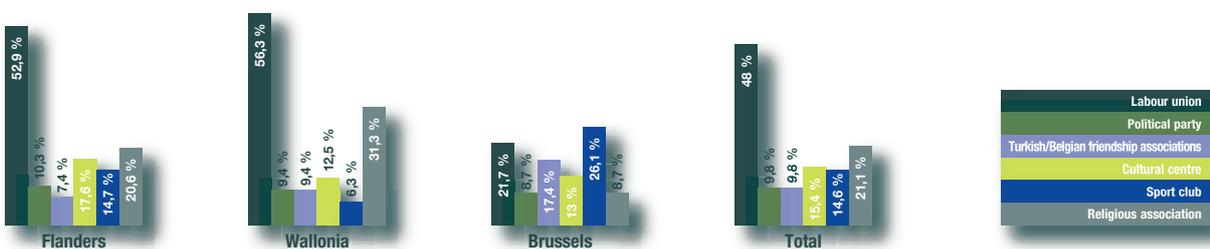
On the other hand, those groups with lower socio-economic status were more likely to feel that Belgium has become better compared to the previous years. Those with higher socio-economic status do not observe big change, while the middle class people feel that things have got worse in the last few years.

**Figure 43. Is there any organization of which you are a member, or in which you are involved?**



31% of our sample of Belgian-Turks said that they were involved in various associations in Belgium, as against 39% of German-Turks and 29% of French-Turks. The organizations are as follows:

**Figure 44. What kinds of organizations are you involved in or a member of?**



Unlike Brussels-Turks (22%), Flemish-Turks (53%) and Walloon-Turks (56%) are primarily attached to labour unions. In Brussels, there is a more equal distribution of organizational affiliation. Religious affiliation is proportionately much higher among Walloon-Turks with 31% mentioning this, compared to 21% of Flemish-Turks and only 9% of Brussels-Turks. In Germany, religious associations are the most mentioned (45%), whilst 16% of French-Turks mention involvement in religious organizations. Cultural centres are the most often mentioned organization in France (31%). Membership of a labour union is also quite high in Germany and France (12%). On the other hand, political party membership among Belgian-Turks and German-Turks (10%) is much higher than among French-Turks.

**Table 21. Are you involved in, or are you a member of, any organization?  
(By place of birth)**

Membership	Birthplace Turkey	Birthplace Belgium	Total Belgium
No .....	69 %	71 %	69 %
Yes .....	32 %	29 %	31 %
Total .....	100 %	100 %	100 %

The cross tabulation above shows that place of birth appears to have little influence on belonging or not belonging to an organization.

### **The politics of distinction:<sup>26</sup> local election candidacy in the age of Islamophobia**

Jacobs *et al.* (2006) indicate that Belgian-Turks have not been so very fortunate in the political sphere, but the Belgian local elections of 8 October 2006 proved to be rather successful for Turkish-origin migrants and their descendants, with Belgian-Turkish candidates making their mark across Belgium. With an estimated 7,700,000 Belgian citizens going to the ballot boxes (the vote is obligatory in Belgium), more than 40 ethnically Turkish candidates were elected to local municipality and county councils. By comparison, in the 2000 elections, only 28 Belgian-Turks were voted into various positions. Non-native Belgians, who could prove residency in the country for at least 5 years, have been legally able to vote in Belgium since 2000. It is estimated that some 70,000 of voters in 2006 were ethnically Turkish. The focus groups and depth interviews we conducted revealed that candidacy in local elections has become a source of distinction for Belgian-Turks. Even those who ran in local elections but did not win proudly expressed their candidacies in a way that gave them distinction and a rather higher social status in their communities. Such pride was expressed so overtly that our interlocutors seemed to have internalised the political capital generated by these candidacies. Politics as a source of distinction and pride was more visible among Walloon-Turks and Brussels-Turks. Migrant representation in local, national and EU governmental bodies appears to contribute significantly to ending misrepresentation in the public space. This would indicate that migrants should not be kept away from the public sphere and encouraged to form apolitical communities (*Gemeinschaften*) in their private sphere: rather the state should encourage them to form interest groups. Political participation is a legitimate form of engagement, which highlights the political integration of Belgian-Turks and their willingness to cooperate with the Belgian political system. One should interpret the ways in which migrants and Muslims generate new forms of political socialization as another type of modernity, which also helps to underline coexistence of diversity in the public space.

At a time when the clash of civilizations and the culture wars have become major fault-lines in the West, Belgian-Muslims have developed a need to express the qualities of Islam to the majority society.<sup>27</sup> Belgian-Turks are becoming politically more mobile, but they are also developing other strategies to communicate better with the Belgians. One such strategy has been the establishment of Ramadan tents by Muslim organizations, which thousands of people, both *autochton* and *allochton*, have visited during Ramadan in the last two years.<sup>28</sup> Interviewees expressed the importance of the Ramadan tents in establishing further dialogue with Belgians who can enjoy the hospitality and free food provided in the tents.

### **The importance of cultural self-respect in promoting integration: teaching Turkish as a modern language**

Another key issue raised by interviewees with regard to the integration of Belgian-Turks was their need to see official policies recognizing their ethnocultural and religious differences. As an officially recognized second language in primary schools in Belgium, Turkish is said to give migrant-origin children the

<sup>26</sup> We are using the term distinction as Pierre Bourdieu used it. In his work *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu draws attention to how different kinds of capital (social, cultural, symbolic and economic) have been put into play by members of each social class and group in order to create a difference or distinction.

<sup>27</sup> Ural Manço (2005) explains very well the ways in which Belgian-Turks institutionalized Islam in order to express themselves in the public space.

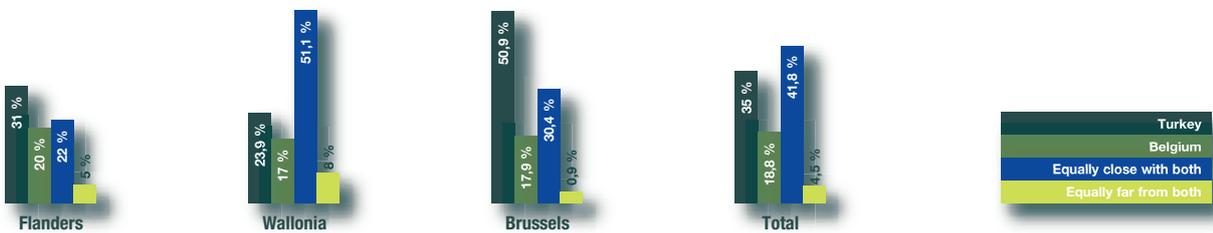
<sup>28</sup> The first Turkish Ramadan tent was set up in the Köln Neumarkt Platz in Cologne, in 2005. Tents set up each Ramadan in the crowded quarters of cities have also lately become a common practice in Turkey. This practice was first introduced by the pro-Islamist municipality in Uskudar, a district of Istanbul on the Anatolian coast of the Bosphorous. This old Ottoman ritual has recently been politicised, so that any municipality or political party, no matter where they fall in the political spectrum, is now eager to initiate such a philanthropic service. The practice has now spread across the Turkish diaspora, from as far afield as from the USA to Moscow.

impression that their parental culture is respected. Previously there were around 100 schools giving Turkish language and culture courses in Flanders, but today there are only sixteen, fifteen of which are in the province of Limburg. Interviewees in Beringen (Flanders) expressed their objection to Turkish culture teachers sent by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. It was pointed out that such teachers are unable to speak the Flemish language, do not know the social, political and cultural problems of Belgium and serve for only a limited period of three years. The same concern and reasons for concern were expressed regarding the *imams* sent to Belgium by the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs. Our quantitative research findings also reveal that some Belgian-Turks have a feeling that the majority society does not respect their Turkishness (Flemish-Turks 13%, Walloon-Turks 3% and Brussels-Turks 12%).

### Images in comparison: homeland and ‘hostland’

The data below show that Belgian-Turks no longer essentialize their homeland as a place of eventual return. Instead, both Turkey and Belgium have advantages and disadvantages for them, although, when asked, they are quite objective in stating which place is better in terms of issues such as human rights, democracy, education, tolerance, values and job opportunities.

**Figure 45. To which do you feel more affiliated, Belgium or Turkey?**



At national level, 42% of Belgian-Turks feel equally close to their country of residence and Turkey (vs. 27% for German-Turks and 36% for French-Turks). Compared with France and Germany, however, relatively fewer Belgian-Turks mention only their adopted land (the figures are respectively 19%, 25% and 22%). This kind of affiliation is a sign of Euro-Turks’ bridging status between the two locations. In all three countries groups seem to constitute a bridge between Turkey and the European Union through the more cosmopolitan identities that they have developed. These groups generally come from within those born in Belgium. What is striking in the chart above is the much higher affiliation of Brussels-Turks with Turkey (51%), which is more than double that expressed by Walloon-Turks (24%).

Belgian-Turks have a common discourse concerning their affiliation with Belgium, which gives them a different identity from the other Euro-Turks living in Germany and France: *the comfort of living in Belgium*. A middle-aged opinion leader in Beringen explained this well:

“Belgium is very attractive for Turks, even for those Turks coming from Germany. Belgium is a paradise with respect to social rights and private property... We invest here more than we do in Turkey. It is both because of the extensive property rights granted us by the Belgian government, and of the troublesome experiences of investment that we had before in Turkey. Belgium is like the centre of the European Union when it comes to comfort. Due to such advantages in Belgium we feel more Belgian. Here it is more *multikulti*, Germany and France are more monocultural. Walloons are not multicultural, but they are kind. The Flemish are in favour of cultural diversity.”

**Table 22. To which country do you feel more affiliated, Belgium or Turkey? (By birthplace)**

Mentioning	Socio-economic status		
	Birthplace Turkey	Birthplace Belgium	Total Belgium
Considering return			
Turkey .....	45 %	19 %	35 %
Belgium .....	12 %	29 %	19 %
Equal affiliation to both .....	39 %	47 %	42 %
Equal detachment from both .....	4 %	5 %	5 %
Total .....	100 %	100 %	100 %

The table above indicates that Belgian-Turks born in Belgium are either equally affiliated with both countries, or more affiliated with Belgium. Younger generations are more integrated into Belgium than the older generations, with 36% of those aged between 15 and 19 affiliated with Belgium or with both countries (45%). The fact that the younger generations are equally affiliated with both homeland and the receiving country highlights the premise of this research. The younger generations form a bridge between Turkey and the EU.

**Table 23. To which do you feel more affiliated, Belgium or Turkey? (By socio-economic status)**

Mentioning	Socio-economic status					
	Highest class	Upper Middle	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower class	Total Belgium
Turkey .....	31 %	30 %	33 %	42 %	43 %	35 %
Belgium .....	17 %	16 %	29 %	17 %	12 %	19 %
Equal affiliation to both .....	45 %	49 %	33 %	40 %	45 %	42 %
Equal detachment from both .....	8 %	6 %	5 %	1 %	0 %	5 %
Total .....	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

The figures above show that there is a link between socio-economic status of Belgian-Turks and their affiliation with Belgium or Turkey. While lower classes tend to affiliate proportionately more with Turkey, higher classes affiliate more with Belgium or with both countries.

**Table 24. Which country is better?**

Mentioning Turkey/Belgium as better for	Flanders		Wallonia		Brussels		Total	
	Turkey	Belgium	Turkey	Belgium	Turkey	Belgium	Turkey	Belgium
Health and social security systems	2 %	89 %	2 %	82 %	0 %	88 %	2 %	87 %
Democracy and human rights	5 %	71 %	2 %	58 %	1 %	56 %	3 %	64 %
Educational system	6 %	70 %	10 %	56 %	20 %	59 %	11 %	64 %
Valuing human capital	11 %	60 %	6 %	67 %	2 %	67 %	7 %	63 %
Job opportunities	4 %	70 %	9 %	51 %	6 %	56 %	6 %	62 %
Respecting rules	20 %	51 %	3 %	76 %	12 %	67 %	14 %	61 %
Seeking rights	9 %	57 %	2 %	58 %	4 %	45 %	6 %	54 %
Efficiency of judiciary system	8 %	48 %	6 %	36 %	10 %	38 %	8 %	42 %
Equal treatment for all	18 %	41 %	5 %	41 %	10 %	36 %	13 %	40 %
Comfortable and easy life	34 %	38 %	22 %	32 %	22 %	43 %	28 %	38 %
Attitudes of police	12 %	42 %	8 %	32 %	18 %	30 %	13 %	36 %
Mutual tolerance	39 %	34 %	40 %	23 %	35 %	28 %	38 %	30 %
Moral social values	36 %	32 %	38 %	23 %	40 %	18 %	37 %	26 %
Respecting cultures and religions	43 %	30 %	25 %	16 %	37 %	21 %	37 %	24 %

Interviewees were asked to compare the homeland and the 'hostland' in terms of 14 different items. The findings indicate that Belgian-Turks generally favour Belgium concerning the criteria of having a better health and social security system, respecting rules, seeking rights, democracy and human rights, job opportunities, the judiciary system, valuing human capital, equal treatment, attitudes of the police, and having a comfortable life. Turkey was believed to have considerable defects in these areas. However, in terms of respecting cultures and religions, moral social values, and mutual tolerance, Turkey is appreciated more by Belgian-Turks. Below are some of the testimonies from the depth interviews in relation to the various criteria:

"Here people respect each other. Even the police respect you when you have a trouble. Once I was getting divorced I got so much support from the police." (Middle-aged woman, Brussels)

"Belgian society is such a mixed society. You have all kinds of people here. You learn to be tolerant. That is what I did." (Young woman, Brussels)

However, some complain about Belgians' mistreatment of Muslims:

"Belgians are so tolerant, they can even very openly talk about gays, lesbians and euthanasia, but unfortunately they have always belittled the good things done by the Muslims in this country. They have no tolerance towards us." (Young man, Beringen)

Belgian-Turks have rather clear attitudes about Turkey, but we found little evidence of a quest to return, or even the myth of returning to Turkey: on the contrary, living in Belgium has become a very normal phenomenon for most Belgian-Turks. Their engagement with Belgium owes a lot to the ways in which migration was regulated by the Belgian state in the past. Belgium made it attractive for Turkish workers to immigrate to Belgium with their families. This was a different policy from that of the Germans and the French. Migrating to Belgium with their families also prompted migrants to loosen their connections with the homeland. This has generated a kind of 'trust' in their relationship with the Belgian state and its institutions. An old man expressed this trust in the following words: "Even if you are broke here, nobody will turn you down at the hospital." This statement implicitly compares the two countries, that of destination and the country of origin. A migrant who had been to Turkey in order to make preparations for his return project reported the troubles he encountered in Turkey:

"When I went to Turkey in 1986 to run a tourist motel in Fethiye, Antalya, with a friend of mine I had a traffic accident. I had my wife, father and two relatives with me in the car. We were injured. We were taken to the Gendarme for some routine questions. The commandant there insulted all of us so much, telling us always what to do, or what not to do in a very patronizing way. He was expecting me to bow to his authority. Why should I? I also served in the Turkish army for twenty-one months. Then I went to the public prosecutor and he dared to accuse me of having tried to kill my father. Can you imagine? I had had an accident and we were all about to die. And the things we had to go through... And then we went to see the doctor, and he didn't even do anything for my wound. And then I told my friend that I would never return to this country..."

This man's narrative draws our attention to the troubled relationship between individuals and the Turkish state. Another person underlined that Euro-Turks were seen as foreigners in Turkey: "When we are in Turkey, the Turks understand immediately that we come from Europe. And then they cheat us on every occasion..." Yet, despite the problems expressed, Belgian-Turks cannot imagine not going to Turkey, be it for family visits, the sea, the beach, sun or holiday:

"We are attracted by the nature of Turkey. We often go to the spas there

for our health. If the climate in Turkey was cold, then we would go to Africa for our holidays.”

Belgian-Turks regularly go to Turkey for various reasons but primarily for holidays. The problems experienced in Turkey are transmitted to friends in a satirical manner:

“How do we find Turkey? Summer season, holiday, sea, travel, eating, drinking... and being cheated. A lot of cheating... After you leave Belgian territory, nobody asks you for a passport in any customs until you reach the Turkish border in Kapikule. When you get there, you have to wait for at least 14-15 hours. Our Turkish officers always drink their tea without doing anything, and they expect to be bribed...”

It is also possible to meet people who talk about their desire to return to Turkey and the conditions for when this will happen, which seem to be similar for all of them: “When the house instalments come to an end”, “When our children graduate from school”, or “When we are retired”. Challenging what had been said by others about the possibility of return, a young second generation man talked about the impossibility of return:

“Nobody has returned from Belgium, and nobody will return. My father is 55 years old, and he spends seven to eight months of the year in Turkey, and the rest here. The ones who talk about returning are not telling the truth. What they mean by returning is to live in both places. They cannot sever their links with Belgium...”

Another young man made similar comments to support his friend:

“Turkey is over for us. Everybody has a property, a house, in Turkey. But everybody is investing here. Their children live here. There is no longer a question of return...”

One cannot deny that what Belgian-Turks said was often rather disconnected and inconsistent. The comments of any one individual could be contradictory. Someone with a nationalist perspective about his/her ethnic identity might also exhibit elements of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. This inconsistency shows the elusive and fugitive power of individuals in everyday life and also displays the fact that people generate constantly changing tactics to tackle the problems they face in different spheres of life. One cannot expect all the tactics to be consistent with each other.

“Belgium is a great place. I am from Brussels. I can be myself in Europe. I cannot find such peace in Turkey. I am multi-cultural. I am a world nationalist. The only people I could be opposed to would be aliens coming from space. If blacks are good, then I also support them...”

Belgium has thus become the real home for Belgian-Turks, replacing the former home in Turkey. Those born in Belgium are much more precise in naming Belgium as their home. A young second-generation married woman, in her 20s, clearly expressed that Belgium is her real home:

“I am not ashamed of my Turkishness, but whenever I go to Turkey I truly miss Belgium... I am more interested in what happens in Belgium. Every night I watch the Belgian news...”

Nevertheless, it seems that there is a growing tension between two groups: on the one hand there are the Belgian-Turks who tend to comply with the rules, norms and regulations of their new home, Belgium, and on the other hand those who tend to essentialize their former home, Turkey. An Imam explained how the mosque-goers do not internalise some of the norms of Belgian society:

“There is not really a lot of racism here. But there are other problems. In Belgium, there are 400,000 Moroccans and then come the Turks. The

streets in Belgium are usually very clean, but the Turkish and Moroccan neighbourhoods are completely dirty. This is not good for Islam or for health. Nobody really cares about this. Sometimes we talk to the crowds at prayer times about the need to keep the environment clean. Once I remember that we distributed candies to the crowd while talking about the importance of sanitation in Islam. And we also asked them not to throw the candy wraps away. Despite that, the mosque was full of candy wraps all over the place. That is unbelievable. They listen to and affirm what you say, but in the end it is very difficult to change their habits..."

Unlike those who are ready to accommodate some norms in their everyday life and to internalise their new home, there are others who tend to essentialize their Turkishness. Reflecting upon racist acts in the wider society, some Belgian-Turks seem to reproduce a Turkish nationalist discourse in a way that leads to the nationalization of the community:

"I am truly Turkish and my grandfather became a martyr in the war in the Dardanelles... Europe is finished. There are no longer any jobs or prosperity here. Europe screwed up. The Turkish nation taught these people [Europeans] what culture is. We taught them. I won't stay here even for one more day, I will go back. There is a lot of racism here, especially the Flemish. They treat us like pigs..."

Contradicting statements can be heard from Belgian-Turks everywhere in Belgium and discursive differences and tension are always visible:

"The Flemish are not racist. You don't integrate yourself. First you have to comply with the rules here. Have you ever done that? First of all, you have to respect the citizens of this country."

"I also lived together with a Flemish girl. I know how racist they can be. There is no other nation that could adapt to the others as well as the Turks."

All these narratives are expressions of personal experience. However, sometimes we also heard interesting statements that demonstrated the anger felt towards Belgium through the essentialization of an imagined Turkey:

"Real democracy exists in Turkey. Here in Belgium, the police beat and shoot a man in the street. In Turkey, if you are arrested then you have the right to ask for your lawyer. If the police beat you up, then you can get his number to take him to the court. I tell you there is no democracy here..."

In the focus group held in a coffee house in Schaerbeek, where this comment was made, other participants opposed what was said:

"-Police do not beat people here!

-But they do!

-How come?

-Really, I swear!

-Here, the police are beaten up by the others.

-Here, you swear at the police, nothing happens. They don't do anything to you.

-In the worst case, they take you to the custody."

A proper perception of the police by migrants is essential, because a correct relationship with the police, or anyone else in authority, can infer that migrants are recognised by the state. Being recognized by official authorities is of great importance because it fosters migrants' self-confidence. As Charles Taylor (1994) put it very eloquently, being recognized by the other provides individuals with a ground to generate moderate and cordial identities.

"In Turkey, a mayor is accompanied by at least thirteen bodyguards. Look at here. The Prime Minister lives a kilometre away from me like a

normal citizen. If a driver crashes into the Prime Minister while cycling in Turkey, can you imagine what happens then? The guy would be dead, I tell you. Here, such things don't happen. Once someone crashed into the Prime Minister here, and the police came and nothing happened. The guy just left the place, that was it..."

Socio-economic conditions and the habitats of meaning<sup>29</sup> of an individual, or a family, are decisive in shaping the way diasporic individuals give priority to Turkey or Belgium. Insecure personalities who suffer from poverty, exclusion or unemployment tend to overemphasize the value of the country of origin, authenticity, purity, religion and ethnicity. This is a kind of mental exit from current social reality and a return to the imagined homeland. The idea of return then becomes a useful tactic in everyday life in tackling the destabilizing effects of structural restraints. Conversely, those individuals and families, who have better socio-economic prospects tend to be at peace with the wider society. They also abstain from making holistic statements about their country of destination:

"In Beringen, Limburg, where I was born, people are not racist. There, Flemish, Arabs, Italians and Turks have lived together for a very long time. There is even a mosque with minaret."

"I am from Antwerp and I don't have many Belgians friends. But this also has something to do with the Belgians, not only with us. Belgians are distanced from the Turks..."

"When I want to ask something to an old woman walking in the street, it is as if she is scared to death. They are afraid of foreigners..."

"The Flemish are more racist. When they see something disturbing, they think that all the Turks are like that. But I understand them. Sometimes I feel the same with the Turks, especially when they slaughter animals in their gardens..."

It seems that interculturalism is imbedded in the everyday life of Belgian-Turks. Living on both banks of the same river is what they are destined for.

### **Making and unmaking communities to cope with structural challenges**

In order to provide reasons for the failure of the integration regime, one should look into the ways in which 'communities' are creating themselves. Schaerbeek provides a good example of a location where one can find an intact Turkish community. The first thing that a *flâneur* (someone strolling through the streets) will notice is that no other language is spoken in the Turkish neighbourhood of Schaerbeek but Turkish. The next distinctive feature of the neighbourhood is its coffee houses (*kahvehane*), which are very similar to those in Turkish villages and working-class areas. The only difference is that the Schaerbeek coffee houses sell alcohol (beer) in addition to coffee and tea. There are other distinctive characters of this very Belgian-Turkish community. A middle-aged-man interviewed said that "Schaerbeek is a place where 'an ignorant peasant' from Emirdağ arrived just after he had put his shepherd's stick on the shelf." The Turks in Schaerbeek are more inward looking and conservative than those originating from other parts of Turkey and they still collectively visit their villages every year. The Schaerbeek community is a shelter, even a fortress, for the vulnerable social actor:

"According to me, the advantages of living in Schaerbeek are a lot more than the disadvantages. At least we are not dispersing and vanishing. If we dispersed and lived separately, our children would be in a worse situation: they would be exposed to degeneration. This way, at least they are familiar with our traditions."

Because the wider society in which they live is an 'alien' society and full of 'dangers', the community provides them with a kind of social control:

<sup>29</sup> The notion of 'habitats of meaning' belongs to Ulf Hannerz (1996). Hannerz developed the notion in relation to the simultaneous co-existence of local and global. TV and the print media have an important impact on the formation of our habitats of meaning. While some people may share much the same habitats of meaning in the globalized world, others may have rather distinct and localised habitats of meaning.

“Let me be frank, it is very easy for a young man to obtain whatever he wants here. Let me be more frank, he can get women, alcohol, whatever he desires anytime. Prostitution is widespread. Drugs are available in certain areas. Their use is legal. Young people who came here from Turkey have also experienced deviation. But I cannot say that this is true for the majority. Maybe you will call it tribalisation, but I tell you there is an advantage in living together: it prevents us from dispersal.”

The community essentially presents a collective need. The community strategy of keeping people together is counteracted by individuals through a kind of what Dubet (2002) calls “necessary conformism”. Conformism is a tactic deployed by individuals in order to comply with the rules of the game set out by the power of the community. Islam is one of the key elements in helping the Turkish community in Schaerbeek conform. A young man defined religiosity in the district:

“Schaerbeek is number one in religiosity. Many young people attend Koran courses, generally at the Fatih Mosque or the Ulu Mosque...”

Another young man, with more cultural capital and greater autonomy as a social actor, revealed the secondary result behind this façade of the strategy:

“I learn directly from the greatest God. Why should I listen to the Imam? Here Islam is only in words, not in people’s hearts. It only gives people an identity. They go to Friday prayers, but they drink alcohol on other days and are keen on committing immoral acts. In the month of Ramadan 85% of the people here do not fast... They regard almost every woman as a prostitute, excuse my language please.”

While the community provides its members with the opportunity not to lose their religion or ethics, it also keeps the mother tongue alive. However, if the community is not properly regulated and governed, it may bring about failure to learn Flemish and French:

“There are both advantages and disadvantages to living together here... The people do not feel themselves as foreigners. Solidarity exists. Nevertheless relations with the Belgian community are very weak. But, on the other hand, children of Turks living with Belgians far away from here, in villages, for example, do not speak Turkish well.”

“A few days ago, we were going to employ someone here. We held interviews. We wanted them to translate a French and Flemish text into Turkish. Nobody could even write properly in Turkish.”

“There is even a difference between family members. For instance my older brother is much closer to the Turks. His Flemish is bad. We used to live in Antwerp, in the Turkish community. In order to protect me, my father took me from a school mainly attended by Turks and registered me in another school in which Turks were in minority. Then, my Flemish became very good. But the children who attend schools in which the majority is Turkish cannot speak Flemish well. For instance, a father can’t read some bureaucratic papers and has to ask his son for help. But he cannot read them either.”

“The children know neither Turkish nor French... But the education is more serious in Flemish schools. I am sending my children to Flemish schools. The Turkish parents want to have money... It seems that if the children earn money, the difficulties will end... I am advising the children here to go to school. But at the same time, they should learn the Turkish culture. For this reason we go to Turkey in the summer holidays with the children. They get bored in Eskişehir. They go out but after 2 hours they get bored. They want to come back here as soon as possible. Here is their place...”

Despite all the protection provided by the community, its members bear other risks, in addition to failing to learn the language(s) of the host society:

“There is no way that you can suffer economically in Europe. But what is essential is peace at home. The Turkish community is getting more restless. They experience the difficulties of being inward-looking. They cannot make their children attend school. The children envy the world outside...”

It seems that the community is going through a ‘transition process’ and its “ghetto” qualities are dissolving. It is the younger generations that go through this process to a greater extent and it is they who feel the difficulties of ghettoization. As they are loyal to their parents and families, they cannot get away from the restraints of the community, but their being in the community is rather symbolic. Their minds and behaviour transcend the boundaries of the community. They always feel the tension between the community and wider society in the process of individuating. Those who are aware of the crisis of the community and are experiencing the dangers and limitations of the ghetto are gradually leaving Schaerbeek in order to ‘protect their children’. They tend to move to other districts. Whilst new generations now go to the Turkish Riviera for summer holidays, there is also geographical mobility inside Belgium.

Departure from the community is regarded as a path to success by the schooled generations, but this also creates certain problems. The traditional methods of older generations to ‘protect’ their children have proven to be unsuccessful. The people we interviewed explained this through stories of ‘lost generations’, ‘insecurity’ and ‘crime’:

“If parents are strict, then the children escape from their homes... You cannot achieve what you want by locking them in. If you prevent your daughter from going out, she will run away as soon as she has the chance and become a prostitute...”

“Our children have mingled with the Arabs. They get involved in the drug business. Frankly our children get involved too. There are people who sell joints in the streets. Every night there is an incident.”

In transition from one generation to the next, change is inevitable. A young person interviewed explained his experience as a kind of *soft transition*:

“There is slow change. The new generations are more outgoing. They learn the language. We cook Turkish food at home. But when we go out, we go to Italian or Chinese restaurants. But the older generations go to eat kebabs when they go out.”

An older person explained the difficulties he had experienced and how the new generation is overcoming them:

“We were ignorant. We came here from the villages. How could we help our children? We did not know the language. But our children progressed. They can pay more attention to their children. Now we have become more outgoing and we are changing. The new generation is getting more involved in education. Many Turks are taking their place in the municipalities.”

Failures continue along with the success stories. Despite all the limitations of the ghetto, many people try to *bricoler*<sup>30</sup>(cobble together) solutions to overcome their failures. It is possible to see traditionalism, modernism, being outgoing, being introvert, support for democracy, nationalism and enthusiasm for the community in one and the same person. For instance, a 16-17 year old teenager who was born in Schaerbeek and goes to Turkey every year, illustrated the difficulties of overcoming problems experienced in Turkey and Belgium:

“Here, we are deprived of the tastes that exist in Turkey. The Belgians think that there is happiness, money and everything in Belgium, in Europe, but on the contrary, here everything is more difficult. This is not the kind of life I want. How can I explain? The place we live in is very dis-

**30** Claude Levi-Strauss (1966: 17) defines the ‘bricoleur’ as someone who “is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or deconstructions.”

ordered. There is filth... The environment is not good. Everybody is after money. What are they doing for money? They either sell joints, or steal, or cheat the *'gavurs'* (a Turkish word for unbelievers). The Belgians and the others are afraid of us, and they say 'They are foreigners and they rob us.' The Flemish are afraid of Turks. When they realize that you are a Turk, they begin to fear. When I go somewhere, Belgians do not even turn and look at me. When a Belgian walks by right there at night, the policeman does not even look at him. But when we pass by, he keeps on looking at us and chases us to find out what we are doing there at night."

For this young man, all Belgians are "*gavur*" (unbelievers). He uses such a categorization of 'exclusion' and 'othering' with ease. Nevertheless, he also knows that he is subject to the same kind of categorization when he is in Turkey. As a response to this categorization of exclusion, he tends to demonstrate stronger loyalty to Turkey and Turkishness. This state of feeling even more Turkish is actually an individual tactic to overcome exclusion from within the Turkish nation:

"When we go to Turkey, we are not regarded as Turks. The neighbours in the village call us *'gavur'*. But despite all of this, Turkey is different. They say 'the Gavurs have arrived'. They sell us things in the market at very high prices, they cheat us. Despite all these things, everything is different in Turkey. You are ready to pay 100 euros for something which actually costs 5 YTL. The taste of things is different. You do not want to spend money here. But it has a different taste when you spend money in Turkey."

Although they prefer 'the taste' of Turkey to that of Belgium, life seems to be restricted to a limited space for the youth who live in Schaerbeek. Most of them do not have Belgian friends except those at school. In fact they have no ties outside Schaerbeek. In contrast to the ways in which young males affirm the attitudes of the older generations towards them, young females feel rather confined. The fact that young women are not allowed to go out after 6 pm gives us some clues to a male dominated world. This 'male to male world' holds no hope for the future. As one of the young people said:

"It is not easy to earn money here. People sell joints, and smoke cigarettes. Turkey is better."

The harshness of life in Schaerbeek creates a strange mixture in people's minds. Although they 'learn to like the district', parents become worry about its restraints where their children are at stake. The safe and familiar Schaerbeek of their early years turns out to be a place that is far from promising a good future:

"After I get married things will be different... This is not a good place for the future of my child...I cannot stay here."

A young man explained the feeling of living in a community where the district is not only a symbolic shelter, but also a physical sanctuary:

"The children who are born here are all brave. You cannot find a timid child. For example, the Flemish have 'skinheads' but they cannot come to Schaerbeek. If they come, bad things happen. If they catch somebody alone, they will take them to the forest and stab them, but they cannot come here. Here it is full of Turks... We are not afraid of them, we are used to them. Killing us is beyond the power of Belgium. We believe in God... I have a friend who was stabbed 8 times, but he did not die..."

However, even though this environment offers some protection against the outside world, it is not easy to say that the inner world is safe:

"Many incidents happen here... For example, a man is alcoholic and he says 'Why are you looking at me?', and then the other says 'Why are you looking at me? It is just because of overconfidence. This place is not safe..."

It seems that Belgian-Turks, and especially young Belgian-Turks still experience a feeling of exclusion and fear. They frighten others, raise doubts and get frightened. To understand the Schaerbeek's Turkish community, one has to be aware of the intercultural tendencies within the community. Let us try to describe Hasan, a 45-year-old man from Emirdag. He has lived in Brussels for 40 years, earns his living through unemployment benefits but owns apartments. When we look at his physical appearance, he fits in with that of the stereotypical 'radical Islamist'. He has completely shaved his head and has a rounded beard. But he has something more. He has knitted a small part of his beard and attached a blue eye on it. Hasan's *bricolage* is not limited to his physical appearance. What he tells us is even more important. He is a truly dedicated Muslim, but he also he tries to practice his own interpretation of Islam. And as well as the way in which he individualizes Islam, he is also a true Belgian. In the discussions, he was the one who openly reacted to any negative opinion about Belgium and Brussels, as well as to the idea of 'imported brides and grooms' who cannot adapt to the Belgian way of life. When asked to define his life style, he described it as 'interculturality':

"We have established a distinctive culture here. We have gained from both sides."

When we summarize observations about the Turkish communities, we can mention two antithetical tendencies. On the one hand there are signs of people being more and more parochial and inward looking, but on the other hand there are also traumas resulting from social transformation. The community is based on the constituents of religion, tradition, ethnicity and Turkishness. When such a community goes into a crisis, the traditional imagined community is replaced by another form of imagined community, i.e. 'an essentialist and ethnicist Turkish national identity' that is characterized by a concrete understanding of nation. A woman interviewee, aged 28, in Charleroi draws our attention to the increasing level of isolation among the Belgian-Turks:

"What we heard from our parents is very different from what we experience now. When I look at my parents' pictures I see that they were dancing with their Flemish landlords, neighbouring with the Greeks, having assistance from the Belgians. They had solidarity with the outside people then. Now, Turks are becoming more and more isolated in comparison to the past."

The quotations below, extracted from our depth interviews, display the existence of a relationship between the 'nationalist construction' created in the homeland and the diaspora, and demonstrate how the externally imposed Turkish national identity fills the gap that results from weakening communal ties caused by generational and structural social, political and cultural changes within the community. This transformation corresponds to a transition from religiosity towards nationalism:

"There has lately been an alliance among Belgian-Turks on issues like the position of Turks in Europe, Turkey's situation *vis-à-vis* the European Union, the so-called Armenian Genocide etc. Conferences are held in the mosques on special days such as the anniversary of the establishment of the Republic (29<sup>th</sup> October), or 18<sup>th</sup> March, the Commemoration Day of Martyrs. Although the people attending such conferences and gatherings have different political engagements, everybody agrees on the survival of the state, the nation and the flag."

"The situation of the new generation is bad. They are losing their values. In any case we came here after learning our traditions in Turkey. But the third generation is deprived of this culture. But when the PKK was a problem, hundreds of young people protested here. They even clashed with the police. That means that they are truly nationalist."

Modern global circuitry of communication and transportation has partly erased

the boundaries between homeland and diaspora. Hence, diasporic identities are subject to the constant interplay of the two locations, which have become almost overlapping in the symbolic world of migrants.

### **The community and women**

Although women are not so visible in the public space, they have an essential role in the construction and protection of the community. A woman's honour, which has to be protected, seems to be an unspoken cement that keeps the community intact. The dominant discourse of the community may be mostly based on ethnicity, religiosity and nationalism, but the discourse of protecting the honour of women cuts across all other discourses. However, the strategic role of women in protecting the boundaries of the community does not help them represent themselves in the public space. They are restrained by the community to the extent that they become even more timid and inward looking in the diaspora. The women we interviewed stated their lack of knowledge about basic women's health needs: they talked about their lack of information about gynaecology because this is considered to be a prohibited and disgraceful subject. One of the biggest worries of Turkish women seems to be the risk of not having enjoyable sexual intercourse. They are worried that their men, who have constant access to the public space, always have the option of reaching out to other women outside, especially to Belgian women. It seems that such female fears are nourished by the experiences of men outside the community boundaries, which are then brought back for consumption by the community. A young man, who reported having had affairs with Belgian women, paradoxically expressed his main concern as being the dissolution of Turkish culture: "We have taught them [Belgians] what culture is actually. The Turkish nation is the most cultured nation on earth". It is exceptional, however, for women to have had similar experiences outside the community. This indicates that Belgian-Turks have brought their cultural baggage from home and even reify it, but without making any changes in the gender-specific roles. A young woman expressed this reification of gender roles in the diaspora in a comparative way:

"Turkish men protect their women better than the Belgian men. They are jealous for instance. A Belgian man would not react at all if someone made a pass at his woman as he walked by."

Another strategy to keep the community intact is the attitude of fathers in preventing their daughters from marrying Belgian men. In coffee houses around Belgium, one often hears comments such as, "How could a father look into the others' faces?" Parents still seem to be influential in deciding who their children will marry. Although it seems to be primarily the father who decides on behalf of his daughter, women also play an active role in taking the decision to remain within the community boundaries. The way children are raised within their families puts pressure on them to be more inward looking in order not to lose the comfort provided for them by the community. Their upbringing prevents them from taking counter-hegemonic decisions, which may eventually outlaw them from within their community. A young woman reported her discomfort concerning marriage outside the community with a Belgian: "If we get married to a Belgian man, then we risk losing all our family and relatives."

Women become even more isolated in their private space when they are married. A woman's role then becomes even more determined by the community: that of being a mother and a decent woman. Women become truly 'private women' when they marry, a very different status from the 'public women' that describe Belgian women.<sup>31</sup> Women become active agents in replicating the community through complying with its customs, traditions and values. They do not even question why they cannot go beyond the boundaries of the community. It is just "not possible".

Despite all of this, however, the boundaries of the community are not so rigid and

<sup>31</sup> The difference between 'private women' and 'public women' has been very successfully drawn by Claire E. Alexander. She used this classification in mapping out the modes of courtship of black male Londoners (Alexander, 1996: 157-186).

there is always a way out. One might describe the masculine power of man as *'hard power'*, and the power of the *habitus*<sup>32</sup> as *'soft power'*. Individuals usually have the capacity to escape from the restraints of both hard and soft power, using their *'fugitive power'*.<sup>33</sup> Fugitive power is elusive, mobile, shifty and slippery; it is used by individuals to reposition themselves against the power of strategies and ideologies that operate at social and communal levels. Compared to men, women in the community are much more resistant, diversified and elusive in their daily life. Their successful tactics provide them with spaces in which they can occasionally detach themselves from the restrictive power of communal strategies and ideologies.

### **Habitats of meaning for Belgian-Turks**

It is a common belief that Euro-Turks are insufficiently interested in the media of their countries of settlement and that they are rather involved in the Turkish media. Our research presents a different picture. Belgian-Turks, generally speaking, are quite attentive to the media of their new destinations, and widely tune into Belgian TV and radio channels and read Belgian newspapers. Our data show that 37% of Belgian-Turks watch Belgian TV channels every day (45% of German-Turks and 55% of French-Turks watch local stations). 35 % of Belgian-Turks either never or rarely watch Belgian TV channels, compared with 28% for German-Turks and 17% of French-Turks. It is important, however, to point out that 52% of Belgian-Turks frequently use the Internet compared to 54% of German-Turks and 35% of French-Turks. More than a third (37%) of Belgian-Turks report that they use the Internet almost every day, while only 25% of German-Turks and 14% of French-Turks report daily use of the Internet.

Telecommunications technology has made it possible to receive almost all Turkish TV channels and newspapers in EU countries. Turkish media in Western Europe have achieved a remarkable cultural hegemony throughout the Turkish diaspora. To understand this one has to appreciate the interest of the Turkish media industry in Turkish populations living in Turkey and Belgium as well as elsewhere. The major Turkish TV channels all have their own European units making special programmes for Turks living in Europe. TRT International (a state channel) was the first of these channels. Other channels are Euro Show, Euro Star, Euro D, Euro ATV, TGRT, Kanal 7 and Lig TV. With the exception of TRT International, all of these TV channels can be received via a satellite dish. TRT Int. and several other channels are also already available on cable.

The programme spectra of all these channels differ greatly. TRT Int tends to give equal weight to entertainment, education, magazine, movies and news. Since it is a state owned channel, it tries to promote the 'indispensable unity of the Turkish nation' by arranging, for instance, fund-raising campaigns for the Turkish armed forces fighting in the South Eastern part of Turkey. There are also many programmes that focus on the problems of Euro-Turks. This channel is also widely received in Turkey. Thus, in a way, it also informs the Turkish audience about the lives of Euro-Turks, whilst connecting modern diasporic Turkish communities to the homeland.

Euro Show, Euro D and Euro Star are private channels, broadcasting secular programmes. Most of the programmes show old Turkish movies, American movies, comedy programmes, dramas, Turkish and European pop charts, sport programmes, reality-shows and news. TGRT and Kanal 7 are religion-based TV channels broadcasting religious programmes but also dramas and movies with religious themes. Traditional Turkish folk music programmes are also shown on these two channels. Satel is a channel that broadcasts the Turkish and European pop charts. It is the favourite channel of Turkish youngsters who have satellite dishes. Lig TV on the other hand is a pay channel that broadcasts the Turkish Premier League football matches.

The Turkish media play a part in shaping Euro-Turks' 'habitats of meaning'. They

<sup>32</sup> The term *habitus* was coined by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) to refer to a system of durable, transposable dispositions which function as the generative basis of structured practices.

<sup>33</sup> The concept of 'fugitive power' is used by Zygmunt Bauman (2000), Katherine N. Farrell (2004) and Robin Cohen (2007). The notion of 'fugitive power' describes modes of democratic power operating beyond the reach of 'hard power' (guns and laws) and 'soft power' (norms, customs, culture industry, ideology).

attempt to provide a stream of programmes considered as suitable to the 'habitats of meaning' of the diasporic subject. Euro-Turks are perceived by the Turkish media industry as a group of people who resist cultural change and this is the main rationale behind the selection of the movies and dramas. Many of the films on each channel are old Turkish films produced in the late sixties and seventies<sup>34</sup> which touch upon traditional issues such as Anatolian feudalism, blood feuds, migration (*gurbet*), ill-starred romance and poverty, which tend to reinforce the reification of culture within the Turkish diaspora. As Foucault noted, such films attempt to 're-programme popular memory' to recover 'lost, unheard memories' which have been denied or buried by dominant representations of the past experienced in the diaspora (Quoted in Morley and Robins, 1993: 10). Hence, identity is also a question of memory, and memories of home in particular (Morley and Robins, 1993: 10). Before the private TV channels began operating, it was the VCR industry that provided the Turkish diaspora with such movies.

*Radio Pasha*, *Radio Ezgi*, *Panik FM* and *Suryanilerin Sesi Radyosu* (Voice of Assyrians Radio) are three of the local Belgian-Turkish radios broadcasting in Belgium. Satellite TV channels can also receive several Turkish TV and radio channels broadcasting from Turkey. Belgian-Turks also have access to a wide variety of Turkish language newspapers such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Evrinsel* and some of the Turkish papers are printed in Germany. There are also many other sports and tabloid style papers available from Turkey. Although the content of the papers is extremely limited in terms of news about the homeland, they offer a wide range of news about the Turkish diasporic communities in Europe. Belgian-Turks have a monthly Turkish language journal too, *Binfikir*, which is printed in Brussels ([www.binfikir.be](http://www.binfikir.be)). Recently there have been also been a number of Internet sites contributing to the construction of a 'community of sentiments' among Belgian-Turks. Such portals are mostly engaged in tourism, entertainment, news, business, trade, banking, transportation, catering, and sports.<sup>35</sup>

**Table 25. Habitats of meaning of Belgian-Turks through the media viewing / listening / reading almost every day**

	Flanders	Wallonia	Brussels	Total
<b>Belgium</b>				
Belgian television channels.....	33 %	51 %	35 %	38 %
Turkish television channels .....	61 %	63 %	79 %	66 %
Belgian radio channels.....	14 %	24 %	13 %	16 %
Turkish radio channels .....	8 %	13 %	18 %	12 %
Belgian newspapers.....	11 %	12 %	22 %	14 %
Turkish newspapers .....	18 %	17 %	29 %	21 %
Internet.....	39 %	30 %	38 %	37 %

The data above indicate that there is a lot of duplication of media use among Belgian-Turks, as they show attachment to both the Turkish and Belgian media. However, Walloon-Turks seem to tune in proportionately more to Belgian TV and radio channels, whilst Brussels-Turks have high levels of viewing of Turkish TV. Daily Internet use is high everywhere, but especially in Flanders.

<sup>34</sup> The Turkish film industry produced a vast amount of film until the early eighties, prior to the hegemony of the American film industry over the world market.

<sup>35</sup> Some of these sites are <http://www.anadolu.be/>; <http://www.bel-turk.be/>; <http://www.abhaber.com/>; <http://www.eglence.be/>; <http://www.turkhavadis.com/>; <http://avrsyailletisim.sitemynet.com/>; <http://www.anafilya.org/go.php>; [www.lactuel.be/](http://www.lactuel.be/); <http://www.bel-cikaturk.com/>; <http://www.funremix.net/>; <http://www.turksestudent.be/>; <http://bel-cikasecimleri.be/>; <http://walter-yavuz.skynetblogs.be/>; [www.gundem.be/](http://www.gundem.be/); [www.belcikahaber.be/](http://www.belcikahaber.be/); [www.hadeka.be/](http://www.hadeka.be/); <http://www.turk-konso-los.com/go.php>; [www.uetd.be/](http://www.uetd.be/); <http://www.bteu.de/index.php?newlang=tur>; [www.ilhanfoods.com/tr/website.htm](http://www.ilhanfoods.com/tr/website.htm); [www.turksport.be/go.php](http://www.turksport.be/go.php); [www.rehber.be/contact.php](http://www.rehber.be/contact.php); and etc.

## Europe and the European Union

### Alternative projects of Europe: A holistic Europe, or a syncretic Europe?

There are at least two definitions of Europe and the European Union. The first is that proposed by Conservatives, which defines Europeanness as a static, retrospective, holistic<sup>36</sup>, essentialist, and culturally prescribed entity. The second is that of the Social Democrats, Liberals, Socialists and Greens, which emphasises the understanding of 'Europe' as a fluid, ongoing, dynamic, prospective, syncretic and non-essentialist process of becoming. While the first definition highlights a *cultural project*, the latter definition welcomes a *political project* embracing cultural and religious differences, including Islam. This must be one of the explanations as to why the inclusive and responsible acts of the Social Democrats and Greens in Germany and France are very well received by German-Turks.

**Table 26. Alternative Projects for Europe**

Syncretic Europe	Holistic Europe
Dynamic	Static
Secular	Religious
Societal	Communal
Post-national	Multinational
Economic	Economic
Political	Cultural
Syncretic culture	Holistic culture
Post-civilizational	Civilizational
Prospective	Retrospective
Non-essentialist	Essentialist
Heterophilic	Heterophobic
Political geography	Physical geography

Accordingly, the conservative *holistic idea* aims to build a culturally prescribed Europe based on Judeo-Christian mythology, shared meanings and values, historical myths and memories, the Ancient Greek and/or Roman legacy, homogeneity and heterophobia. Holistic Europe does not intend to include any other culture or religion outside of this European/Christian (and Judaic) legacy. Hence, neither Turkey nor Islam has a place in this project. This is why Angela Merkel (CDU leader in Germany) and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (President of the EU Convention) and several other leaders in the wider Union (Poland, Slovakia) implicitly and explicitly advocate including an article in the EU Constitution regarding the Christian roots of the Union. On the other hand, the progressive *syncretic idea* proposes a politically dynamic Europe based on cultural diversity, dialogue, heterogeneity, and heterophilia. The advocates of a syncretic Europe promote coexistence with Turkey and Islam, and underline that the EU is, in origin, a peace project. Joschka Fischer, Michel Rocard, and Gerhard Schröder are some of the leaders who emphasize the secular character of the EU. Surprisingly enough, the cultural Europe project complies with the latest Republican idea of 'unity-over-diversity' in a way that denies heterogeneity and opposes the poten-

<sup>36</sup> Anthropologically speaking, there are two principal notions of culture. The first one is the holistic notion of culture, and the second is the syncretic notion of culture. The former considers culture a highly integrated and grasped static 'whole'. This is the dominant paradigm of the classical modernity, of which territoriality and totality were the main characteristics. The latter notion is the one that is most obviously affected by increasing interconnectedness in space. This syncretic notion of culture has been proposed by contemporary scholars to demonstrate the fact that cultures emerge in mixing beyond the political and geographical territories (Kaya, 2001: 33).

tial of the European Project as a peace project. However, the political Europe project goes along with the idea of 'unity-in-diversity' that aims to construct a meta-European identity which embraces cultural and religious differences. Hence, Euro-Turk perspectives of the EU should be assessed in function of these two antithetical paradigms for Europe. Hence, Euro-Turk perspectives of the EU should be assessed in function of these two antithetical paradigms for Europe.

### **Belgian-Turk perspectives of relations between Turkey and the European Union**

Our focus groups and depth interviews indicated that, overall, Belgian-Turks are in favour of Turkey's participation in the European Union although there were also some who were against it. The quantitative data showed that one third of those interviewed felt both positively and negatively about EU membership, and just under a quarter were either negative or positive about membership. It seems that the European Union does not have a direct impact on Belgian-Turks' habitats of meaning, but when asked directly, they mostly express content about Turkey's EU integration process. Those who are sceptical about Turkey - EU relations mentioned problems such as socio-economic differences between Turkey and the EU or worries about a "hidden agenda" of the Union:

"It would be a pity if Turkey became a member of the EU. Turkey does not fulfil the required criteria yet..."

"I hope Turkey does not join the Union. If it does, then our culture will get spoiled too..."

"Turkey doesn't need the Union, it is an empire unto itself..."

"I don't think that the EU will accept Turkey as a member. I will tell you why. Recently, there was a trial about the genocide initiated by the Serbians against the Bosnians. The decisions taken were wrong. They didn't accept genocide. Yet when you claim that the Armenian genocide did not happen, you are taken to court. This is not justice. They won't accept us. They always pretend, but they will never let us in. Germany says "We promised Turkey, we should accept them" and then the French will oppose that. Five years later it will be the other way. The French will say 'Yes!', and the Germans will say 'No!' They won't take us..."

There were others, however, who were very positive about the Europeanization of Turkey:

"Why should the EU divide us? We are currently being divided by those who talk about secularism and the religious divide. We should get into the EU... Europeans and Turks can interact more. What is important is to develop yourself. You can even go to Japan for this purpose."

An Imam was critical about the Eurosceptics and said that there is no need to be afraid of the EU and that Islam has even developed further in Europe:

"One should ask those Eurosceptics what we would lose by membership. Sometimes we discuss such things. I don't think that the EU is a Christian club. If it were, then so many Churches would not be losing their congregations. If you go to the biggest Church here on a Sunday morning, what you see is 10-15 Black Africans. Recent public polls indicated that 52 % of the Belgians are atheists. If it was a Christian Club, the EU would first protect its religion. We Muslims, on the contrary, are filling the mosques."

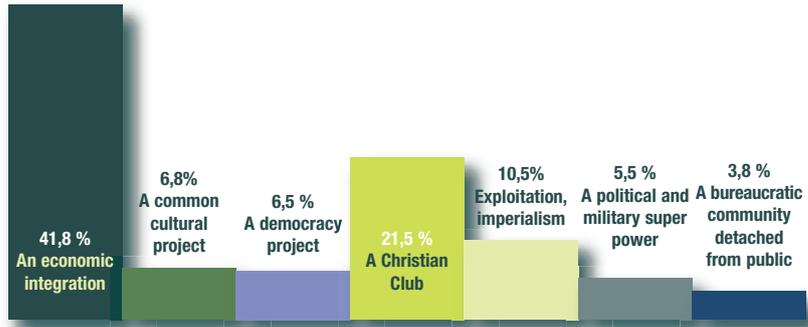
Another person addressed the potential gains for Turkey:

"Turkey should do its homework if it wants to be a member tomorrow. What is really essential is democracy and the human rights record of a country. The economy comes later..."

One could argue that for those who have made Belgium their homes, Turkey's entry into the EU does not appear to be a very important issue. However, such a standpoint seems to be strongly related to global and local contexts that have recently brought about parochialism, nationalism, xenophobia and communitari-

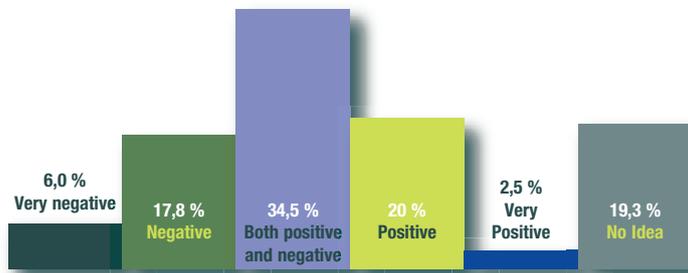
anism. It therefore becomes very difficult to make a clear separation between the attitudes of Belgians and those of the Belgian-Turks *vis-à-vis* the European Union.

**Figure 46. What does the European Union mean to you?**



While 42% of Belgian-Turks regard the EU as an economic integration project (vs. 48% of German-Turks and 64% of French-Turks), 22% think of it as a Christian club (vs. 21% of German-Turks and 11% of French-Turks). What Belgian-Turks emphasize is the aspect of EU economic integration.

**Figure 47. To what extent you are either positive or negative about the EU?**



Generally speaking, Belgian-Turks are equally positive and negative about the European Union. 23% of Belgian-Turks express a “positive” or “very positive” view about the EU (vs. 32% of German-Turks, 54% of French-Turks) and 24% of them are not in favour (28% of German-Turks and 17% of French-Turks). A further 35% of Belgian-Turks have mixed feelings about the Union (29% of German-Turks and 23% of French-Turks). A recent Eurobarometer Survey showed that 60% of all Belgians<sup>37</sup> were favourable. Some of the Euroscepticism of Belgian-Turks can probably be attributed to recent heated debates within EU circles concerning Turkey’s EU membership. These debates were mentioned by the interviewees we talked to in the qualitative research. The other reason for negative feelings towards the EU is that they perceive the Union as the cause of their relative poverty. Moreover, only 11% of Belgian-Turks are supportive of the euro, while 6% of German-Turks and 25% of French-Turks support it, whilst 64% openly state their dislike of the euro.

**Figure 48. To what extent should Turkey be a member of the European Union?**



<sup>37</sup> 60 % of Belgians reported that they have a positive image of the EU in the latest Eurobarometre Survey 67 (2007).

When asked specifically whether Turkey should be a member of the EU, there were again mixed feelings among Belgian-Turks: 34% expressed opposition to membership and 30% expressed support, but around a quarter said it did not matter either way (these could be people who now felt relatively more “Belgian”, or at least more settled in Belgium than in Turkey. As mentioned above, rising Euroscepticism among Belgian-Turks could be a reflection of scepticism about Turkey joining the EU within European Union countries. The fact that Belgium is one of the seven countries least in favour of further enlargement may partly explain the Eurosceptic reaction of Belgian-Turks.<sup>38</sup> Belgian-Turks’ criticism concerning the image of the EU may also be a reflection of some negative representations of Turkey in the European public space.

**Table 27. What does Turkey’s EU membership mean to you?**

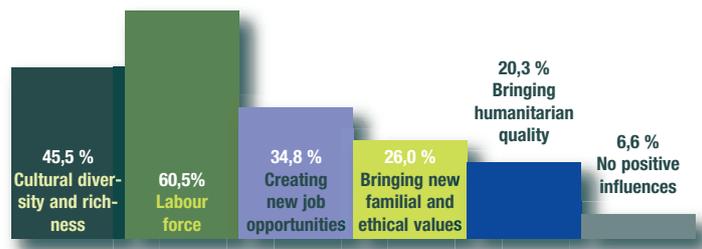
	Flanders	Wallonia	Brussels	Total Belgium
<b>More democracy?</b>				
Yes.....	50%	47%	40%	46%
No .....	27%	16%	27%	25%
No reply .....	24%	38%	33%	29%
<b>More job opportunities?</b>				
Yes.....	64%	53%	46%	57%
No .....	21%	24%	27%	23%
No reply .....	16%	23%	27%	20%
<b>More human rights?</b>				
Yes.....	58%	44%	52%	53%
No .....	27%	23%	18%	24%
No reply .....	16%	33%	31%	23%
<b>Separation of the country?</b>				
Yes.....	30%	21%	18%	24%
No .....	32%	32%	35%	33%
No reply .....	39%	48%	47%	43%
<b>End of independence?</b>				
Yes.....	31%	33%	21%	29%
No .....	40%	24%	39%	36%
No reply .....	29%	43%	41%	36%
<b>Moral breakdown?</b>				
Yes.....	41%	25%	29%	34%
No .....	37%	32%	37%	36%
No reply .....	23%	43%	35%	31%
<b>Exploitation of the country?</b>				
Yes.....	41%	27%	31%	35%
No .....	31%	30%	29%	30%
No reply .....	29%	43%	42%	36%
<b>Migration of more people from Turkey to Europe?</b>				
Yes.....	59%	53%	61%	58%
No .....	18%	11%	9%	14%
No reply .....	24%	35%	30%	28%

Like the research conducted in France and Germany in 2004, interviewees in Belgium were asked to agree or disagree with a number of criteria in relation to EU membership. All three studies showed that the opinions given strongly reflected the general climate of the time with regard to Turkey’s EU accession. In France and Germany, answers on the whole indicated rather positive perceptions of EU membership for Turkey, but the 2006 Belgian study was carried out against a background of much wider discussion and some publicly stated opposition to Turkish membership, as well as political unrest in Turkey. Both German-Turks and French-Turks gave similar answers to the following questions: Turkey’s entrance into the EU does not really result in division in the

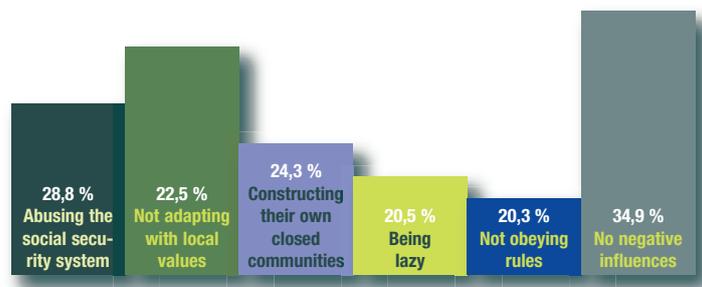
<sup>38</sup> See, Eurobarometer 67 (2007). “Public Opinion on the European Union”, National Report, Executive Summary, Belgium. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb67/eb67\\_be\\_exec.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb67/eb67_be_exec.pdf)

country (53% German-Turks, 58% French-Turks); It won't result in the end of independence (52% German-Turks; 58% French-Turks); Membership will bring more democracy to Turkey (63% German-Turks; 67% French-Turks); Membership will improve the implementation of human rights (70% German-Turks; 79% French-Turks); and Membership will result in migration from Turkey into the EU countries (71% German-Turks; 69% French-Turks). On the other hand, there was a big discrepancy between German-Turks and French-Turks in answering the following questions: Membership will cause moral breakdown in Turkey (52% German-Turks; 36% French-Turks); Membership will bring about the exploitation of Turkey (52% German-Turks; 34% French-Turks); and Membership will increase job opportunities (61% German-Turks; and 83% French-Turks).

**Figure 49. What kind of positive influences do the Turks have on the host society? (Multi-response)**



**Figure 50. What kind of negative influences do the Turks have on the host society? (Multi-response)**



The figures above show interviewees' perceptions about the positive and negative impact of Euro-Turks on their 'hostland'. Overall, it can be seen that Belgian-Turks mention more positive factors than negative influences. While the positive factor most often-mentioned by Belgian-Turks is the impact they make in terms of a labour force (60%) and over a third mention the creation of new job opportunities, 45% mention the contribution made by Belgian-Turks to society in terms of cultural diversity and richness. 34% of interviewees thought that Turks had no negative influences on their host country (vs.32% of French-Turks and 25% of German-Turks), but just over a quarter mentioned abuse of the social security system and about 20% mentioned Turks not adapting to local values, living in closed communities and laziness.

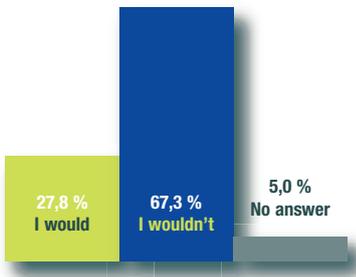
Walloon-Turks are more convinced about the negative influence of the Turks within the European Union and particularly mentioned the conservative and communitarian characters of the Turks. Flemish-Turks on the other hand mention the issues of 'abusing the social security system', 'being lazy', and 'not obeying rules' when referring to the negative influences of the Turks. Flemish-Turks appear more likely to evaluate the contribution of Turks in line with capitalist/Protestant ethics. It would appear that Euro-Turks can be credited with having developed a democratic political culture that highlights criteria such as human rights, democratization,

rule of law, rights, equality and trust. This is broadly in line with the European democratic political culture. However, Turkish society came to the fore positively when interviewees were asked questions about mutual tolerance and moral values.

### EU membership and migration prospects for Turks

One of the most commonly expressed concerns regarding Turkey’s membership of the Union is the possibility of massive immigration from Turkey to the EU countries. However, our qualitative and quantitative research reveals a rather different picture. In the first place, most of those we interviewed in the depth interviews, focus groups and structured interviews claimed that they would *not* recommend Turks in Turkey to migrate to EU countries if Turkey were to enter the Union (67% Belgian-Turks, 80% German-Turks and 61% French-Turks) because of the difficulties they would face in the EU, including rising unemployment, homesickness, low wages, disciplined working conditions, lack of tolerance and a depreciation in moral values. However, there was a strong belief among interviewees, as among many people across the EU, that there would be huge migration from Turkey to the EU member states.

**Figure 51. Would you recommend those from Turkey to immigrate to Belgium?**



**Table 28. Would you consider returning to Turkey if Turkey joins the EU? By birthplace**

Considering return	Birthplace Turkey	Birthplace Belgium	Total Belgium
I would .....	26 %	30 %	28 %
I wouldn't.....	70 %	64 %	67 %
It depends.....	4 %	6 %	5 %
Total .....	100 %	100 %	100 %

The experience of Euro-Turks should therefore be communicated to Turks in Turkey. Nevertheless, previous experience has shown that when Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece joined the Union, their membership did not result in massive migration to other EU states. Indeed, there was even reverse migration. It seems that the same might happen if Turkey becomes a member, since 28% of Belgian-Turks said that they would consider going back to the homeland in such a case. However, the overwhelming majority (two-thirds) would not consider returning to Turkey and those born in Belgium are even less likely to think about going to Turkey to live.

## Multiple identities and alternative modernities

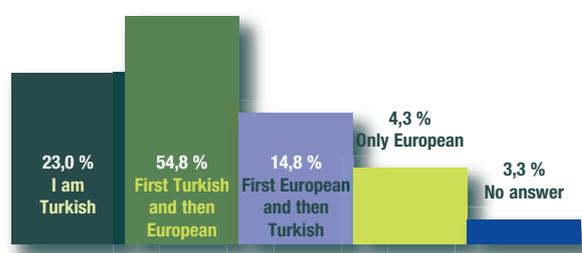
### Europeanness: A constant process of being and becoming

Both the qualitative and quantitative data gathered in our research point to the fact that a clear understanding of Europeanness does not exist among Euro-Turks in general. However, the same observation may be made with regard to receiving societies. There is no indication that a deep-rooted sense of Europeanness currently exists among most people in Europe, although the political elite of the European Union appears to be currently constructing such an identity through education, European citizenship and a common history and future. The European Union has displayed stronger political unity since the Tindemans Report, which was submitted to the European Council at the end of December 1975 (Leo Tindemans was Belgian Prime Minister at that time) and subsequently prompted member states to form a unified political entity with its own flag, anthem, myths, memories, peoples, regions, rights and duties for its citizens.<sup>39</sup>

The definition of “Europeanness” differs according to social class differences among Euro-Turks. When members of the working class are asked about the term, their definitions usually accord with the dominant discourse in Turkey and include notions such as democracy, equality, human rights and modernization. ‘Europeanness’ addresses a teleological project that emphasizes constant progress with a target to be reached. Some middle class Euro-Turks, on the other hand, state that they are not concerned with being defined as ‘European’: they already have an identity and have no need to reach any target. (These people tend to be third and/or fourth generation young people, mostly born in the country of settlement, whilst first and second generation middle class people reproduce the dominant discourse in Turkey.) Third and/or fourth generation youngsters, however, have developed a cosmopolitan identity which underlines differences, diversity and citizenship.

A separate note is needed here to briefly summarize various discourses developed retrospectively by Euro-Turks. First-generation migrants during the 1960s and 1970s developed a discourse centred upon economic issues; in the 1980s, the second generation generated an ideological and political discourse based on issues related to the homeland; whilst the third generation has, since the 1990s, developed a culture-specific discourse stressing intercultural dialogue, symbolic capital, cultural capital, difference, diversity, tolerance and multiculturalism.

**Figure 52. Which identifications suit you most?**



<sup>39</sup> For a detailed account of the Tindemans Report see, Tindemans (1975); see also Maas (2004).

The figure above shows that Belgian-Turks themselves confirm their hyphenated identities with 74% defining themselves as such (vs. German-Turks (60%) and French-Turks (70%). 55% of Belgian-Turks identify themselves as Turkish/European and 15% as European-Turkish. Fewer people in Belgium define themselves as “Turkish”, especially compared with Germany (23% vs. 37% German-Turks and 24% French-Turks).

**Table 29. Which identification suits you most? (By birthplace)**

Describing themselves as	Birthplace Turkey	Birthplace Belgium	Total Belgium
Only Turkish .....	27 %	17 %	23 %
First Turkish and then European .....	58 %	50 %	55 %
First European and then Turkish .....	10 %	22 %	15 %
Only European .....	3 %	6 %	4 %
No reply .....	2 %	5 %	3 %
Total .....	100 %	100 %	100 %

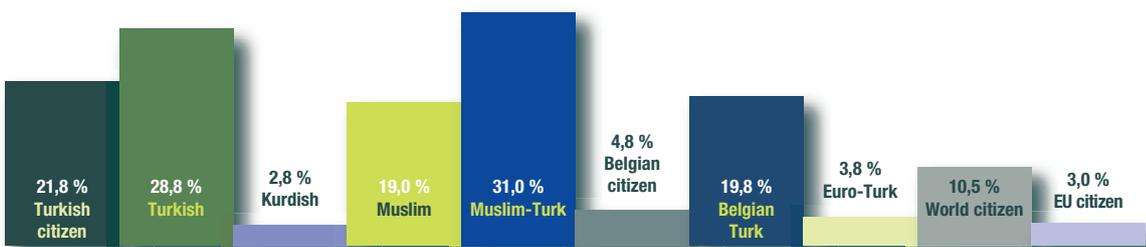
Table 29 shows that an overwhelming majority (74%) of all Belgian-Turks primarily identify themselves with hyphenated European identities, as in European-Turkish or Turkish-European, or European (this compares with 75% in Germany and 85% in France). Among those born in Belgium, this figure rises to 78%, due mainly to the increase in those referring to themselves as “first European and then Turkish” (22% vs. 15% of all Belgian Turks). Those aged between 15 and 19 overwhelmingly identify themselves as ‘Turkish and then European’ (48%) or vice-versa (26%).

**Table 30. Which identification suits you most? (By socio-economic status)**

Describing themselves as	Highest class	Upper Middle	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower class	Total Belgium
Only Turkish .....	15%	21%	22%	29%	33%	23%
First Turkish and then European .....	56%	54%	62%	55%	39%	55%
First European and then Turkish .....	21%	17%	9%	11%	18%	15%
Only European .....	5%	4%	4%	2%	6%	4%
No reply .....	3%	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%
None of the above .....	15%	21%	22%	29%	33%	23%
Total .....	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

As can be seen in the table above, Belgian-Turks of higher social status see themselves above all as having hyphenated identities underlining the European element, whilst lower social groups underline their Turkishness.

**Figure 53. Which one of those below defines you most? (Multi-response)**



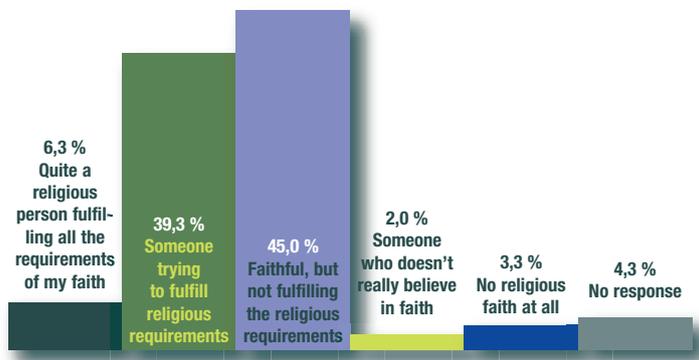
The sum of those defining themselves as Belgian citizen, Belgian-Turk, world citizen and EU citizen is actually much higher (42%) than that of German-Turks (27%) but rather similar to that of French-Turks (47%).

**Table 31. How do you define yourself with regard to the identifications below? (Multi-response)**

	Flanders	Wallonia	Brussels	Belgium	German	French
<b>Describing themselves as</b>				Total	Turks	Turks
Religious.....	30 %	24 %	20 %	26 %	33 %	22 %
Kemalist.....	25 %	15 %	27 %	23 %	9 %	22 %
Islamist.....	27 %	19 %	9 %	20 %	14 %	9 %
Nationalist.....	18 %	18 %	12 %	16 %	18 %	26 %
Democrat.....	10 %	13 %	20 %	13 %	17 %	16 %
Patriot.....	14 %	17 %	10 %	13 %	22 %	19 %
Secularist.....	4 %	7 %	22 %	10 %	4 %	20 %
Social democrat.....	12 %	9 %	7 %	10 %	8 %	6 %

It is striking to see in Belgium that the ideational divide is between Brussels and Flanders with Wallonia falling somewhere in between. Religiosity and Kemalism are the two major identifications among Belgian-Turks. In Flanders there is more identification with religiosity, Islamism and Kemalism; in Wallonia religiosity, Islamism and nationalism; and in Brussels Kemalism, secularism and democracy.

**Figure 54. How do you define yourself with the following statements regarding your faith?**



6% of Belgian-Turks define themselves as quite religious (8% German-Turks and 10% of French-Turks). This is similar to Turks in Turkey. 84% of Belgian-Turks claim to be relatively faithful (89% German-Turks and 80% French-Turks). 5% of Belgian-Turks are atheist or agnostic (2% German-Turks and 10% French-Turks).

**Table 32. How do you define yourself in function of the following statements regarding your faith? (By birthplace)**

	Birthplace Turkey	Birthplace Belgium	Total Belgium
<b>Saying they are</b>			
Quite a religious person, fulfilling all the requirements of my faith	10 %	2 %	7 %
Someone trying to fulfil religious requirements	42 %	36 %	39 %
Faithful, but not fulfilling the religious requirements	42 %	50 %	45 %
Someone who doesn't really believe in faith	1 %	3 %	2 %
Someone who does not have faith .....	4 %	3 %	3 %
Total .....	100 %	100 %	100 %

The cross-analysis above between faith and place of birth indicates that religiosity is becoming less and less important among the generations born and raised in Belgium.

**Table 33. How do you define yourself in function of the following statements regarding your faith? (By socio-economic status)**

Saying they are	Highest class	Upper Middle	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower class	Total Belgium
Quite a religious person fulfilling all the requirements of my faith .....	7%	1%	2%	11%	14%	7%
Someone trying to fulfil religious requirements	35%	34%	47%	40%	41%	39%
Faithful, but not fulfilling the religious requirements	45%	55%	42%	42%	41%	45%
Someone who doesn't really believe in faith	5%	3%	1%	0%	0%	2%
Someone who does not have faith .....	7%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%
No reply .....	2%	4%	5%	6%	2%	4%

This table shows that religiosity among Belgian-Turks is relatively higher among those of lower social status. Nevertheless, 46% of all Belgian-Turks claim to fulfil some religious requirements and even among the highest social classes some religiosity is visible (42%).

**Symbolic religiosity: the individualization of Islam among younger generations**

Religion and ethnicity offer attractive “solutions” for people entangled in intertwined problems. It is not surprising that masses, who have a gloomy outlook of the future, who cannot benefit from society and who are cast aside by global capitalism, should resort to religion, ethnicity, language, and tradition, all of which they believe cannot be taken away from them, and that they should define themselves in those terms. In fact, it is consistent in itself. However, a detailed analysis must be made of acts of violence committed by young Muslim extremist migrants. If a rigorous analysis is not made, it will serve to affirm, and thus re-produce, the current “clash of civilisations” thesis. It is important to underline that the Islamic identity used by young people, who choose to demonstrate their resistance to the system in ways such as music, graffiti, dance, looting - or even arson in France and other Western countries - is not necessarily essentialist or radical. The Islamic reference used in such acts of protest mostly expresses a need to be part of a legitimate counter-hegemonic global discourse such as that of Islam, and to derive a symbolic power from this<sup>40</sup>. It seems that religion is now replacing the political left in the absence of a global leftist movement. Michel de Certeau (1984: 183) reminds us of the discursive similarities between religion and left: religion offering a *different world*, and the left offering a *different future*.

Islam is perceived by Westerners as a threat to the European lifestyle. Islamic fundamentalism is depicted as the source of xenophobic, racist and violent behaviour in the West. However the rise in religious values may be interpreted as the result of structural problems such as poverty, unemployment, racism, xenophobia, isolation, constraints on political representation and the threat of assimilation. In order to cope with these challenges, discourses on culture, identity, religion, ethnicity, traditions and the past have become the most significant existence strategy for minorities in general and immigrants in particular. In this context, the opinions of Herbert Gans on symbolic ethnicity and religiosity are very revealing. According to Gans, symbolic ethnicity and religiosity are accessible resources for those who want to keep away from ethnic or religious essentialism, yet wish to experience ethnic or religious sensations from time to time (Gans, 1979: 1-2). The adoption of ethnicity and religion by Belgian-Turks as a source of identity is a non-essentialist attitude. This is an identification process that Gans defines as “symbolic ethnicity”, or what we have called “symbolic religiosity”. This process shows that the essentially religious becomes ethnic, and that “ethnicity” and “religiosity” are the two most important components of identity politics as developed by minorities under the threat of structural isolation imposed by global conditions.

<sup>40</sup> For a further discussion of this issue, see Zubaida (2003).

The following quotation from Gans clearly summarises this process:

“As ethnic cultures and groups become less functional and identity becomes the primary means of being ethnic [and religious], ethnicity [and religiosity] gains a more symbolic than instrumental function in people’s lives, and loses its importance in the order of family life, and becomes a leisure activity. Symbolic behaviour can be manifested in different ways, but frequently includes the use of symbols. Ethnic [and religious] symbols are mostly individual cultural practices that have been acquired from older ethnic cultures; they are abstracted from that culture and stripped of their original meanings” (Ibid., 6).

Islamic rituals among Belgian-Turkish youngsters have become more symbolic and secularized than ever. A Durkheimian perspective draws attention to the sense of collective consciousness created by religious practices. Islam, in this regard, provides Turkish-origin migrant communities with an opportunity to reproduce their collective ethnocultural and religious boundaries through religious festivities (*bayrams*), fasting, *halal* food, wedding and circumcision ceremonies (Cesari, 2003). Daily religious practices like prayers lose their efficacy, and what is religious becomes more symbolic in reproducing the boundaries between minority and majority.

There has lately been a tendency among younger generations of Muslim-origin Belgian-Turks to regard religion as an intellectual and spiritual quest in a way that distances them from the inherited cultural practices of Muslim communities. Referring particularly to young Belgian-Moroccans, Nadia Fadil (2005) reveals how youngsters of Moroccan origin undergo a process of emancipation and how they rescue their individual faith from the authority of their parental culture. The younger generations differentiate between Islam and culture. Mandaville (2001: 141) observes a similar tendency, especially among young Muslim women in diaspora:

“More and more women seem to be taking Islam into their own hands. They are not hesitating to question, criticize and even reject the Islam of their parents. Often this takes the form of drawing distinctions between *culture*, understood as the oppressive tendencies which derive from the parents’ ethno-social background, and *religion*, a true Islam untainted by either culture or gender discrimination.”

Migrant women are likely to see in Islam a progressive force emancipating them from their traditional roots, but also preventing them from surrendering to Western cultural forms. Jorgen Nielsen (1987: 392) claims that Muslim women in diaspora no longer refer to dress codes, arranged marriages and gender roles as symbols of Islam. For them, the emphasis seems to be shifting towards the ethical and spiritual values of Islam. In their qualitative study on Belgian-Muslims, Sami Zemni *et al.* (2006) revealed that young Belgian-Muslims heavily criticize the ways in which their parents used *religion as a shield* for cultural practices oppressing women. Their critique is directed against those among first-generation Muslims who take<sup>41</sup> forced/arranged marriage and unequal conditions for men and women to be religious prescriptions. The youngsters see illiteracy as the main source of indifference and the mingling of religion and cultural traditions. Zemni *et al.* (2006: 43) also draw our attention to the fact that women, rather than men, problematize the relationship between *culture* and *religion*.

### Digitalized religion in a virtual diaspora

“We used to learn the content of Islam from our parents. They taught us how to pray, how to fast, and how to read the Quran. We learned those things in practice without knowing the very meaning of the verses and the rituals. Our parents did not know them either. Only the Imams knew what the verses meant, because they could understand Arabic, the language of the holy book. But now we no

<sup>41</sup> Zemni, Sami *et al.* (2006). Etude des facteurs limitant la liberté de choix d’un partenaire dans les groupes de population d’origine étrangère en Belgique, University of Ghent, Centre pour l’Islam en Europe.

longer need our parents to learn the religion. We have the Internet, religious associations, and schools to inquire about everything. I don't want anybody, or any institution like the mosque, to impose on me anything about my faith. I am always surfing the Internet, and I send my writings to the relevant forums."<sup>42</sup> These are the words of a young veiled Euro-Turkish woman, who treats Islam as a way of emancipation from the repression of both parental culture and traditional institutions. In doing so, youngsters make use of modern telecommunications provided by the contemporary processes of globalisation. The media and information technologies have certainly played an important role in the emergence of a new breed of Islamist intellectual whose activities represent a form of hybridised, counter-hegemonic 'globalisation from below'. Brecher et al. (1993) define 'globalisation from below' as a constitutive entanglement, which has become a characteristic of modern diasporic networks. The expansion of economic, cultural and political networks between Euro-Turks and Turkey is one such example of this trend. In the context of the diasporic condition, 'globalisation from below' refers to the enhancement of access of transnational migrants and their descendants to those social, cultural, political and economic mechanisms that enable them to transcend conditions imposed upon them by transnational capitalism, which organises them into a system of international and hierarchical division of labour.

**Table 34. Has your religious faith become stronger or weaker than before? (Intensive Internet users by age, N=209 in total)**

Saying religion has	Age 15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total Internet users
Become stronger.....	39 %	33 %	27 %	47 %	30 %	33 %
Become weaker.....	9 %	23 %	14 %	20 %	20 %	18 %
No difference.....	53 %	42 %	57 %	33 %	50 %	48 %
No answer.....	0 %	2 %	2 %	0 %	0 %	1 %
Total.....	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

The global circuitry of modern telecommunications also contributes to the formation of a *digitalized umma* within the Muslim diaspora, based on the idea of a more homogeneous *community of sentiments* (Appadurai, 1997) and shaped by a constant flow of identical signs and messages travelling across cyberspace. A *digitalized umma* (Muslim community) shaped by electronic capitalism tends to get engaged in various forms of *ijtihad* (interpretation), because each individual dwells in a different social, political or cultural environment within the diaspora. Whilst the signs and messages disseminated across the diaspora are rather more homogeneous, their impact on individual lives differs greatly. The signs and messages form a more heterogeneous and individualized form of *umma*. This kind of *ijtihad* (an Arabic word, interpretation of the Quran), built up by the media, has the potential of turning recipients into a virtual *alim* (an Arabic word for intellectual) who can challenge the authority of traditional religious scholars (Mandaville, 2001: 160). As Arjun Appadurai (1996: 195) rightly says, "new forms of electronically mediated communication are beginning to create virtual neighbourhoods, no longer bounded by territory, passports, taxes, elections, and other conventional political diacritics." These new *communities of sentiments* are constructed in cyberspace, a space that is often occupied by modern diasporic subjects. Access to the Internet seems to reinforce religious beliefs for the diaspora.

"It is time to recognize that the true tutors of our children are not school teachers or university professors but filmmakers, advertising executives and pop culture purveyors. Disney does more than Duke, Spielberg outweighs Stanford, MTV trumps MIT" says Benjamin R. Barber (1998: 26). Diana Crane, wrote more than thirty years ago (1972) about the ways in which knowledge is produced through *invisible colleges*. Her concern was principally with (scientific) knowledge production, clearly distinguished, as in the 'official' discourse, from teaching. Young people not only learn through official schools curricula, but also through unofficial cur-

<sup>42</sup> Some of these popular forums include <http://www.islamisohbet.net>; <http://www.nurluyuz.com>; <http://www.islamiweb.net>; <http://toplist.ihya.org>; <http://www.islamilist.com>, <http://www.islamisanat.net>.

ricula (e.g. films, TV, Internet, on-line journals, distance learning classes, book-stores, libraries, museums, movies, TV, music compact discs, rap albums, video games, and comic books), or through what Mahiri (2000) calls *pop culture pedagogy* and popular learning settings (e.g. community centres, churches, mosques, and peer groups). Pop culture pedagogy practiced by contemporary youth through invisible colleges seems to have changed the relationship between youth and formal schooling. There is a discrepancy between these 'unschoolers' and traditional pedagogic methods. It is evident that technological changes have transformed the new generations. This kind of transformation is the central tenet of pop culture pedagogy. One of its early material and symbolic expressions was *Transformers* toys that were launched more than two decades ago (Mahiri, 2000: 384). Transformers were mechanical characters that could instantly change into other forms, just like the multiple identity changes of today's youth. Pop culture pedagogy also provides young people with electronically mediated multiple identities: Belgian-Muslim-Turks and Belgian-Muslim-Kurds, for instance, are constructions of the modern telecommunication circuitry.

### **Euro-Islam: the revival of *honour* in an age of structural outsiderism**

Those Euro-Turks alienated by the system and swept into a destiny dominated by the capitalist West, no longer invent local futures. What is different about them is that they remain tied to their traditional pasts, religions and ethnicities. Re-creating or rediscovering the past serves at least a dual purpose for diasporic communities. Firstly, it provides a way of coping with the conditions of the present without being very critical of the status quo. Secondly, it helps to recuperate a sense of self that is not dependent on criteria handed down by others. The past is what diasporic subjects can claim to be their own. Hence, a growing affiliation with Islam, culture, authenticity, ethnicity, nationalism and traditions provides Euro-Turks or Euro-Muslims with the opportunity of establishing solidarity networks, bulwarks against the major clusters of modernity such as capitalism, industrialism, racism, surveillance, egoism, loneliness, insecurity, structural outsiderism and militarism. Accordingly, the Islamic revival emerges as a symptom, the outcome of certain processes of structural outsiderism.

Islam is, by and large, considered and represented as being a threat to the European way of life. It is widely believed that Islamic fundamentalism is the source of current xenophobic, racist and violent attitudes. However, one of the main premises of this paper is that religious resurgence is rather a symptom of illnesses brought about by structural constraints such as unemployment, racism, xenophobia, exclusion and, sometimes, assimilation. If this is so, then in order to tackle such constraints, a discourse on culture, identity, religion, ethnicity, traditions and the past becomes essential for minorities in general and migrant groups in particular. This is actually a form of politics generated by outsider groups. According to Alistair MacIntyre (1971) there are two forms of politics: *politics of those within* and *politics of those excluded*. Those *within* tend to employ legitimate political institutions (parliament, political parties, the media) in pursuing their goals, and those *excluded* use culture, ethnicity, religion and tradition to pursue their aims. It should be noted here that MacIntyre does not place culture in the private space: culture is rather inherently located in the public space. Thus, the quest for identity, authenticity and religiosity should not be reduced to an attempt to essentialize the so-called purity. It is rather a form of politics generated by subordinated subjects. Islam is no longer simply a religion, but also a counter hegemonic global political movement, which prompts Muslims to stand up for justice and against tyranny – whether in Palestine, Kosovo, Kashmir, Iraq, or Lebanon.

In an age of insecurity, poverty, exclusion, discrimination and violence, the wretched of the earth become more engaged in the protection of their *honour*, which, they believe, is the only thing they have left. In understanding the growing

significance of honour, Akbar S. Ahmed (2003) draws our attention to the collapse of what Mohammad Ibn Khaldun (1969) once called *asabiyya*, an Arabic word which refers to group loyalty, social cohesion or solidarity. *Asabiyya* binds groups together through a common language, culture and code of behaviour. Ahmed establishes a direct negative correlation between *asabiyya* and the revival of honour. The collapse of *asabiyya* on a global scale prompts Muslims to revitalize *honour*. He (2003: 81) claims that *asabiyya* is collapsing for the following reasons:

“Massive urbanization, dramatic demographic changes, a population explosion, large-scale migrations to the West, the gap between rich and poor, the widespread corruption and mismanagement of rulers, the rampant materialism coupled with the low premium on education, the crisis of identity and, perhaps most significantly, new and often alien ideas and images, at once seductive and repellent, and instantly communicated from the West, ideas and images which challenge traditional values and customs.”

The collapse of *asabiyya* also implies for Muslims the breakdown of *adl* (justice), and *ihsan* (compassion and balance). Global disorder characterized by the lack of *asabiyya*, *adl*, and *ihsan* seems to trigger the essentialization of honour by Muslims. The rise of honour crimes in the Muslim context illustrates the way honour becomes instrumentalized and essentialized. Recent honour crimes among Euro-Muslims have made it very common for some of the conservative political elite and academics in the West to explain them as an indispensable element of Islam. However one should note that honour crimes are not unique to the Islamic culture: they are also visible in the Judeo-Christian world. Honour crimes have rather been structurally constrained. The traumatic acts of migration, exclusion, and poverty by uneducated subaltern migrant workers without work prepare a viable ground for domestic violence, honour crimes and delinquency.

Here is the way an interviewee perceived ‘honour’ among the Turks and how he distances himself from that state of mind:

“There are cultural differences between the two societies in terms of the way they live. I used to have a Belgian acquaintance. He was around 65 years old. He used to come to work from 15 km outside of Brussels. One day he was complaining. I asked ‘What’s up? ‘Is there a problem?’ and he replied ‘I have a daughter of 19 years old. She brought home a guy two months ago.’ I thought he was angry at her because she had stayed with the guy outside marriage. He said ‘I am 65 years old and working. Now there is one more plate on the table. He will exploit me too.’ Can you imagine? In our culture, we would take it as an offence to our honour, wouldn’t we? Imagine that a 19-year-old girl brought home a guy and wanted to stay together. How many fathers could accept this? The financial aspect is the last concern for a Turk. But the main concern of the Belgian father is money.”

**Table 35. Attitudes to the statement:  
“I can even commit a crime for my honour.” (By region)**

Saying that this	Flanders	Wallonia	Brussels	Total Belgium
Absolutely suits me .....	12 %	13 %	11 %	12 %
Suits me .....	13 %	10 %	13 %	12 %
It doesn’t matter.....	22 %	19 %	19 %	21 %
It doesn’t suit me .....	19 %	26 %	24 %	22 %
Absolutely doesn’t suit .....	32 %	24 %	31 %	30 %
No answer .....	3 %	8 %	2 %	4 %
Total.....	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

The quantitative data indicate that “honour” is an important value for about a quarter of Belgian-Turks, with 24% of those interviewed saying that they could even commit a crime for their honour. Those living in Brussels were most opposed to this idea.

## Enforced religiosity: the institutionalization of Islam

As well as the individualization of Islam among younger generations of Euro-Muslims, an anti-thetical process is taking place contemporaneously: the institutionalization of Islam in Europe. A number of initiatives have been taken so far with a view to institutionalizing Islam in minority, such as the Executive Council of Muslims in Belgium (*Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique*, 1995), "CORIF" in France (Council for Reflection on Islam in France, 2003), national organizations in the Netherlands charged with overseeing the building of mosques, the employment of imams and the availability of *halal* meat (Cesari, 2003), and Chancellor Merkel's attempt to bring Muslims together through the Integration Summit held in July 2006 and the Islam Conference held in September 2006. These attempts to organize European Islam have been relatively unsuccessful up to now because of national, ethnic and doctrinal cleavages dividing Muslim populations. One could consider the ways in which the construction of the European Union might influence the form and the content of Islamic expression. The fortification of European borders with neighbouring countries through the Schengen Treaty (1985) has reinforced the political and cultural borders separating Europe from its southern and eastern neighbours. The rise of the 'clash of civilizations' discourse has also deepened the boundaries between the life worlds of Europeans and non-Europeans. At the same time, social and political issues such as the Gulf War, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran, publication of *The Satanic Verses* in Britain, the murder of provocative Dutch film director Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands (Buruma, 2007), the Cartoon debate in Denmark, and the controversial intervention of Pope Benedict XVI regarding the brutal nature of the Prophet Mohammad, have all brought European Muslims together in protest, provoking hostile reactions from Europeans who, for the first time, have begun to view Europe's immigrant Muslims as a unified whole. All these events have led to questioning the significance of the Muslim collective presence in Europe and the radicalization of European Islamic identity.

In his study comparing Britain, France, and Germany in the period 1973-2001, Koenig (2003) revealed that the public incorporation of Muslim immigrants follows specific patterns shaped by the legally institutionalized logic of traditional religious politics that emerged from historically specific trajectories of state-formation and nation-building. A first crucial factor is the degree of institutionalization of the idea of the 'individual' in each polity, as this affects the very definition of 'religion'. In corporatist polities, where rights are ascribed to corporate bodies, religion is regarded as a formal membership organization, which can directly be incorporated into the state's rationalising project. In statist and liberal polities, where the individual is the primary bearer of rights, 'religion' is perceived as an individual orientation organised in voluntary associations. Koenig (2003) points out that it is not by accident that conflicts about Muslim claims for recognition in Germany crystallise around legal questions of organisation, as evinced by the notorious debate about the recognition of Islamic organisations as corporations of public law, a problem that in Britain is of rather secondary relevance. In addition to the degree of institutionalization of the idea of the 'individual', there is a second factor, namely the degree of "stateness": In nation states oriented toward statist or corporatist polity models, such as France and Germany, the incorporation of Muslim minorities is co-ordinated by the organizational centre of the state, while in liberal polities, such as Great Britain, it rather takes the form of civil negotiations, mostly at the local level (Koenig, 2003). A third factor is the relationship of symbols of national identity to the meta-narratives of "secularization": as universalistic symbols of national identity are connected to ideologies of secularism, as in the case of French secularism, explicitly religious claims for recognition are conceived as transgressing the symbolic boundary between the 'religious' and the 'secular'. Polities where nation building was sustained by collective religious or confessional mobilization, as in Britain and Germany, are in principle open to religious symbols (Zolberg, 2004).

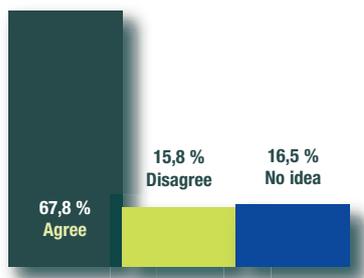
Koenig's work has been confirmed by three separate studies conducted by Patrick R. Ireland (2000), Jan Rath *et al.* (2001) and Soper and Fetzer (2003). Ireland (2000) claims that the reason why migrant groups organize themselves politically along ethno-cultural and religious lines is primarily because, 'host-society' institutions have nurtured ethnicity through their policies and practices. Ireland's theory takes migrant individuals as active subjects, who form their political participation strategies in response to the regulations of host-society institutions. Ireland also tends to explain the Islamic revival as an outcome of the ways in which host society institutions treat immigrant communities of Muslim origin: "just as they have been getting the Islam they deserve, so too, are they reaping what they sow in terms of their immigrants' political mobilization" (Ireland, 2000: 269). Rath *et al.* (2001) conclude in their study that the institutionalization of Islam is "to a far greater degree determined by the societies in which Muslims settle than by the Muslims themselves." Similarly, Christopher Soper and Joel Fetzer have revealed that the pattern of church-state relations is the major factor explaining differences in the accommodation of Muslim religious practices in France, Germany, and Britain (Soper and Fetzer, 2003).

The institutionalization of Islam seems to be in contradiction with the process of individualization of Islam. Institutions tend to have their own life-worlds. When Islam, or any other religion, is institutionalized, it is inclined to create its own industry, which is composed of a group of 'religious brokers' who act as a buffer between their own religious communities and the state. Institutions need their own clientele to survive; the survival of, say, Islamic institutions, depends on the existence of faithful subjects who are ready to remain within the boundaries of the religious community without needing to incorporate themselves in mainstream society. This process is what Jan Rath calls (1993) the "reminoritization of minorities", which results in migrants not being perceived as full members of the receiving society, making them likely to be tolerated but not accepted in key positions (Odmalm, 2005: 47).

One should also not underestimate the fact that, unlike Roman Catholicism or the Orthodox Church, we cannot move systematically through institutional levels of Islam, assessing the degree to which the structures are truly transnational in nature. Indeed as Carl L. Brown (2000: 31) put it very well, "Islam knows no 'church' in the sense of a corporate body whose leadership is clearly defined and hierarchical... No distinctive corporate body equivalent to the church in Christianity exists," at least not in Sunni Islam. The Shia tradition is more corporate, and more similar to the clergy-led communities that make up Catholicism, and Christian Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, throughout all of Islam, the ulema, the learned men who lead local communities, are not formal authority figures or members of an officially sanctioned body. Contrary to the ideal of Islamic unity, Islam is territorially very plural and is a self-governing religious community (Byrnes, 2007: 6). In other words, attempts to institutionalize Islam in the European context are likely to fail.

Belgian-Turks seem to be squeezed between the two hegemonic strategies of the Belgian and the Turkish states. On the one hand, they are encouraged by the Belgian state to mobilize along religious lines and on the other hand they are persuaded by the Turkish state to organize along ethno-cultural lines. This is more discernible in Wallonia and Brussels, which host less prosperous migrants of Turkish origin.

**Figure 55. Do you think religious and world affairs should be separated from each other?**



The majority of Belgian-Turks (68%) believe that religious and world affairs should be separated from each other (vs. 43% of German-Turks and 72% of French-Turks).

When a similar question was asked in a survey in Turkey, Turks too overwhelmingly favoured a separation of world affairs and religion:

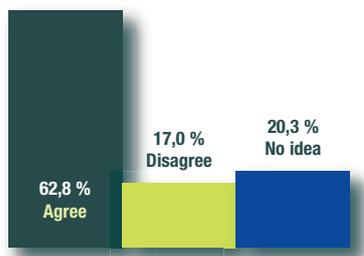
**Table 36. Religious and world affairs should be separated from each other.**

% of Turks in Turkey saying of religious and world affairs	Number	%
Yes, they should be separated .....	2302	73 %
No, they cannot be separated.....	645	21 %
No response .....	191	6 %
Total .....	3138	100 %

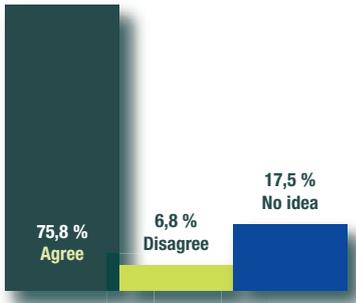
(Source: SAM Public opinion survey in Turkey, February 2006)

Belgian-Turks argue overwhelmingly in favour of a multiculturalist setting with a 63% favourable statement regarding the coexistence of ethno-cultural and religious differences (65% among German-Turks; 79% for French-Turks). However, as it is known, multicultural policies have recently been severely criticised in the west. The ideology of multiculturalism tends to compartmentalise cultures. It also assumes that cultures are internally consistent, unified and structured wholes attached to ethnic groups. Essentializing the idea of culture as the property of an ethnic group, multiculturalism risks reifying cultures as separate entities by over-emphasising their boundaries and mutual distinctness; it also risks overemphasising the internal homogeneity of cultures in terms that potentially legitimise repressive demands for communal conformity. This is why a discourse of interculturalism seems to be replacing that of multiculturalism. 76% of Belgian-Turks are in favour of intercultural dialogue (86% German-Turks and 90% French-Turks). This predominant view is parallel to what the progressive political elite is trying to construct in the west. Thus, it is clear that Euro-Turks neither want to pose a challenge to European societies, nor want to see European societies as challenges.

**Figure 56. Nobody should adapt to the other; everybody should have his/her way.**



**Figure 57. Both groups should interact with each other to find similarities.**

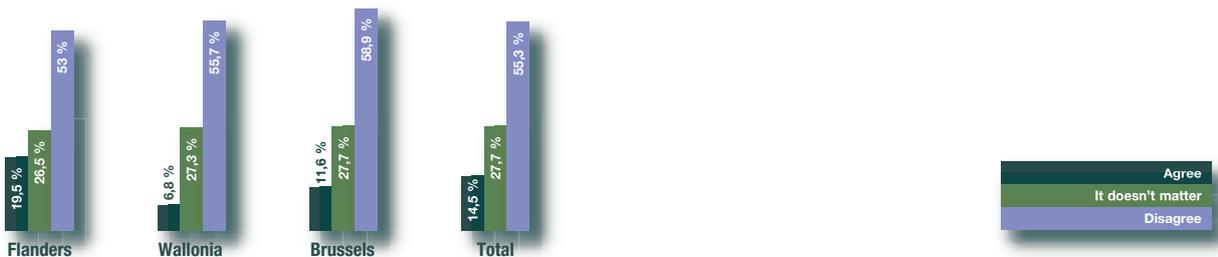


The two figures above (56 and 57) indicate that Belgian-Turks are ready to invest in their similarities with the majority societies more than in their differences. Interculturalist attempts of Belgian-Turks is well illustrated by the members of the *Turkse Unie*, an umbrella association funded by the Flemish government in order to contribute to the integration of Turks in the region.<sup>43</sup> What is striking in the discourse of the opinion leaders of the association is the emphasis laid upon the notion of “*intercreation*” instead of *integration*.

**The ‘imported’, or ‘national’, brides and bride-grooms (ithal/Milli gelin-damat)**

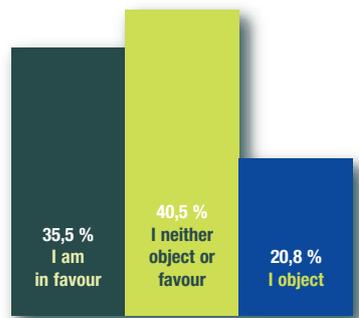
A significant issue among Belgian-Turks is the increasing number of spouses brought to Belgium from Turkey. Such partners are known as “imported brides and bridegrooms” or “national brides and bridegrooms”. Arranged marriages are usually preferred by conservative families, which believe that brides from Turkey are more culturally pure and thus capable of raising better-educated children. Bridegrooms on the other hand are usually chosen from candidates who fit the occupational prospects required by the extended family in question. For these families, marriage seems to be more a question of purely economic prospects and/or that of an appropriate childbearing institution. The figures below show that 55% of Belgian-Turks are against the idea of arranged marriages (44% German-Turks, 64% French-Turks). On the other hand, around 35% of Belgian-Turks in our sample did not mind the idea of ‘importing brides, or bride-grooms’ from Turkey whilst a further 21% disagreed with this idea (respectively 40% of German-Turks agreed and 20% disagreed, whilst 48% of French-Turks agreed and 18% disagreed).

**Figure 58. Could you tell us if you agree or disagree with arranged marriages?**

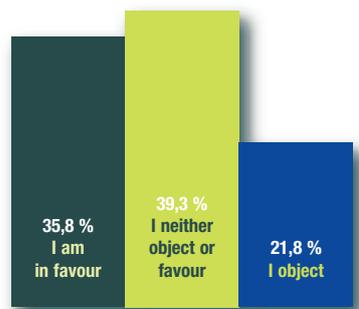


<sup>43</sup> There are around 60 sub-organizations underneath *Turkse Unie*.

**Figure 59. Are you in favour of or against Turkish men bringing their wives from Turkey?**



**Figure 60. Are you in favour of or against Turkish women bringing their husbands from Turkey?**



The family remains one of the most important spaces of protection for Belgian-Turks, as it is for German-Turks and French-Turks, but it also produces constant tension and crises. The family provides diasporic individuals with a sense of being protected because it is where the socialization of the diasporic culture starts. A married couple of Belgian-Turks, who displayed a multicultural character, explained how Turkish culture provides an ideal intimate family atmosphere: “The best thing about the Turks is that they are attached to their families. I often see my parents, for instance.”

The children of Euro-Turks have a rather different process of socialization. They live simultaneously on both banks of the river. On the one hand they have to go through the diasporic form of socialization at home with their families, but on the other hand they interact with the wider society outside their family. Family expectations of their children concentrate on their wish to protect the boundaries of their culture. They encourage their children to marry brides or grooms from Turkey in order to sustain the authentic culture. A member of the *Diyanet* (the Directorate of Religious Affairs) commented:

“One of the main problems here is marriage. There are still families that bring brides from Turkey. This causes great unhappiness. Both brides and grooms are unhappy. Parents choose to marry their children to relatives who live back home. Brides and grooms who are brought from Turkey are treated like slaves. When the boys have their own girlfriends, the parents tend to prevent their sons from leaving home with a girl they do not approve of by bringing a bride from Turkey. They believe that the Turkish bride will keep their son on the straight and narrow. Turkish brides are considered to be more traditional than the Belgian-Turkish girls, who are believed to be less traditional. On the other hand, the parents tend to choose rather more educated bridegrooms for their daughters, because it is believed that Turkish boys are more modern than the Belgian-Turkish ones.”

Zemni et al. (2006) observe a resistance among Belgian-Turks to arranged/forced marriages, revealing that young generations of Belgian-Muslim females raised in Belgium are more emancipated than they were 10 years ago. Knowing what the holy book Quaran says regarding the illegitimacy of forced marriages in Islam, young females now seem to have the courage to oppose their parents who may force them marry the men they appreciate (ibid: 12). Zemni *et al.* (2006: 93-100) also reveal that there are some major motives behind the arranged marriages initiated by parents: they are concerned about the morality and good behaviour of their children who are believed to have come to the age of marriage; they are concerned about the risk of their daughter losing her virginity; parents believe that they make the best choice for their children; they are convinced that this is the ongoing tradition; they are concerned that their daughter shall not be able to marry if she exceeds the age of 25 or so; and finally they may be motivated to help someone in Turkey with a lower social economic background, who is willing to go abroad through marriage. What is also striking is that parents present arranged marriages as a religious order, a manoeuvre that leaves no room for the youngsters to act. However, recently youngsters have the potential power to challenge their parents trying to convince them that this has nothing to do with Islam, but with the traditions.

It is estimated that each year some 1,300 brides and bridegrooms come from Turkey to Belgium. Compared to other immigrant communities in the West, Turks are known to be those most inclined to arrange marriages from their homeland. 75% of Turkish families marry their sons to so-called 'imported brides', compared to some 70% of parents who marry their daughters to 'imported bridegrooms' (Lesthaeghe, 2000: 20). There may be several reasons for this (Akçapar, 2007):

- Increasing restrictions on family unification in the West since the 1970s;
- Continued arranged marriages and endogamy within Turkish society;
- Continued solidarity networks between transnational subjects and their kin in the homeland;
- The high number of young men expecting a better life abroad as well as those parents who are willing to benefit from marrying their daughters to a young man residing abroad;
- Concern about bringing up new generations with a pure culture, something that imported brides are expected to bring with them from Turkey.

Marrying someone from Turkey certainly points to the willingness of migrant families to stay in touch with Turkey, as well as to protect cultural values such as honour. As explained above, honour is not only an individual value, but also something social and communal. Cultural values such as honour become a source of distinction and difference in a remote land where the diasporic individual encounters the other. Honour and resistance to intermarriage may also mean a counter-attack to assimilation, especially in Wallonia. Marrying someone from Turkey not only functions as a tool for keeping a culture intact, but also as a tool for sustaining immigration (Bozarslan, 1996). On the other hand, imported brides and grooms may also provide migrants with the opportunity to generate strong families in which one of the spouses is likely to be dependent on the other due to lack of competence in the language and culture of the majority society. Claire Autant and Véronique Manry (1998: 73) claim that French-Turkish women are reluctant when their parents decide to marry them to a man from Turkey. Marrying a man from Turkey may in fact provide a Belgian-Turk with some advantages: for instance the man becomes dependent on the bride because of his lack of competence in French or Dutch and the loosening of parental authority on both sides. Gaby Strasburger (2004) has also claimed that the issue of parental suppression is relevant to a certain degree among Euro-Turks: apart from some exceptional cases, young people usually decide of their own free will to marry someone from their country of origin. However, the issue remains unresolved. A woman, aged

40, in Beringen, who is a turcologist and a social worker, describes the situation of imported brides and bridegrooms as *traumatic*:

“Those brides and bridegrooms used to be called ‘tourist’ before. It is a very difficult task to live here within the Turkish community without knowing the Flemish language and having any contact with the outside world. It is a trauma actually. I am giving social guidance to such people, who could make it to attend our courses. However, most of the women are exposed to pressure from their in-laws not to socialize outside their extended families. Social assistance is not enough for them: they also need professional psychological help.

Akçapar (2007: 413) refers to the problems of brides who become imprisoned in their own extended families and we heard about such restraints through some testimonies of the brides themselves:

‘How could I know who the Belgians are? I hardly see them here in the Turkish neighbourhood... I am not sure if I live in Europe. I cannot get out. The Turks here are much more conservative than they were in their villages in Turkey. If you go out, people immediately gossip about you. I have been here for almost nine years, but I have never been to a movie, theatre, or museum.’

The interviewees were also quite sensitive about the ways in which the wider Belgian society reduces the issue to traditional Turkish culture and Islam without attempting to understand the real problem. One of the founders of the *Turkse Unie*, an umbrella association for some 60 Turkish associations in the Flanders region, stated:

“Belgians tend to reduce the problem into Turkish culture and Islam. This is why the problem is likely to be stigmatised and politicized. The issue is rather a social problem, which has something to do with the need of the Turks to preserve their culture and the upcoming generations against alienation. And also for instance bridegrooms coming from Turkey work harder than the boys here. So the issue is not that simple, you can not reduce it to culture and religion. It is more complicated than that. Though, lately, people have become aware of the high risk of divorce among imported brides and bridegrooms resulting from their integration difficulties. This is why families are becoming more in favour of having their children married with the Turks born and raised here.”

The same interviewee also addressed the increasing frequency of intermarriage between Belgian-Turks and Belgians: “Intermarriage is no longer considered to be a disgraceful act (*ayıp* in Turkish). This is the learning process of the Turks here.” This view is confirmed by our quantitative research, which reveals that 53% of Belgian-Turks do not object to intermarriage between Belgians and Belgian-Turks.



## Conclusions

The conclusions below reflect the interpretation given to the research findings by the report's two authors. It is hoped that, in addition to answering the basic question of whether today's Belgian-Turks can contribute to building bridges between Turkey and the European Union or whether they create more of a breach, the research findings may also contribute to further discussion and understanding of issues such as migration, integration and identity, within Belgium and the European Union in general.

Some general remarks can be made as a preface to the main conclusions of the study. The first is that the current state of Turkish-EU relations is important in understanding the inclinations of Belgian-Turks with respect to Europeanness and the European Union. Similarly what happens in Turkey also has an influence on the feelings and attitudes of Belgian-Turks with regard to their relationship with Turkey and indeed with each other. Secondly, the research shows clearly that Belgian-Turks' capacity for their social, political, economic, cultural and linguistic integration into Belgian society is primarily related to differences of generation, gender and socio-economic status. Younger generations and those with a higher socio-economic status seem to be more integrated than older generations, whilst women and those with lower social economic status are more likely to feel excluded from the social, political and economic spheres of everyday life. As has been seen, however, all groups generate their own particular strategies for integrating into the majority society, whether through ethnocultural or religious institutions, the labour market or even cyberspace. And last, but not least, as residents of Belgium, Belgian-Turks are also subject to the pressures and positive influences of living in Belgium and, more specifically, the influence of the region in which they live.

**We believe the key learnings from our study are as follows:**

- I. *Euroscepticism and pro-Europeanism among Belgian-Turks:* There is both Euroscepticism and pro-Europeanism among Belgian-Turks. Both are contextual and subject to change. Euroscepticism ebbs and flows in parallel with that of the Belgians in Belgium and the Turks in Turkey. While the winners of global and local trends and events generate more cosmopolitan political and cultural identities, the losers tend to become more reactionary and conservative. Hence, one should remember that identities are always fluid and never fixed.
- II. *The development of critical faculties:* One of the most encouraging aspects to emerge from the research is that, with the experience of another state and other cultures, Belgian-Turks seem to have developed a critical analysis of both themselves and the homeland and speak quite freely about values that are dear to the European ideal such as freedom of choice. A European political culture is beginning to develop among Belgian-Turks and there is pride in the beginnings of political representa-

tion and an interest in Belgian politics. The majority of Belgian-Turks felt that Belgium is superior to Turkey with respect to democratic and social rights, but Turkey was somewhat more favourably regarded in terms of moral, social and religious values.

- III. *Belgian-Turks are committed to Belgium:* The socio-demographic and attitudinal analyses show that most Belgian-Turks regard Belgium as their home. They came for work or to marry, and now they own homes in Belgium and three-quarters have Belgian citizenship. Importantly, Belgian-Turks are in favour of initiatives, such as the Ramadan tents, that provide a bridge between them and others in Belgium. They do return to Turkey, but mostly for holidays, and this not necessarily to where they were born. The children of Belgian-Turks are now in education, and some are benefiting from this to go on to higher education and become socially mobile, although unemployment remains a problem for many Belgian-Turks, especially younger groups and those in Wallonia.
- IV. *Integration means more than cultural and linguistic competence.* Integration is more than granting migrants linguistic or cultural competence: it is also about generating inclusionary political and economic policies for migrants in the public space and labour market. Teaching Turkish as a modern language may provide Belgian-Turks with greater self-esteem and a motivation to integrate and such policies could convince them that their 'otherness' is respected by the majority society.
- V. *The ethnic/religious/cultural revival among Belgian-Turks can be interpreted as a quest for justice and fairness:* The research reveals that Belgian-Turks do not pose a threat to the Belgian social-political system since most are willing to be part of the Belgian system. Despite a growing literature on the inclination to "securitize" Islam, the research has uncovered that an orientation to Islam among Belgian-Turks could also be regarded as a quest for *justice* and *fairness*.
- VI. *Ethnic associations are an important form of societal participation, but education and work are crucial.* Ethno-cultural and religious associations established by Belgian-Turks are important for many Belgian-Turks. However, they assume an added and even a disproportionate importance for those who are unable to participate in other forms of shared community life, of which perhaps the most important are higher education and the labour market. Unemployment is a key feature of life for over a quarter of Belgian-Turks, whilst mastery of the local language remains a problem for one in eight. Nevertheless, Belgian-Turks are improving their language skills, with two-thirds now competent in the principal language of their region and a sizeable minority having a reasonable knowledge of the other national language. Illiteracy is barely present.
- VII. *The stigmatisation and misrepresentation of migrants in the media:* The media represent the institution least trusted by Belgian-Turks in Belgium. The representation of Belgian-Turks in the media has sometimes been characterized by clichés and stereotypes, whilst Belgian-Turks who do not conform to stereotypical 'Turkish' images are under-represented. Stereotypes reiterate ethnic, cultural and religious boundaries between groups and yet there are many migrants of Turkish origin who can and do challenge such boundaries.
- VIII. *Regional attitudinal differences may reflect other regional phenomena.* It is to be expected that Belgian-Turks will tend to reflect the overall social

and economic problems and opportunities of the region where they live and this was borne out by the quantitative survey. Belgian-Turks in Flanders and Brussels were more likely to feel that they were better off today than ten years ago than the Belgian-Turks in Wallonia.

- IX. *The individualization of Islam:* As elsewhere in Europe the individualization of Islam is a phenomenon that is particularly present among younger Belgian-Muslims, thanks to modern communications, which can create what we might term “invisible colleges”. The word of a religious authority is now being replaced by what is learned on blogs, websites and from Internet-based religious associations. Hence, they are equipped with new critical and intellectual stimulation that can liberate religion from the conservative culture of their parents. This more individual approach to religion is taking place against a background of what the literature describes as the *institutionalization of Islam*, whereby official efforts are made to institutionalize Islam through the establishment of centralised Islamic organizations and councils to represent Muslims vis-à-vis the state.
- X. *Importing brides and bridegrooms:* The so-called ‘imported brides and bridegrooms’ appear to pose a challenge to integration since they contribute to the continuation of chain migration among Turks. and to a certain extent militate against integration through intermarriage. The study reveals that Belgian-Turks themselves have already started to complain about the negative consequences of such marriages, which may result in divorce, domestic violence and the cultural incompetence of the children born into such marriages.
- XI. *Hyphenated identities characterize many Belgian-Turks.* The data indicate that many Belgian-Turks identify themselves with hyphenated (multiple) identities such as Belgian-Muslim-Turkish. Political identity precedes religious and ethnic identities.

This study provides a photograph of Belgian-Turks at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have no trend data, and yet the findings of this research would seem to show that Belgian-Turks have or are developing attitudes and behaviour that are in line with the European ideals. Even though some of those we interviewed have experienced intolerance and discrimination in Belgium, they are more aware of the European ideals of freedom, democracy and tolerance and are committed to things such as education and respect for national institutions. To this end, we believe that Belgian-Turks can provide a bridge between Belgium, the European Union and Turkey. More encouragingly, we believe that through their frequent trips back to Turkey for holidays and family visits, many are probably already doing just that.



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# Executive Summary

In answer to the fundamental question posed by this research project, it would seem that Belgian-Turks can play a valuable role in bridge-building between Turkey and the European Union. Despite unquestionable affection for Turkey and many of the things it has to offer, not only are elements of everyday life, such as health, education and employment considered better in Belgium, but so are fundamental values of the Union, such as democracy and human rights, respect for rules and rights and an efficient judicial system. Belgian-Turks express awareness of current problems in Turkey. To this extent, Belgian-Turks can surely be invaluable ambassadors not just for Belgium, but for the European Union and, through their frequent visits to Turkey and contacts with those in Turkey, help propagate those values that will facilitate the process of integration.

There has been migration from Turkey to Belgium for many years, but principally since the 1960s, which is not that long for integration to have taken place, particularly given that there were relatively few official or unofficial efforts made to integrate migrants until relatively recently. There are still deep feelings of exclusion or confinement among Belgian-Turks, particularly young people and married women, as well as an awareness of some mutual fear between the various communities. These perceptions of being different, unknown and almost inevitably therefore, not respected, result partly from traditional social and family norms imposed by parents, husbands and older generations, but also quite simply from a lack of opportunity to make contacts in the community through such things as education, work and leisure activities. Yet, the quantitative and qualitative data testify to second- and especially third-generation Belgian-Turks in particular becoming more involved with the Belgian community, whether this be through media consumption, linguistic abilities, property owning, even some “mixed” marriages to Belgians and, importantly, political representation. We have no trend data but there are encouraging signs that integration is happening, albeit slowly and Belgian-Turks themselves appear to be aware of the need to be more outward looking.

It is obvious that education plays a key role in allowing migrants to participate in the welcoming society by providing opportunities to meet others, by providing literacy and linguistic skills, learning about the society, its history and its culture, and because education gives access to jobs and, especially, to better jobs. A quarter of the Belgian-Turks interviewed were unemployed and although the unemployment rate was broadly similar across the regions, Belgian-Turks in Wallonia were much less positive about their economic prospects than those in Brussels and Flanders. Exclusion from the workplace and the consequences it generates in terms of exclusion from other aspects of life in society creates yet further problems, especially where those concerned are young. For the young, spare time is often filled by log-

ging on to the Internet and receiving unverified information in an environment where there is little room for contextual discussion.

Whilst the religious revival is sometimes considered in Europe as a reason for the disintegration of migrant communities, there is increasing support, especially in academic literature, for the argument that the resurgence of Muslim should be interpreted as a reaction to factors such as poverty, unemployment and insecurity. This means that every effort should be made to generate inclusive policies that involve reaching out to ethnic associations and civil society organisations working with migrants, which can play a vital role in furthering societal and political participation of Belgian-Turks, as well as building greater familiarity with aspects of Turkey and Turkish-origin migrants among the other communities in Belgium. The Internet, as well as the journeys back to Turkey for holidays and family visits will all ensure that initiatives to promote integration will not only be observed in Turkey: there is every reason to believe that, through leading by example, such initiatives could be replicated in Turkey.

With regard to the commitment of Belgian-Turks to the European Union and Europeanness, it seems that Belgian-Turks are open to the same influences, and thus the same shifts in humour, as other Europeans and families, friends and colleagues in Turkey in their attitudes towards Turkey's EU membership. We live in an information age and with the high penetration of a multitude of Belgian, Turkish and other international media in Belgium, it is perhaps not surprising that many Belgian-Turks express opinions that are not so radically different from those of other European Union citizens. In the survey, there were as many Belgian-Turks for EU membership as against, but there was also a large minority who did not care either way. Those who were against expressed similar worries to other EU citizens: fears of massive migration, causing pressure on jobs and pushing down wages. Belgian-Turks were more enthusiastic about the benefits of being part of the EU than about the EU itself and ultimately about the benefits of living in Belgium, as less than one third of those interviewed would even consider returning to Turkey if EU membership was conferred on Turkey. In the end, the success of Belgian-Turks' own lives in Belgium provides a more tangible, realistic and credible argument for the benefits of EU membership than conceptual notions about the European Union itself.

# Synthèse

En réponse à la question fondamentale posée par ce projet de recherche, il semblerait que les Belgo-Turcs puissent jouer un rôle utile de jeteurs de ponts entre la Turquie et l'Union européenne. En dépit d'un indéniable lien affectif envers la Turquie et ses nombreux attraits, ils estiment qu'un certain nombre de choses sont meilleures en Belgique: non seulement des aspects de la vie quotidienne, comme la santé, l'éducation et l'emploi, mais aussi des valeurs fondamentales de l'Union européenne, comme la démocratie et les droits humains, le respect des règles et des droits ainsi que l'efficacité du système judiciaire. Les Belgo-Turcs se montrent conscients des problèmes actuels en Turquie. Dans cette mesure, ils peuvent certainement être de précieux ambassadeurs pour la Belgique comme pour l'Union européenne toute entière et, par leurs fréquentes visites en Turquie et leurs contacts avec ceux qui y vivent, contribuer à propager les valeurs qui faciliteront le processus d'intégration.

L'immigration turque en Belgique a une longue histoire, mais elle date principalement des années 60, ce qui n'est pas si ancien que cela pour qu'une intégration ait pu avoir lieu, surtout si l'on tient compte du fait que les efforts entrepris pour intégrer les migrants n'ont été mis en œuvre que dans un passé relativement récent. De profonds sentiments d'exclusion règnent toujours parmi les Belgo-Turcs, surtout les jeunes et les femmes mariées, ainsi que la conscience d'une peur mutuelle entre les différentes communautés. Ce sentiment d'une différence, d'une méconnaissance et, corollaire presque inévitable, d'un mépris résulte en partie de normes sociales et familiales imposées par des parents, des époux et d'anciennes générations, mais aussi tout simplement d'un manque d'occasions de contacts sociaux au travers de moyens tels que l'éducation, le travail et les activités de loisirs. Pourtant, les données quantitatives et qualitatives témoignent que les Belgo-Turcs de la seconde et plus encore de la troisième génération s'impliquent davantage dans la communauté belge, que ce soit par la consommation de médias, par leurs compétences linguistiques, par la possession de biens, voire par certains mariages "mixtes" avec des Belges et, un point important, par la représentation politique. Nous n'avons pas de données indiquant une tendance, mais il y a des signes encourageants qui montrent que l'intégration est en marche, quoique lentement, et que les Belgo-Turcs semblent prendre conscience de la nécessité de se tourner davantage vers l'extérieur.

Il est clair que l'éducation est un moyen privilégié pour favoriser la participation des migrants à la société d'accueil: elle crée des occasions de rencontre, développe l'alphabétisation et les compétences linguistiques, permet de mieux connaître la société, son histoire et sa culture, et donne accès à l'emploi, en particulier à des emplois de meilleure qualité. Un quart des Belgo-Turcs interviewés étaient sans emploi et même si le taux de chômage était assez similaire d'une région à l'autre, les Turcs de Wallonie se montrent

beaucoup moins positifs quant à leurs perspectives économiques que ceux de Bruxelles et de Flandre. L'exclusion du monde du travail a pour effet de générer d'autres formes d'exclusion de la vie sociale, ce qui pose surtout un problème pour les jeunes. En effet, ceux-ci passent souvent leur temps libre à surfer sur internet, où ils reçoivent des informations non vérifiées dans un environnement où il y a peu de place pour une mise en contexte.

Si le renouveau religieux est parfois considéré en Europe comme un facteur de désintégration des communautés migrantes, l'argument selon lequel la renaissance de l'islam doit être interprétée comme une réaction à des éléments tels que la pauvreté, l'emploi et l'insécurité trouve de plus en plus d'écho, en particulier dans le monde de la recherche. Cela signifie qu'il faut s'efforcer par tous les moyens de produire des politiques d'inclusion qui touchent des associations immigrées et des organisations de la société civile travaillant avec des migrants. Elles peuvent en effet jouer un rôle crucial pour promouvoir la participation sociale et politique des Belgo-Turcs tout en faisant mieux connaître à d'autres communautés de Belgique certains aspects de la culture turque et de la vie des migrants d'origine turque. Grâce à internet et aux voyages faits en Turquie à l'occasion de vacances ou de visites familiales, ces initiatives de promotion de l'intégration ne seront pas simplement observées en Turquie : il y a toutes les raisons de penser que, par la vertu de l'exemple, elles pourront aussi y être reproduites.

En ce qui concerne leur engagement envers l'Union et l'idée européenne, il semble que les Belgo-Turcs soient réceptifs aux mêmes influences, et donc sujets aux mêmes changements d'humeur, que d'autres Européens et que leur attitude vis-à-vis de l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'UE ne diffère guère de celle de leur famille, de leurs amis et de leurs collègues de Turquie. Nous vivons à l'ère de l'information et compte tenu de la large diffusion d'une multitude de médias belges, turcs et internationaux en Belgique, il n'est peut-être pas surprenant que bon nombre de Belgo-Turcs expriment des avis qui ne sont pas radicalement différents de ceux d'autres citoyens de l'Union européenne. Dans l'étude, il y avait autant de Belgo-Turcs favorables que défavorables à l'adhésion de la Turquie, mais aussi une importante minorité de personnes sans opinion. Les opposants ont exprimé des inquiétudes semblables à celles d'autres citoyens de l'UE: la crainte d'une immigration massive, entraînant des pressions sur l'emploi et poussant les salaires à la baisse. Les Belgo-Turcs se sont montrés plus enthousiastes à propos des avantages de l'appartenance à l'UE, et en fin de compte des avantages de la vie en Belgique, que de l'UE elle-même, puisque moins d'un tiers des personnes interviewées envisageraient de retourner en Turquie si celle-ci obtenait son adhésion. Au final, la réussite de la vie des Belgo-Turcs en Belgique constitue donc un argument plus tangible, plus réaliste et plus crédible en faveur des avantages de l'adhésion que certains éléments conceptuels sur l'Union européenne proprement dite.

# Samenvatting

Als antwoord op de centrale vraag in dit onderzoeksproject blijkt dat Belgische Turken een waardevolle rol kunnen spelen bij het leggen van bruggen tussen Turkije en de Europese Unie. Ondanks hun onbetwistbare affiniteit voor Turkije en voor veel zaken die het land te bieden heeft, vinden zij niet alleen elementen van het dagelijkse leven zoals gezondheidszorg, onderwijs en werkgelegenheid beter in België, maar ook essentiële waarden van de Europese Unie zoals democratie en mensenrechten, respect voor regels en rechten en een doeltreffend gerechtelijk systeem. De Belgische Turken blijken zich bewust te zijn van de problemen die vandaag in Turkije bestaan. In dat opzicht kunnen de Belgische Turken dus zeker waardevolle ambassadeurs zijn, niet alleen voor België maar ook voor de Europese Unie. Door hun regelmatige bezoeken aan Turkije en hun contacten met mensen in Turkije kunnen zij ook helpen om deze waarden die het integratieproces zullen bevorderen, bekend te maken.

De migratie van Turkije naar België bestaat al vele jaren, maar is toch vooral op gang gekomen sinds de jaren 1960. Dat is dus nog niet zo lang geleden om te kunnen spreken van integratie, vooral ook omdat er tot vrij recentelijk inspanningen werden geleverd voor de integratie van migranten. Belgische Turken – vooral jongeren en getrouwde vrouwen – hebben nog altijd sterk het gevoel van uitsluiting en zij voelen ook enige wederzijdse angst tussen de verschillende gemeenschappen. Het gevoel dat ze anders en onbekend zijn en daardoor haast onvermijdelijk niet worden gerespecteerd, komt gedeeltelijk voort uit de traditionele maatschappelijke en familienormen die zijn opgelegd door ouders, echtgenoten en mensen van de oudere generaties, maar ook gewoon uit een gebrek aan kansen om contacten te leggen in de gemeenschap door middel van bijvoorbeeld onderwijs, werk en vrijetijdsbesteding. Toch blijkt uit de kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve onderzoeksgegevens dat Belgische Turken van de tweede en vooral de derde generatie meer betrokken zijn bij de Belgische samenleving. Dit is zowel het gevolg van hun omgang met de media als van hun kennis van de taal, bezit van eigendom en zelfs enkele “gemengde” huwelijken met Belgen en in belangrijke mate ook van hun politieke vertegenwoordiging. Wij hebben geen gegevens over de trend, maar er zijn bemoedigende aanwijzingen dat er sprake is van integratie, al verloopt die langzaam, en dat de Belgische Turken zelf zich bewust lijken te zijn dat het nodig is om zich meer op de buitenwereld te richten.

Onderwijs speelt overduidelijk een heel belangrijke rol om migranten de kans te bieden tot deelname aan de samenleving in het gastland, omdat onderwijs kansen biedt om mensen te ontmoeten, om te leren lezen en schrijven en talenkennis te verwerven, om iets te leren over de samenleving, de geschiedenis en de cultuur en omdat onderwijs toegang biedt tot werk en vooral tot beter werk. Een vierde van de geïnterviewde Belgische Turken was werkloos en hoewel de werkloosheidscijfers vrijwel gelijk zijn in de verschillende gewesten, bleken de Belgische Turken in Wallonië veel minder optimistisch over hun economische vooruitzichten dan de Belgische Turken in Brussel en Vlaanderen. Uitsluiting van

werk en de gevolgen die dat met zich mee brengt in de vorm van uitsluiting bij andere aspecten van het maatschappelijke leven, leidt ook nog tot andere problemen, vooral bij jongeren. Zij vullen hun vrije tijd vaak in door te surfen op het internet en krijgen zo dikwijls niet-nagetrokken informatie in een omgeving waar er weinig ruimte is voor inhoudelijke discussie.

Hoewel de religieuze revival in Europa soms wordt beschouwd als de reden voor het uiteenvallen van de migrantengemeenschap, krijgt de stelling dat de heropleving van de islam moet worden gezien als een reactie op factoren als armoede, werkloosheid en onveiligheid steeds meer aanhang, vooral in de wetenschappelijke literatuur. Dit betekent dat al het mogelijke moet worden gedaan om een inclusief beleid uit te stippelen dat steun biedt aan zelforganisaties en middenveldorganisaties die met migranten werken. Zij kunnen een essentiële rol spelen bij het bevorderen van de maatschappelijke en politieke betrokkenheid van de Belgische Turken en kunnen ook helpen om de andere gemeenschappen in België meer vertrouwd te maken met bepaalde aspecten in verband met Turkije en met migranten van Turkse origine. Het internet en ook de reizen naar Turkije voor vakantie en familiebezoek kunnen ervoor zorgen dat initiatieven ter bevordering van de integratie ook worden opgemerkt in Turkije. Daarnaast zijn er ook veel redenen om aan te nemen dat die initiatieven door het voorbeeld dat zij stellen ook in Turkije kunnen worden herhaald.

In verband met de betrokkenheid van de Belgische Turken bij de Europese Unie en de Europese identiteit lijken de Belgische Turken open te staan voor dezelfde invloeden en dus ook dezelfde stemmingswisselingen als de andere Europeanen en hun familieleden, vrienden en collega's in Turkije in hun houding tegenover het Turkse lidmaatschap van de EU. Wij leven in een informatietijdperk en door de sterke aanwezigheid van een groot aantal Belgische, Turkse en andere internationale media in België is het misschien niet verwonderlijk dat veel Belgische Turken een mening vertolken die niet zo drastisch verschilt van die van andere inwoners van de Europese Unie. In het onderzoek bleken evenveel Belgische Turken voor het EU-lidmaatschap te zijn als ertegen, maar er was ook een grote minderheid die daar helemaal niet wakker van lag. De tegenstanders drukten dezelfde bezorgdheid uit als andere EU-burgers: angst voor massale migratie, die druk zou uitoefenen op de werkgelegenheid en de lonen naar beneden zou halen. De Belgische Turken waren enthousiaster over de voordelen van het Europese lidmaatschap dan over de EU zelf en uiteindelijk dus blijkbaar ook over de voordelen van het leven in België, aangezien minder dan een derde van de geïnterviewden zelfs maar zou overwegen om naar Turkije terug te keren indien Turkije lid zou worden van de EU. Uiteindelijk biedt het succes dat de Belgische Turken in hun eigen bestaan in België hebben opgebouwd een tastbaarder, realistischer en geloofwaardiger bewijs voor de voordelen van het EU-lidmaatschap dan de theoretische concepten over de Europese Unie op zich.



# King Baudouin Foundation

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