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Partner selection dynamics in transition

A sociological study
of Turkish and Moroccan
minorities in Belgium.

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Prologue.

This dissertation can be framed within a research tradition that studies Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium and, in particular, studies their family formation and partner selection patterns. I provide an overview of the projects that formed this tradition and that eventually led to the selection of the data sources analyzed in this dissertation.

The research tradition that focuses on the partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minorities started in the early 1990s with interuniversity cooperation¹ in research on ethnic minorities in Belgium (see e.g. Callaerts, 1997; Lievens, 1996; Lodewijckx, 1993; Reniers & Lievens, 1997; Segaert, 1993). In 1999, Lievens (1999a) analyzed the prevalence of three different partner types among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium using population data from 1991. This was the first large quantitative study showing the frequency of the different partner choices among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium, as well as the influence of individual and local marriage market characteristics. He found a high prevalence of transnational marriages that remained high over time, but the expected traditional character of this partner choice was not confirmed for all minority members. Highly educated women were more likely to engage in a transnational marriage, possibly to gain more autonomy within the relationship by not subjecting themselves to patriarchal family structures, while lower educated men were more likely to search for more traditional spouses in the origin country. Furthermore, the least preferred partner type was mixed marriage, confirming a classical assimilation perspective, as the highest likelihood to marry mixed was found among those minority members expected to be the most assimilated. In addition, Lievens (1999b) discussed preliminary analyses regarding the prevalence of unmarried cohabitation among these minorities as well as the relationship between cohabitation and heterogamy. He concluded that the occurrence of unmarried cohabitation is low and strongly correlated with having a non-co-ethnic partner. Minority members in a mixed partnership might choose cohabitation over marriage to avoid adverse social reactions by not formalizing their heterogamous partnership.

¹ See <http://interfacedemography.be/id-working-papers> for the complete publication list.

Based on the same data extraction, Eeckhaut et al. (2011) studied the divorce rates of marriages registered between 1988 and 1991 by Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium. Moroccan minority members were more likely to divorce, although the prevalence of divorce is low, especially compared to the overall Belgian divorce rate. This study showed that divorce rates differ according to partner type and illustrated the importance of differences between Turkish and Moroccan minority members regarding transnationalism and social bonds in explaining differences within these communities.

In 2011, a research project regarding partner migration,² funded by the European Integration Foundation (EIF) and the Integration Foundation of the Flemish Government (Desmet, Leys, & Ronsijn, 2011), aimed at providing a more current, integrated view of partner migration by third-country³ nationals. The initial qualitative part consists of literature research and interviews with key actors, and discusses the evolution in immigration policies, as well as the influence of policy changes on partner migration patterns. However, results show that the timing of this study was too early to adequately evaluate the influence of restrictive immigration policies implemented in 2006 and 2011. A second, quantitative part describes several forms of partner migration of third-country nationals to Flanders. This part aims at understanding underlying dynamics behind each form of partner migration. The study analyzes two data sources: an extraction of the Belgian National Register carried out in July 2001, consisting of all partner migrants entering Flanders between 2008 and mid-2011, and information on visas granted between 2005 and 2010. Because the identification code of the migration motive registered in the National Register is only reliable from 2008 onwards, the timeframe of this project was shorter than anticipated.

The results show a consistent influx of partner migrants. Turkey and Morocco are the most common countries of origin, but ex-Soviet states and Brazil, for example, are also in the top five. The authors cluster the origin countries based on similar partnership characteristics and similar trends in the prevalence of partner migration over time. Partner migration from Turkey and Morocco declined between 2008 and mid-2011; increasing trends were described for higher income

² Partner migration is used as a synonym for marriage migration, which refers to migration of a person in the context of the formation of a partnership. See section 1.2 for more detailed information.

³ As indicated in section 1.2, third countries are countries outside of the European Economic Area and Switzerland.

countries;⁴ and the influx of partner migrants from Thailand and the Philippines remained consistent over time. Based on demographic similarities within each cluster, the authors identify different partner migration dynamics per cluster.

The short timeframe this research project covered made the assessment of trends in partner selection difficult, although indications of an evolution over time were reported. Therefore, a new research project regarding transnational partnerships was initiated in 2011. A new extraction of the Belgian National Register included all official partnerships (marriages and legally registered cohabitations) formalized between 2001 and 2008 by residents of Belgium born with a third-country nationality. More detailed information on the characteristics of this data source can be found in section 4.1.1. I analyzed this data source in the first empirical article written for this dissertation, included as Chapter 7, while awaiting the latest extraction of the National Register, which is described at the end of this section and in more detail in section 4.1.3.

Dupont (2019) analyzes the extraction of the Belgian National Register containing Turkish and Moroccan partnerships formed between 2001 and 2008 in her dissertation and shows that when considering only first marriages, the orientation of Turkish and Moroccan minority members starts to shift from the origin country more towards the local ethnic community. Even though mixed marriages are the least prevalent partner choice, they are increasing—not only over the past 15 years, but also within the timeframe Dupont studied. Although the prevalence of transnational marriages wanes within that timeframe, it remains a popular choice. Turkish and Moroccan minority members use their transnational networks, which are embedded in a well-established system of migration, to expand their search to include the country of origin, especially when there is a shortage of potential partners in the local marriage market.

Although declining levels of transnational marriages indicate a stronger orientation towards the local marriage market, especially amongst the second generation, boundaries within the local co-ethnic marriage market appear to be much stronger for divorced minority members. Dupont et al. (2019a) compare divorce rates of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium who got married between 2001 and 2005 to the results of Eeckhaut et al. (2011) and show that divorce rates have doubled within these minority groups over the past 15 years.

⁴Including countries such as the U.S., Australia, Canada, Japan, etc.

Similar to the patterns of the early 1990s, Moroccan minority members are more likely to divorce, and divorce rates differ according to partner type.

In 2012, an extension of the Sexpert (I) study expanded the understanding of the partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium (and especially Flanders), incorporating sexual health and its correlates. The Sexpert (I) survey was initiated in 2009 by a consortium led by Dr. Ann Buysse and financed by the Agency for Innovation by Science and Technology to conduct a Strategic Basic Research (Agentschap voor Innovatie door Wetenschap en Technologie om een Strategisch Basis Onderzoek). The main objective of this survey⁵ was to systematically gain more insight into the sexual health of Flemish men and women between the ages of 14 and 80 ($N = 1,832$). As indicated above, in 2012 the survey was expanded to focus on two groups that were underrepresented in the population study (Sexpert I) yet they are of great interest when researching sexual health: LGBT communities and Turkish and Moroccan minorities. Because the dataset on Turkish and Moroccan minority members living in Flanders is a data source for two of the empirical chapters of this dissertation, more information on the data collection can be found in section 4.1.2.

In 2014, Van Kerckem (2014) published a dissertation on how ethnic boundaries within Belgian society shape the sociocultural incorporation of Turkish minority members. With information gathered from 62 semi-structured qualitative interviews with male and female second- and third-generation Turkish minority members, she formulated three questions: (1) how do majority and minority members contribute to the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, (2) how do Turkish minority members negotiate the boundaries and the maintaining mechanisms with which they are confronted, and (3) how do ethnic boundary dynamics shape individual-level aspects of the sociocultural incorporation of Turkish minority members?

I briefly summarize her answers to these questions.

- (1) The active maintenance of a boundary is work done jointly by members of both groups. Members of the majority population mark boundaries and maintain them through mechanisms of exclusion. Turkish minority

⁵ An overview of the methodology and main results of this population study can be found in Buysse et al. (2013).

members also mark boundaries between themselves and the majority population, and maintain them through ethnic conformity pressure.

- (2) Minority members contest both the content of symbolic boundaries (what it means to be Turkish) as well as the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them.' They not only redefine what it means to be Turkish, but also negotiate how they are categorized by mainstream society. The data show that minority members also have the power to deal with the behavioral dimension of ethnic boundary maintenance. Conformity pressure through social control is not inescapable, but people are able to respond to it with particular impression management strategies (conformity, creativity, or disregard).
- (3) Although she considers several aspects of sociocultural incorporation, I discuss only the one most relevant to this dissertation: how mechanisms of ethnic boundary maintenance shape partner choice. Van Kerckem distinguishes four mechanisms: the extent to which people have internalized symbolic boundaries, third party pressure to marry a co-ethnic partner, the way minority members deal with this pressure, and contact opportunities.

Dupont's research project (2019) discusses the partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minorities between 2001 and 2008. This project was the first step in identifying recent partner selection patterns of first- and second-generation minority members, building on knowledge from population data from 1991. The results show that the partner selection behavior of these minorities may be changing significantly. However, the insights gained from this project needed to be explored further by analyzing partner selection patterns over a longer timeframe. Therefore, a new extraction of the Belgian National Register was executed that included all partnerships registered between 2005 and 2015 by residents of Belgium born with a foreign nationality. This new data extraction complements existing research and generates a more comprehensive understanding of partner selection patterns of minority members in two ways. First, it provides a larger timeframe, making it possible to adequately analyze trends in partner selection behavior. Second, between 2001 and 2008, minority members could realize their partner choice without much interference from government-issued policies. However, Belgian immigration policies regulating partner migration got stricter in 2006 and in 2011, especially, and possibly motivated minority members to delay, adjust, or cancel their partner choice. The

potential impact of these policy changes would have become visible between 2005 and 2015. A detailed description of this latest extract of the National Register can be found in section 4.1.3 because it is a data source in two of the empirical chapters of this dissertation.

Chapter 1. General introduction

1.1 Introduction

The migration and integration of ethnic minority members and how those members fit into society over time are topics of societal and political as well as scientific interest. Studying partner selection attitudes and behavior of minority members can provide a clearer understanding of these topics in two ways. First, the level of interaction between different ethnic groups can be an indicator of integration processes (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010; Lichter, Carmalt, & Qian, 2011; Lieberman & Waters, 1988; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Song, 2010; Waters & Jiménez, 2005; Wildsmith, Gutmann, & Gratton, 2003). Because marriage is seen as the most intimate form of social contact, and it connects individuals as well as their social networks, marrying outside of one's own ethnic group is seen as a manifestation of integration, which diminishes ethnic boundaries. The prevalence of mixed marriages in a society is therefore often considered to be an indicator of ethnic boundaries in a society. Marrying a co-ethnic minority member is thus seen as a consolidation of the own group and the boundaries between ethnic groups (Wimmer, 2013). Second, studying partner selection dynamics makes it possible to describe processes of adaptation⁶ prevalent in minority groups. How do family systems in minority communities develop over time in Belgian society, which is characterized by the Second Demographic Transition? Collectivistic family systems could for example change due to assimilation processes towards the prevailing family system or stay the same as a way to maintain group cohesion and identity (Dumon, 1989). Minority members may preserve collectivistic family systems because they are generally in a disadvantaged position in Belgian society, which is characterized by strong ethnic boundaries.

Hence, from a sociological standpoint, the study of minority members' partner selection is of interest because it can clarify the orientation of minority members and the presence of ethnic boundaries in a society as well as the mechanisms of adaptation within minority groups. Additionally, evolutions in partner selection

⁶ Adaptation and processes of adaptation refer to processes of change within minority groups as a reaction to a specific situation without implying a certain direction of change. See also sections 1.2 and 2.2.

behavior could be indicators of social change regarding the boundaries between ethnic groups and the structure of minority groups (Kalmijn, 1998).

This dissertation focuses on Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium for two reasons. First, the two largest minority groups in Belgium originating from third countries are from Turkey and Morocco (Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014). Second, the cultural differences with the majority population are extensive, which makes the possible mechanisms of adaptation substantial. By studying their family formation and partner selection patterns, I gain more insight into these mechanisms of adaptation and the presence of ethnic boundaries in Belgium society.

Lievens (1999a) analyzes Belgian National Register data from 1991 and shows that among both first- and second-generation members the most preferred marriage types are transnational marriages with a partner from the country of origin, followed by local co-ethnic marriages; mixed marriages remain the least preferred. From a classical assimilation perspective, the expectation is that transnational marriages would become less prominent over time, particularly as more second-generation members began looking for a partner (Böcker, 1994; Esveldt, Kulu-Glasgow, Schoorl, & Van Solinge, 1995). Better structural and social integration of the second generation, as well as assimilation processes in different aspects of minority members' lives, would alter their partner selection preferences and behavior. The wish for an ethnically homogamous marriage could be fulfilled by a local co-ethnic partner and would be followed by a growing openness towards mixed marriages. Some studies have indicated that the distinct preference for transnational marriages indeed decreased, but without substantially influencing partner selection behavior, as the majority of the first and second generations were still opting for a transnational partner in the mid-1990s (Böcker, 1994; Esveldt et al., 1995; Lievens, 1999a) and early 2000s (Descheemaeker, Heyse, Wets, Clycq, & Timmerman, 2009; Timmerman, Lodewyckx, & Wets, 2009).

Recently, some studies indicated that partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium are changing after being constant for decades (Dupont, Van de Putte, Lievens, & Caestecker, 2017; Van Kerckem, Van der Bracht, Stevens, & Van de Putte, 2013). The orientation of Turkish and Moroccan minority members may start to shift from the origin country more towards the local (ethnic) community. These studies, however, do not offer a complete picture, and they are also limited to only the earliest stage of change and thus cannot indicate whether

or not the observed changes are the onset of a structural trend. Hence, more comprehensive analyses over a longer period are necessary to assess whether and to what degree partner selection behavior has changed over the last decade. Therefore, I aim to obtain a better understanding of the recent partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium.

In the first two empirical chapters (5 and 6) of this dissertation, I analyze Belgian National Register data on all official partnerships of Turkish and Moroccan minority members that were registered between 2005 and 2015. These analyses offer a comprehensive overview of the trends in partner selection, paying attention to differences regarding individual and partnership characteristics. Chapter 5 focuses on different partner types to study trends in the prevalence of transnational marriages and what that means for the prevalence of local co-ethnic and especially mixed marriages. It also shows the possible impact of restrictive immigration policies implemented in 2006 and 2011. Chapter 6 studies legally registered cohabitations. Previous research has been able to draw only preliminary conclusions about cohabitation among these minority groups, as the prevalence of this partnership type was very low and cohabiting couples were hard to identify (see e.g. Hartung, Vandezande, Phalet, & Swyngedouw, 2011; Lievens, 1999b). Recently, however, some quantitative studies have indicated that young Turkish and Moroccan minority members may increasingly prefer cohabitation as a first step towards marriage or even as an alternative to marriage (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Huschek, de Valk, & Liefbroer, 2011; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). An increase in the occurrence of cohabitation could be due to a trend towards a more individualistic approach to partner selection, more liberal values about cohabitation, and a decrease in the importance of marriage as an institution. It is possible that cohabiting minority members deviate from traditional family norms because of assimilation towards a family system characterized by the Second Demographic Transition.

In the last two empirical chapters (7 and 8) survey data on Turkish minority members is analyzed to describe possible attitudinal mechanisms behind recent partner selection trends. The result is a richer picture of minority members' partner selection dynamics that allows us to better understand processes of adaptation within these minority groups as well as the prevalence of ethnic boundaries. Chapter 7 focusses on minority parents because they play a central role in the partner selection process. The chapter assesses whether the level of parental influence changes over time, and discusses partner selection attitudes regarding

ideal partner types of both minority adolescents as well as parents. These analyses give more insight into possible attitudinal mechanisms behind recent trends in partner selection behavior and make it possible to predict trends by studying the attitudes of parents as well as adolescents.

Chapter 8 describes the extent to which Turkish minority members experience ethnic boundaries between them and the majority population, by focusing on ethnic prejudice; and considers whether experiencing ethnic prejudice affects partner selection attitudes of minority members, in particular their openness towards mixed partnerships. The extent to which interethnic contact exists and the context in which it originates are determined by intergroup attitudes in which individuals' experiences of ethnic prejudice could play an important role (Livingston, Brewer, & Alexander, 2004; Monteith & Spicer, 2000; Tropp, 2003, 2007). Hence, experiences of ethnic prejudice could influence minority members' openness towards mixed partnerships and therefore consolidate the ethnic boundaries between groups. This would confirm the prevalence of mixed partnerships as an indicator of ethnic boundaries, and confirm that experiences of prejudice or discrimination might hamper processes of integration (Glazer, 1993; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

This dissertation is structured as follows: Chapter 2 presents the theoretical background of the dissertation. In Chapter 3, I illustrate the research outline. Before turning to the empirical chapters (Chapters 5–8), I describe the data sources, cleaning procedures, and operationalization of (in)dependent variables in the methodological section (Chapter 4). Finally, Chapter 9 includes a discussion of the main findings, and a reflection of their scientific and societal implications. It concludes by identifying the limitations of this dissertation, accompanied by suggestions for future research.

1.2 Lexicon

- A(n) (ethnic) **minority member** has a foreign nationality at birth and has either been born in Belgium or been born abroad and has migrated to Belgium. Unless indicated otherwise, within the scope of this dissertation, 'minority member' refers to a resident of Belgium with Turkish/Moroccan nationality at birth.

- Although **migrant** is typically not used for individuals born in Belgium with a foreign nationality at birth, in Chapter 7 migrant is used as a synonym for minority member.⁷
- A Belgian **resident** is registered in the National Register at least one year before the formation of an official partnership.
- A **partnership** refers to a union that is officially registered in the National Register. This dissertation studies two **partnership types**: marriages and legally registered cohabitations.
- In Belgium, from 2000 onwards, two cohabiting individuals could **legally register** their **cohabitation**, regardless of their gender or the nature of their relationship (Senaeve, 2015). Registered cohabitations and marriages entail similar rights and obligations, but the process of formation and dissolution is shorter and easier for registered cohabitations. In contrast to marriage, signing a bilateral declaration is enough to legally register a cohabitation, and signing a uni-lateral or bi-lateral declaration can terminate it.
- Three **partner types** (or marriage types) are distinguished: transnational, local co-ethnic, and mixed partnerships.
 - **Transnational partnerships** are partnerships between a minority member residing in Belgium and a partner migrating from a third country to Belgium because of the partnership. The exact migration motive is unknown, but partners who arrived the same year as, or after, the formation of the partnership are assumed to be migrating because of the partnership. Migration in the context of a partnership is called **partner migration**. After migration, the migrated partner is considered a **partner migrant**. When focusing on marriages alone, marriage migration and marriage migrant can be used as synonyms.

⁷ During the review process of Chapter 7, the editor of International Migration Review requested to substitute 'Turkish ethnic minority members' by 'Turkish Belgians' or 'Turkish migrants'. I chose 'Turkish migrants' because using the term 'Turkish Belgians' implied that all individuals from Turkish descent included in the study, are currently Belgian, which is not the case.

- **Local co-ethnic partnerships** are partnerships between two minority members with the same (Turkish/Moroccan) nationality at birth, who are either both residents of Belgium or one is a Belgian resident and one migrated to Belgium from another EU member-state.
- **Mixed partnerships** (or interethnic partnerships or heterogamous partnerships) are partnerships between two residents: one born with Turkish/Moroccan nationality and one born with a different nationality.

More specific details on the operationalization of the variable partner type can be found in section 4.2.1.

- **Homogamy** (versus heterogamy) refers to the degree to which partners have similar characteristics. **Endogamy** (versus exogamy) refers to the degree to which partners belong to the same group. In this dissertation, homogamy (or heterogamy) is used to refer to ethnic homogamy (or heterogamy) and is operationalized in the empirical chapters as similar (or different) nationality at birth.
- **Family reunification** allows children, parents or spouses of Belgian residents to settle in Belgium; we speak about **family formation migration** (or **partner migration** or **marriage migration**) when a person enters Belgium with the purpose of marrying a Belgian resident or starting a legally registered cohabitation with a Belgian resident. Turkish and Moroccan chain migration consists of both family reunification and family formation migration.
- **Third countries** are countries outside of the European Economic Area and Switzerland.
- The **European Economic Area** (EEA) consists of the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Czech Republic, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein. Croatia became an EU and EEA member in 2013 but is not considered a third country in this dissertation.

- Four **migration generations** are discerned based on the stage in the socialization process in which a person arrived in Belgium: first, 1.5, second, and third generation. Members of the first generation are mainly socialized in their country of birth, while the 1.5 generation is socialized in both the country of birth and of residence. Members of the second generation are mainly socialized in the country of residence, as they migrated at a young age or were born in the country of residence. Finally, the third generation is socialized only in the country of residence, as they are born there, and their parents are second-generation members. More detailed information on the operationalization of migration generation can be found in section 4.3.1.
- **Adaptation** and processes of adaptation refer to processes of change within minority groups as a reaction to a specific situation without implying a certain direction of change. **Assimilation** is seen as a change towards greater similarity with the majority population without necessarily losing all distinctions between majority and minority members (see also section 2.1).
- **Integration** refers to a process wherein characteristics of minority and majority groups are combined, and members of both groups find a way to live together. This is a two-way process and entails changes among minority as well as majority populations. American scholars often use the concept of incorporation to define this process (see also section 2.1).

Chapter 2. Theoretical Background

In this dissertation, I analyze the partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minority members, which allows me to gain more insight into possible processes of adaptation present among these minorities as well as the existence of ethnic boundaries in Belgian society. Therefore, I start by giving a brief summary of the most important theoretical insights on integration and assimilation processes of minority members as well as on the existence of boundaries between different ethnic groups in a society. Following the summaries, the focus turns to the main topic of this dissertation, partner selection.

In general, people prefer a partner who is similar to them, a phenomenon called homophily, or positive assortative mating (Byrne, 1971; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Homophily results in homogamy—a marriage between individuals who are similar to each other—and endogamy—a marriage between individuals from the same group. Studies have found a preference for homogamy with regard to several characteristics, such as age, educational attainment, religion, ethnicity, and personality traits (Coleman, 1992; Kalmijn, 1998; Skopek, Schulz, & Blossfeld, 2011). However, selecting a similar partner does not happen independently of social influence. From a sociological standpoint, partner selection processes take place within social and cultural reference frames. To a great extent, prevailing norms, values, and traditions regarding family formation influence individuals' partner selection behavior and attitudes. Both first- and second-generation minority members have two frames of reference influencing their partner selection behavior and attitudes: the origin country and the residence country. Therefore, I discuss family systems prevalent in Turkey and Morocco, as they are important to understand partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium. Furthermore, an overview of the characteristics of the Turkish and Moroccan migration to Belgium is given. I show that specific characteristics of the origin and maintenance of Turkish and Moroccan migration streams have generated a selective group of minority members and have also determined partner selection dynamics of minority members residing in Belgium. After a short discussion of the societal position of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgian society, I describe their family formation and partner selection patterns and the way these patterns contribute to knowledge about mechanisms of adaptation present in these minority groups on the one hand and ethnic boundaries in Belgian society on the other hand. Finally, I give an overview of the

different factors influencing partner selection patterns of minority members, as factors other than the process of migration influence these patterns, and there is also great variation within these patterns. I give special attention to recent developments within the partner selection process, as they lead up to the research questions of this dissertation.

2.1 Assimilation and integration theories

Trends in the partner selection of minority members are strongly connected to how and in what manner minority members react to their new residence country. In this section, I summarize the main insights of theories that could contribute to understanding the mechanisms of adaptation present in Turkish and Moroccan minorities. The theories discussed focus on other minority groups living in other contexts and thus do not directly apply to Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium. However, despite the fact that processes at play within minority groups are strongly influenced by the specificity of their context, an overview of the most important theories regarding integration, assimilation, and ethnic boundaries could help to understand, at least in an abstract way, the processes prevalent among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium.

Theory development regarding the relationship between minority groups and the residence society, and the processes of change (often called integration or assimilation) within these minority groups, has a long history. The work of Thomas and Znanieck (1919) on the migration process of Polish immigrants is more than 100 years old. Today, integration and assimilation processes are one of the main subjects of social science research. The theoretical debates on assimilation and integration have been dominated by authors from the United States who have built upon the United States' experience with minority members over the past century (Bloemraad, 2007).

Park (1950; Park & Burgess, 1921), a prominent Chicago School sociologist, describes a model based on race relation cycles, one of the first attempts to theorize integration processes. He views integration as a typical and linear sequence of the stages of intergroup interactions that ends with the complete absorption of the minority group. Park identifies four stages of integration: contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation. The first stage in the process is contact between minority and majority members. Minority members try to adapt to the new society, which inevitably leads to competition between

minority and majority groups in, for example, the labor and housing markets. The majority group allows minority members to take up only undesirable positions in the social structure, resulting in an ethnic division of labor and ethnic stratification. The phase of accommodation is characterized by the acceptance of this social structure with unequal relations between groups. But ethnic differences could also diminish and result in assimilation because of social contact across groups. The endpoint of assimilation is cultural fusion, "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups" (Park & Burgess, 1921, p. 736). In his later work, however, Park (1950) no longer considers assimilation inevitable and recognizes the possibility that groups could live together in a symbiotic relationship, without the complete disappearance of the ethnic characteristics of each group.

Warner and Scrole (1945) contribute to this line of reasoning by drawing attention to the interaction between internal group characteristics and external institutional factors—such as phenotypical ranking and racial/ethnic subsystems—in explaining the pace of assimilation. The authors state that all ethnic groups assimilate, but that there is great variation in the time required to reach assimilation. They argue that "the social mobility of readily identifiable minority groups, especially blacks, is likely to be confined within racial-caste boundaries" (Zhou, 1997, p. 976).

Using the same line of reasoning as Park, namely, that minority and majority members will eventually live together in a stable system, Gordon is the first author to stress the multidimensionality of assimilation (Gordon, 1964). Gordon envisions seven stages of assimilation: acculturation or cultural assimilation, structural assimilation or integration, amalgamation or marital assimilation, identificational assimilation, attitude receptional assimilation, behavioral receptional assimilation, and civic assimilation. The first four each represent a stage in the process towards complete assimilation; the last three are necessary conditions to reach complete assimilation. The first stage of acculturation is the process of minority members adopting the cultural patterns of the residence country, an inevitable and largely one-way process. This conceptualization of assimilation differs from Park's, who argued that acculturation was the end point (Park & Burgess, 1921). However, Gordon states that a situation of 'acculturation only' may be permanent (Gordon, 1964, p. 77), since acculturation does not guarantee the minority entrance into the primary groups and institutions of the dominant social groups. Nonetheless, if

they do gain entrance, the second stage of structural assimilation is reached. Structural assimilation is a crucial step, after which all other stages will follow in an irreversible process. Structural assimilation will lead to a high prevalence of mixed marriages, which will inevitably lead to identificational assimilation. For Gordon, this is the end point of the process and is characterized by the disappearance of the ethnic identity of minority members.

Classical assimilation theories consider assimilation as the inevitable "natural end point of the process of incorporation into American society" (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 3) for all ethnic groups. The melting pot metaphor is used to describe the process of assimilation (Gordon, 1978). This metaphor reflects the evolution of a heterogeneous society towards homogeneity. In other words, the melting pot metaphor refers to the idea that American society will eventually become a melting pot of different ethnic groups that have traded their culture in favor of the American culture. Classical assimilation theories see assimilation as a linear process that unfolds in the sequence of generational steps (Alba & Nee, 2003): each new generation abandons more of their culture and moves closer to complete assimilation. Some scholars, like Warner and Srole, recognize that the pace of the assimilation process could be different for different groups, while other scholars, such as Robert Park in his later writings, believe that assimilation may never happen for some groups. But the idea of continuing progression is central to all early versions of assimilation theory.

However, because there are stable forms of ethnic differentiation and stratification, the linear and progressive approach to assimilation and the notion of a homogenous receiving society has been criticized extensively (see e.g. Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Kallen & Chapman, 1956; Sollors, 1986; Yancey, Ericksen, & Juliani, 1976). While most models and theories predict progressive assimilation within and between generations, persistent ethnic inequality in receiving countries is often the reality (Gans, 1992; Glazer & Moynihan, 1963). Several alternative responses to classical assimilation theories have been developed, such as cultural pluralism (see e.g. Bodnar, 1985; Palmer, 1976), the bumpy-line approach (see e.g. Gans (1992), segmented assimilation theory, neo-assimilation theory, and transnationalism. These last three are discussed in more detail.

Segmented assimilation theory was proposed by Portes and Zhou (1993) to explain the heterogeneity in integration outcomes among contemporary immigrants in the United States. The segmented assimilation theory focuses

primarily on the integration of second-generation minority members, so it is considered alongside the modes of incorporation model as proposed by Portes and Rumbaut (2001), which discusses the integration of first-generation minority members.

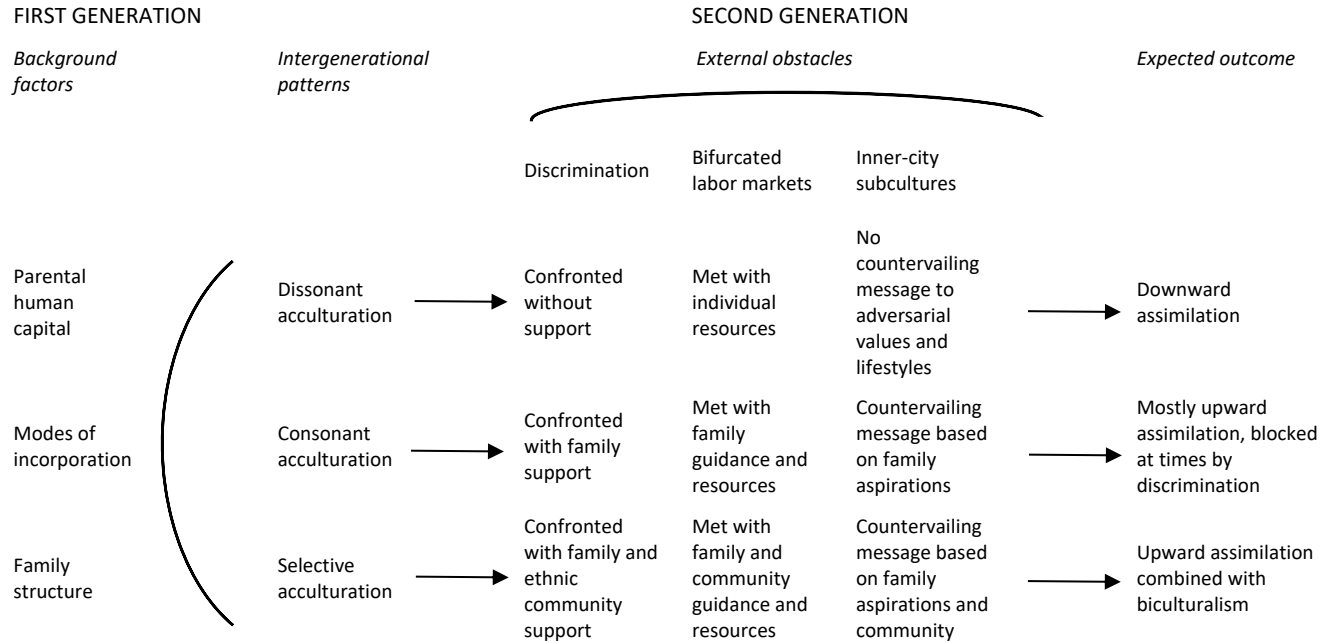
The modes of incorporation model states that the integration of the first generation depends primarily on a combination of individual characteristics and the context of the receiving society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993). The interplay between individual characteristics, such as human capital, and context characteristics, such as government policies towards migrants, the social distance between the majority and minority groups, and the strength of co-ethnic ties within the minority group are central factors that determine the integration processes of first-generation minority members.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) consider the process of integration to be intergenerational and therefore link the integration processes of first- and second-generation members. They describe a threefold typology regarding the relation between the acculturation of parents and of children: consonant, dissonant, or selective. Consonant acculturation happens when both parents and children integrate rapidly into the receiving society. Dissonant acculturation means that children obtain the receiving society's language and culture, but their parents do not. Selective acculturation is where both parents and children become acculturated but retain the norms and values of the origin country because they are part of a strong ethnic community.

The main idea of segmented assimilation theory is that the majority population is not one homogeneous group and that (second-generation) minority members may assimilate to different segments of the residence society based on the interaction of parental human capital, family structure, and the modes of incorporation (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997). These three aspects play a significant role because second-generation minority members are confronted with barriers to their educational and occupational mobility. This theory identifies three barriers to successful adaptation: discrimination, the consolidation of a marginalized population in the inner city, and de-industrialization combined with a bifurcated labor market that offers well-paid jobs to the highly skilled and poorly paid jobs to the unskilled, with few opportunities in between.

This variability leads to three possible paths of adaptation for migrants' children: (1) a path leading to linear assimilation into the white middle class as second-generation members succeed educationally and economically as a result of stable families and the high human capital of their parents combined with a positive mode of incorporation; (2) a downward assimilation path leading to permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass, because barriers to successful adaptation are influenced by low parental human capital, weak co-ethnic network ties, and a negative mode of incorporation; and (3) a path of upward socioeconomic assimilation, despite low parental human capital, because of strong co-ethnic ties and the retention of ethnic culture. See Figure 2.1 for a graphical representation of the three possible paths of adaptation. The main criticisms about this theory are its failure to clearly define assimilation, because the model equates assimilation with social mobility, as illustrated by the concept of downward assimilation (Alba, 2008; Gans, 2007), and because it lacks applicability to contexts outside the US, as it disregards the importance of national context and takes the structural features of American society for granted (Alba, 2005; Crul & Schneider, 2010).

Figure 2.1 Segmented assimilation (source: Portes and Rumbaut, 2001, p. 63)



A new appreciation of assimilation as a useful concept arose in the 1980s and 1990s (see e.g. Alba, 1999; Alba & Nee, 1997; Gleason, 1992; Morawska, 1994). The neo-assimilation theory of Alba and Nee (2003) is the most complete reinvention of classical assimilation theses.

We do not assume that assimilation is a universal outcome, occurring in a straight-line trajectory. . . . To the extent that assimilation occurs, it proceeds incrementally, usually as an intergenerational process, stemming both from individuals' purposive action and from the unintended consequences of their workaday decisions. (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 39)

The authors define assimilation as the decline of ethnic distinctions such that cultural and social differences have little or no impact on interethnic interactions or relations. This definition does not require cultural homogeneity. Assimilation occurs when minority members make the active choice to assimilate. They will choose to assimilate once discrimination has become illegal and the opportunities within the institutions of the majority are more satisfactory. Moreover, the authors conceptualize ethnicity as a social boundary related to social and cultural differences between groups and suggest that assimilation "may occur through changes taking place in groups on both sides of the boundary" (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 11).

All the above-mentioned research, however, discusses the relation between minority members and the receiving society only and thereby neglects the consideration of possible ties and loyalties to and involvement with the origin country. This is unfortunate because transnational involvement could influence minority members' integration processes (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). These transnational activities are what transnational studies focus on. The concept of transnationalism was made popular in the social sciences mainly through the work of three American anthropologists (see Basch et al. 1994). Most migration scholars now recognize that minority members often maintain transnational ties to the origin country even as they are integrated into the receiving country (Morawska, 2008). These transnational activities are relevant for first- and second-generation minority members (Levitt, 2002). Minority members can stay transnationally involved in many ways: economically (Portes, 2003), politically (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007), which is made possible by holding dual citizenship (Bloemraad, 2004), or socially, by maintaining friendship and kin ties

(Esveltdt et al., 1995; Straßburger, 2004, 2005). Transnational involvement calls attention to a specific aspect of international migration (Waldinger, 2008), namely, the (potential) simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Despite several attempts to build bridges between integration research and transnationalism (see e.g. Guarnizo, Portes, & Haller, 2003; Portes, Haller, & Guarnizo, 2002; Schunck, 2014), many aspects of the relation between integration into the receiving society and transnational involvement remain unclear.

The theories described above all originate in the United States. Several authors have tried to apply these American theories to a European context or have at least begun to explore whether that is possible (see e.g. Alba, 2005; Phalet & Heath, 2010; Silberman, Alba, & Fournier, 2006). Others point out the difficulties in trying to apply American theories to European contexts, as contexts can differ greatly (Crul & Mollenkopf, 2012; Crul & Schneider, 2010). In Europe, however, theoretical debates on assimilation and integration have been few.

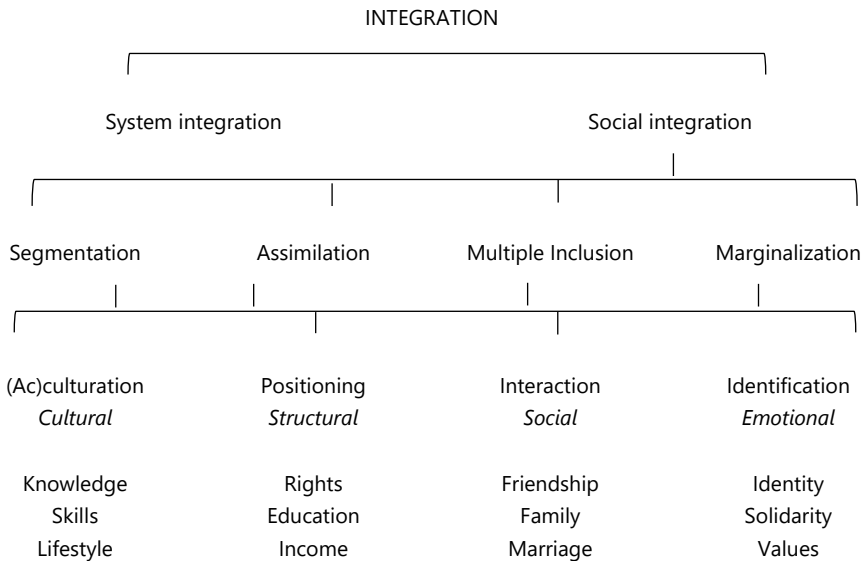
The most comprehensive European-oriented theory regarding integration and assimilation is Esser's theory of intergeneration integration (Esser, 2004). In his dissertation, Schunck says about Esser's theory: "I argue that the model of intergenerational integration, with a general sociological theory of action at its core, may be the most versatile as it is not constructed with reference to a specific geographical or historical context and may be applied even if conditions change" (Schunck, 2014, p. 9).

Esser's aim is to explain why minority members choose to assimilate or choose not to assimilate. He states: "the basic model of intergenerational integration explains different structural outcomes of immigration—societal assimilation, ethnic inequality/ethnic differentiation, ethnic conflicts—as aggregated consequences of the immigrants' rational situation-logical actions geared to the prevailing circumstances" (Esser, 2004, p. 1139).

The process of integration takes place in four different dimensions: cultural (e.g. language, customs), structural (labor market, educational system, etc.), social (friendship, marriage, etc.), and emotional (identity, solidarity, etc.) (Esser, 2004). The process consists of three interdependent aspects: social integration—or an individual's inclusion in a social system—social inequality and differentiation patterns, and societal integration of the whole society.

Individual social integration describes a minority member’s inclusion into or exclusion from social systems (Esser, 2004). The inclusion-exclusion of an individual into or from two groups or systems is a typology proposed by Berry (1990). The typology describes four combinations of being included into or excluded from the majority group/receiving society and/or minority group/origin country. Multiple inclusion refers to inclusion into the receiving society and the ethnic group. Assimilation describes inclusion into the receiving society and exclusion from the ethnic group. Conversely, segmentation describes inclusion into the ethnic group and exclusion from the receiving society, and marginalization describes exclusion from the ethnic group as well as the receiving society. This typology can be applied to each of the four dimensions of social integration (cultural, social, structural, or emotional), to the second aspect of integration—referring to social inequality and social differentiation—and to the third aspect of integration, system integration—referring to the society as a whole. See Figure 2.2 for a graphical representation.

Figure 2.2 Individual social integration
 (Source: modified from Mammey, 2005, p. 43)



Van Kerckem clarifies this framework by applying it to the labor market position of the Turkish population in Belgium:

A focus on social integration means that one has to explain the position of an individual in the labor market. If (s)he holds a labor market position that is similar to an individual actor in a comparable segment of the mainstream group, we can consider it a case of individual assimilation—a situation of social integration of individual immigrants into a subsystem of the host society and/or increasing similarity to individual actors in comparable segments of the mainstream population. In terms of social structure, one has to examine the extent to which the Turkish population in Belgium as a whole has a lower labor market position (social inequality), as well as their own ethnic labor market (social differentiation). When there are no structural inequalities between ethnic groups or ethnic differentiation, we can say that Belgium is characterized by societal assimilation—a situation characterized by the absence of ethnic inequalities or ethnic differentiation, or, to put it in terms of boundary processes, no social boundaries between different ethnic groups. (Van Kerckem, 2014, p. 62)

This overview of the most important theoretical insights regarding integration and assimilation, which could help to understand processes of adaptation prevalent among Turkish and Moroccan minorities, shows that this issue is highly complex. The possible directions of change are numerous, as are the number of aspects influencing possible change, including characteristics of the minority group, the majority group, and the context. This complexity is of great interest, especially to scholars who elaborate on classical assimilation ideas. There is also considerable confusion about concepts and definitions. Concepts such as incorporation, integration, acculturation, and assimilation all refer to how minority members adapt to the situation in the receiving country, but the distinction between them is often not clear because scholars define them differently or use disparate terms as synonyms. Additionally, how minority members are integrated has been subject to intense normative political and public debates; these debates have, to some extent, been mirrored in scientific controversies. By using terms like assimilation or acculturation, one runs the danger of being judged old fashioned and out of date, or even antipluralistic and imperialistic (Gans, 1992, p. 48). Therefore, scholars are motivated to find new terms to keep distance from politicized debates, and by doing so, have increased the complexity within this field of study.

In public discourse, the term integration generally implies a process of becoming like members of the mainstream society. This understanding of integration, however, is more aligned with the process of assimilation, which is generally used by scholars to refer to the process in which minority members become, over generations, culturally and socially similar to majority members (Alba & Nee, 1997). Scholars often use integration or incorporation to refer to immigrants' structural inclusion in the host society's core institutions, such as in labor markets and schools, over generations. Integration might also include participation in informal social relations in local communities (Alba, Reitz, & Simon, 2012; Schneider & Crul, 2010), although the concept is used far less in the context of sociocultural inclusion (Alba et al., 2012). However, although the general consensus is that integration is multidimensional, scholars often disagree on what the relevant dimensions of integration are (Snel, Engbersen, & Leerkes, 2006). The most frequently made distinction is between structural integration and social-cultural integration (Fokkema & De Haas, 2015; Snel et al., 2006). Structural integration refers to integration in contexts like education or the labor market, whereas sociocultural integration refers to aspects like social interaction, marriage, behavior, or feelings of belonging (Fokkema & De Haas, 2015).

2.2 Ethnic boundary theories

When studying partner selection attitudes and behavior to gain more insight into mechanisms of adaptation within minority groups, theoretical insights regarding ethnic boundaries in society are indispensable. Several authors have indicated the usefulness of ethnic boundary theories when discussing incorporation and assimilation (see e.g. Alba & Nee, 2003; Pachucki, Pendergrass, & Lamont, 2007; Zolberg & Woon, 1999). Alba argues that "the nature of ethnic boundaries is crucial in explaining how ethnic individuals, parts of ethnic groups, or even entire groups narrow the social distance that separates them from the mainstream and its opportunities" (Alba, 2005, p. 22).

Ethnic boundary theory is founded on the work of Fredrik Barth (1998), who states that the ethnic boundary defines the group rather than the group's cultural content. The persistence of ethnic groups does not depend on enduring ethno-cultural differences or an absence of interethnic contact, but rather on the maintenance of ethnic boundaries by one or both groups.

Barth (1998) views an ethnic group as a social organization. Two mechanisms are necessary for maintaining the continuity of an ethnic group: (1) establishing a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' and (2) the structuring of interaction. Members of both groups always jointly construct boundaries. First, although ethnic dichotomization may often be based on existing cultural differences, this is not always the case. The aspects that define the boundary between groups are those considered significant by the group members themselves. Ethnic identification is mainly based on ascription and self-identification. This mechanism of ethnic boundary maintenance marks the boundary between two groups, mainly through discourse. Second, the persistence of ethnic groups not only depends on establishing the criteria of difference, but also on structuring interaction. These boundaries are formed through interaction and by specific kinds of intergroup relations. This mechanism of ethnic boundary maintenance creates barriers that structure intergroup relations and access to resources.

These two dimensions of boundary maintenance can be linked to two types of boundaries. Lamont and Molnár (2002) make a distinction between social and symbolic boundaries. Social boundaries are "the objectified forms of social differences, manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources and social opportunities" (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). Social boundaries are prevalent on a macro level and manifest themselves in behavioral patterns, such as marriage, as well as in inequalities in different domains, such as school or work contexts. Symbolic boundaries are the "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices" (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). They are about how people cognitively categorize others and handle group differences. Van Kerckem argues that the persistence of social boundaries "depends on the continuous construction of symbolic boundaries, as well as upon the creation of barriers that prevent an easy 'flow' of resources, services and people across group boundaries" (Van Kerckem, 2014, p. 28). Hence, ethnic boundaries between groups persist because of the continuous construction of symbolic boundaries by dichotomization combined with members of both groups behaving according to these symbolic boundaries.

In contrast to this line of reasoning, Alba (2005) focuses more on boundaries created by institutions instead of by group members themselves. Alba argues that assimilation of minority members is influenced by whether boundaries between groups are bright or blurred.

There is no ambiguity in the location of individuals with respect to [a bright boundary]. In this case, assimilation is likely to take the form of boundary crossing . . . The counterpoint to a bright boundary is one that is or can become blurred. This could mean that individuals are seen as simultaneously members of the groups on both sides of the boundary or that sometimes they appear to be members of one and at other times members of the other. Under these circumstances, assimilation may be eased . . . Assimilation of this type involves intermediate or hyphenated stages that allow individuals to feel simultaneously as members of an ethnic minority and of the mainstream. (Alba, 2005, pp. 24-25)

Whether a boundary is bright or blurred depends on how it has been institutionalized in different domains. The institutionalization of boundaries means that a differentiation is made between majority and minority members within institutions. Alba states, "when this complex of distinctions is manifest in many domains (implying that participants enact it with regularity in their everyday lives) and is associated with salient asymmetries in social status and power, then it is unlikely to be blur-able" (Alba, 2005, p. 26).

Boundaries are dynamic and can therefore change over time, leading to different pathways to assimilation. Regarding change, Alba builds on a typology provided by Zolberg and Woon (1999) (see also Baoböck 1994) distinguishing three types: boundary crossing, blurring, and shifting.

Boundary crossing corresponds to the classic version of individual-level assimilation: someone moves from one group to another, without any real change to the boundary itself . . . Boundary blurring implies that the social profile of a boundary has become less distinct: the clarity of the social distinction involved has become clouded, and individuals' location with respect to the boundary may appear indeterminate. The final process, boundary shifting, involves the relocation of a boundary so that populations once situated on one side are now included on the other: former outsiders are thereby transformed into insiders. (Alba, 2005, p. 23)

Just as an overview of the main theoretical insights regarding integration and assimilation contributes to understanding processes of adaptation within minority groups, insight into the existence and maintenance of ethnic boundaries is essential when studying minority members' processes of adaptation and of, in particular, partner selection. In case of bright ethnic boundaries, both in symbolic

and social terms, processes of adaptation within minority groups will less likely be towards the majority population. The continuous othering and ethnically based inequality and differentiation, in turn, lead to the persistence of group differences, not in the least because of pressure to conform to norms, values, and behavior of the own group.

2.3 Family systems prevalent in Turkey and Morocco

After summarizing the most important theoretical insights on integration and assimilation processes of minority members, as well as the existence of ethnic boundaries, I turn my focus to the main topic of this dissertation, partner selection.

Below, I discuss the characteristics of family systems prevalent in Turkey and Morocco. However, as I will demonstrate, the extent to which these family systems are relevant to minority members' partner choice varies depending on certain characteristics and evolves over time. Nevertheless, it is important to describe these system because it serves as a base for partner selection patterns of both individuals living in Turkey and Morocco and Turkish and Moroccan minority members living in Western Europe. Minority members choosing a partner during the timeframe covered by this dissertation are socialized within these family systems by their parents and have internalized the associated norms, values, and customs to a great extent (de Valk, 2006; Hooghiemstra, 2003).

These family systems need to be understood within the more collectivistic Turkish and Moroccan cultures. General cultural values within collectivistic cultures are conformity, security, and group solidarity, with an emphasis on the conservation of in-group traditions (Triandis, 1989). These values are also associated with the family playing a more active role in union formation and partner selection process, which ensures traditional marriage practices are upheld. Family structures within collectivistic cultures can be categorized as strongly instead of weakly tied (Reher, 1998). In families with strong ties, the family takes center stage in the socialization of the young and sustaining close intergenerational relationships is considered to be a 'social obligation'. In contrast, in families with weaker ties, individualism is more predominant. Both material and emotional exchanges between parents and children are commonplace in families with strong ties, but comparatively less material exchange occurs in the weak-tie families. In addition, strongly tied families exercise more social control over family members and sharply emphasize

kin commitments, especially in marriage. Turkish and Moroccan collectivistic family systems are thus characterized as strongly tied.

Within the Turkish and Moroccan family system, marriage is almost universal (Obermeyer, 2000; Reher, 2004). Marriage is seen as a bond between individuals as well as their families, and the reputation of potential partners is essential for the preservation of family honor. Young adult behavior is therefore determined by an honor and shame system accompanied by a virginity norm and a strong preference for ethnic, cultural, and religious homogamy (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). A decision to involve parents and family members in partner selection is driven by the central role marriage plays in the preservation of family honor (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Finding a suitable and honorable partner is essential, and parents are generally believed to have the best insight and to offer reliable guidance. Among young adults, girls experience a higher level of social control because in strong group-oriented family systems, the sexual behavior of women has been used as a boundary marker between ethnic groups (Dasgupta & DasGupta, 1996; Le Espiritu, 2001; Yuval-Davis, Anthias, & Camping, 1989). The Turkish and Moroccan family system is characterized by a double standard regarding sexuality and the importance of ethnic homogamy. From a religious point of view, Islam does not consider the children of a Muslim woman and non-Muslim man to be Muslim; this norm is less strict for children of Muslim men in mixed marriages if the woman is Jewish or Christian (Buskens, 2010). In Morocco, this religious norm is also included in the family code (or Moudawana), which is based on Islamic norms and values (Buskens, 2010; Prettitore, 2015). Therefore, while the Turkish family code is secular and legally allows mixed marriages, openness towards heterogamy is low because of these religious norms (Ozgen, 2015). Once married, girls move in with their husband's family (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Marriage is therefore a way of perpetuating family cohesion and patriarchal family ties.

The patriarchal family structure is prevalent in most families (Timmerman, 2000; Van der Heyden, 2006). Men are expected to earn a living and represent the family outside the home. Women represent the family inside the home by taking care of children and the household. For women, participation in the labor market is therefore low compared to Belgium or other European countries (Worldbank, 2019). Because a woman's behavior affects the family's honor and reputation, marriage at a young age is closely followed by childbirth (Lodewijckx, Page, & Schoenmaeckers, 1997; Schoenmaeckers, Lodewijckx, & Gadeyne, 1999). Marriage

at a young age combined with a strong emphasis on having children results in high fertility levels (Kâğıtçıbaşı, 1996). For example, in 1990 the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for Moroccan women was almost 4 children per woman (Schoonvaere, 2014) and 2.65 for Turkish women (Yüceşahin & Özgür, 2008). However, we need to consider the possibility of regional differences within both countries. For example, Yüceşahin and Özgür (2008) show that in Turkey the TFR differs substantially between provinces, depending on levels of urbanization and female literacy as well as diversity with regard to language and ethnicity. In 2000, the TFR varied between 1.66 children per woman in western provinces and 7.06 in eastern provinces.

Both sexual behavior and childbirth are reserved for married life (Obermeyer, 2000; Timmerman, 2006). The stigma attached to single-parent families—even in cases of divorce—is strong, especially for single mothers, as women are not supposed to be the head of the household (Kavas & Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2013). Besides stigmatization, other consequences of being a single parent are loss of social and familial support and difficulties finding a marriage partner because of a damaged (familial) reputation.

Nevertheless, the extent to which the collectivistic family system has been applied varies. Kâğıtçıbaşı and Ataca (2005) describe two models of family values and attitudes prevalent in Turkey: the traditional model of interdependence and the model of psychological interdependence. The former is more common in less developed rural areas of collectivistic cultures and is characterized by familial interdependencies in both psychological and material realms. Parents depend on their children for material benefits and old-age security. Children are taught the importance of relatedness and family loyalty. Regarding family formation, arranged partnerships are more frequent, as are consanguineous partnerships (Hortaçsu & Oral, 1994; Kâğıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005; Koc, 2008). Parents with lower levels of educational attainment, traditional attitudes regarding gender roles, more children, and higher levels of religious commitment who are from rural origins are more likely to subscribe to these family values. The psychological interdependence model, by contrast, is present in areas that are more urban and more developed socioeconomically. Familial interdependency regarding the material realm is weaker, but emotional dependency is strongly present. This means there is strong conformity to parental preferences and expectations; however, children have more autonomy in life-course decisions, thus making couple-initiated romantic partnerships more common (Hortaçsu & Oral, 1994).

This model prevails among parents with higher educational attainment, fewer children, and less religious commitment who are from an urban origin (Kâğıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005; Koc, 2008). The two models coexist (Hortaçsu & Oral, 1994); however, Kâğıtçıbaşı and Ataca (2005) describe an evolution in family values, facilitated by socioeconomic development and increasing levels of educational attainment, from the traditional model to the model of psychological interdependence between generations. With urbanization and socioeconomic development, material dependencies between children and parents decrease and the autonomy of children increases, as autonomy is also necessary for functioning in a more urban environment and succeeding in school or the job market. Nevertheless, this evolution does not mean that adolescents are completely autonomous in their partner selection and family relations become more nuclear, as predicted by a general modernization perspective. The psychological interdependence model differs from the independence model, which is more common in Western industrial urban settings with individualistic cultures, as the former assumes emotional dependence between parent and child instead of emotional separation. The model of psychological interdependence combines the Western family pattern of separation and independence with the traditional model of interdependence as it unites interdependence in the emotional realm with independence in the material realm.

To my knowledge, there is no literature that tests for the existence of these models of family relations in Morocco. However, similar regional differences regarding educational attainment, literacy, patriarchal family bonds, and fertility rates between rural and more urban areas in Morocco could suggest that family attitudes and practices differ accordingly and are also influenced by social change based on socioeconomic development in Morocco (Courbage, 1995; Obermeyer, 2000).

This is not the only observed evolution that can be connected to processes of modernization; other examples are increasing age at marriage (Courbage, 1995; Schoenmaeckers et al., 1999), decreasing fertility rates (Desrués & Nieto, 2009; Yüceşahin & Özgür, 2008), and the slow increase of Turkey's low divorce rates,⁸ although the high divorce rates in Morocco are declining.⁹ Important to note is that the institutional context in both countries also changed, in particular with regard to the position of women in society. In Morocco, the family code was reformed in 2004, which changed the legal framework surrounding family formation and partner selection profoundly (Buskens, 2010). For the first time, the law stipulated that spouses have equal rights and duties within the family. Women were granted the right to divorce and given more rights in the negotiation of the marriage. Additionally, the minimum marriage age for women was raised from 15 to 18 years old. In 2002, the Turkish family code also institutionalized greater gender equality (Koelet, Corijn, Lodewijckx, Mortelmans, & d'Hooge, 2008).

Despite these institutional and behavior changes, the collectivistic family system remains the foundation of family formation and partner selection for young Turks and Moroccans, especially in rural areas (Obermeyer, 2000; Timmerman, 1994). Masid (2002) states that Islamic law in Morocco has influenced Moroccan culture for so long that it is strongly intertwined with people's attitudes and behavior. For example, while gender equality in Turkish and Moroccan society is increasing, family honor is still to a great extent dependent on the sexuality of women, which results in stricter social control of women's behavior and a certain gender hierarchy (Buskens, 2010; Kavas & Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2013; Prettitore, 2015).

⁸ Council of Europe, 2004, p. 67

⁹ In Morocco, divorce rates were high (around 50%) mainly because, until 2004, men had the right to cast off their wives or to marry more than one woman (Masid, 2002). Jones (1997) shows that in societies with high divorce rates and low levels of socioeconomic development, divorce rates decrease with modernization compared to societies with low divorce rates, in which divorce rates increase with modernization.

2.4 Turkish and Moroccan migration to Belgium

Partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium is influenced by family systems prevalent in the origin country, as described in the previous section, as well as by characteristics of the migration streams. In what follows, I describe how Turkish and Moroccan migration towards Belgium originated and continues, primarily because of the partner selection preferences of minority members. The specific characteristics of the migration generated a selective group of minority members that are not representative of the Turkish and Moroccan population as a whole, neither at the beginning of migration nor today.

Turkish and Moroccan immigration to Belgium—and to other Western-European countries—started in the early 1960s because of a shortage of laborers as a result of a booming economy (Atalik & Beeley, 1993; Schoonvaere, 2014). In 1962, the first bilateral agreements arranged for the immigration of predominately male guest workers to Belgium (Atalik & Beeley, 1993). This first wave of (labor) immigration ended in 1974 when European governments initiated a moratorium as the economy underwent the post-industrial transition and additional low-skilled laborers became unnecessary (Khooinian, 2006). The guest workers' length of stay was presumed to be temporary, but instead became permanent; this was the foundation for the second wave of family reunification immigration. Married male laborers were reunified with their families throughout the 1970s (Reniers, 1999). Thus, labor migration evolved into chain migration. After 1974, ethnic communities were reconstructed through chain migration, and the already strong association between migration and kinship became almost exclusive (Lesthaeghe, 2000; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). These newly established ethnic communities were transplanted communities in which minority members originating from the same regions often ended up living in concentrated communities in Belgium as well (Reniers, 1999). The phenomenon of transplanted communities resulted in strong concentrations of Turkish and Moroccan minority members originating from mainly rural areas (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). These transplanted communities are able to preserve cultural and normative structures from the origin country, such as norms, values, and traditions regarding family formation and partner selection (Lievens, 2000). The transplanted communities generate strong transnational networks and retain a continuing commitment to remaining relatives in the origin country (Timmerman, 2006).

European governments had expected that migration would dwindle quickly after a certain point, since the number of family members staying behind would eventually decrease. However, immigration has continued unabated since the early 1980s (Lievens, 2000). This third wave consists mainly of people arriving as newlywed partners of minority members already living in Belgium (Lievens, 1999a). This is the result of firmly established transnational networks and the presence of a culture of migration within the origin countries. Timmerman and colleagues argue that

the existence of a “culture of migration” that binds the region of origin with the region of destination and in which “the family” as an institution is capable of building a bridge between traditional praxis, as well as the challenges linked to international migration are crucial for understanding the enduring popularity of marriage migration. (Timmerman et al., 2009, pp. 232-233)

The distance between partners—and their families—involved in transnational marriages makes the partnership negotiations complicated and requires strong transnational ties in order to be successful (Reniers, 1999). These transnational networks were formed at the start of Turkish and Moroccan migration but later, during the third migration wave, facilitated new (family forming) migrations (Lievens, 2000). These transnational marriages, in turn, reinforce the transnational networks between minority members and their origin country or region, resulting in self-perpetuating transnational ties.

Clearly, the migration histories of Turkish and Moroccan minorities have strong similarities (period of arrival, legal conditions, religious characteristics) (Reniers, 1999; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). However, there are also differences regarding the characteristics of the migration and of the recruitment policies (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). Some Moroccan migrants who arrived in Belgium in the 1960s came of their own accord, searching for better living conditions, and not via official recruitment channels. This resulted in three main differences between the characteristics of the groups. First, Turkish labor migrants largely originated from rural provinces such as Afyon, Eskisehir, and Kayseri (Schoonvaere, 2013). Moroccan migrants came from more heterogeneous origins. More than 40 percent—of whom most were of Berber descent—originated from two rural provinces, Nador and Al Hoceima, known as the Rif area (Reniers, 1999). Others of Arabic origin migrated from provinces such as Tanger, Tutouan, and Oujda and lived in more urbanized

settings. Second, the percentage of Turkish labor workers who were already married before migrating, and therefore left their families behind, was larger than the percentage of Moroccan labor workers (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). Third, Turkish migrants were largely lower educated compared to Moroccan migrants, who were more heterogeneous with regard to educational attainment as some of them originated from more urban areas.

These differences are reflected in the more individualistic and sociocultural character of Moroccan immigration compared to the more family-oriented, socioeconomic Turkish immigration (Reniers, 1999; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). These differences are also visible in the level of transnationalism. Compared to Turkish minority members, fewer Moroccan minority members own property in the origin country (Lesthaeghe, 2000), and the norms and values that they uphold are more compatible with the norms and values prevalent in the residence country (Janssens, 1997; Lodewijckx et al., 1997). Finally, transnational ties and social cohesion of local co-ethnic networks in the residence country are weaker among Moroccan minorities (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996).

The third immigration wave, consisting mainly of people arriving as newlywed partners of minority members already living in Belgium, started in the early 1980s and continues today. Migration to Belgium is officially allowed for five reasons: for purposes of education, work, or asylum, or for humanitarian or family reasons (family formation and reunification) (Caestecker, 2005); the latter motive remains the most important.

To illustrate the prevalence of different migration motives, I analyze the numbers Eurostat provides on the first residence permits issued in Belgium for Turkish and Moroccan civilians between 2010 and 2015. All authorizations that are valid for at least a year, allowing Turks and Moroccans to stay legally in Belgium, are selected. The focus on permits with a duration of at least a year allows me to obtain greater insight into the characteristics of first-generation minority members who have entered Belgium recently and possibly registered an official partnership within the timeframe considered by this dissertation. The statistics on first residence permits were published by Eurostat in 2008 and continue today. However, a change in the data source in 2010¹⁰ makes a comparison of numbers from both before and after

¹⁰ From 2010 onwards, all information regarding residence permits published by Eurostat is provided by the Belgian Immigration Office (Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken) instead of the National Register (Schoonvaere, 2014).

2010 impossible. This change caused the 'Other' category to increase significantly in 2010, after which it attenuated, as is illustrated below.

It is important to point out that part of the first residence permits for family reasons do not relate to migration in the strict sense of the word, since children born in Belgium from foreign nationals (legally residing in Belgium) also receive a first residence permit for family reasons (EMN, 2017). Around 50 percent of all children who received a residence permit were actually born in Belgium.

Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show that among both Moroccan and Turkish nationals, family is the most important motive for migration (over 70% for Moroccans and over 60% for Turks). The prevalence of family migration stays consistent over time, although the proportion of Turkish family formation migration declines. The second most important motive falls under the 'Other' category, at 20 percent for Moroccans and 17 percent for Turks. This category includes refugees and unaccompanied minors, but is primarily composed of those who migrate for humanitarian reasons. Asylum seekers are included only when they enjoy subsidiary protection or have been formally recognized as a refugee. However, as indicated above, the 'Other' category becomes smaller over time due to methodological issues. Lastly, the number of Moroccans migrating to Belgium because of education and work is small and consistent at around 3 to 5 percent. Among Turks, the prevalence is higher and increases, respectively, from 11 to 17 percent and from 7 to 13 percent.

Hence, first-generation minority members registering a partnership within the timeframe of this study are either former partner migrants, or they entered Belgium most likely because of 'other' reasons if they migrated from Morocco, and because of work or education if they migrated from Turkey.

Figure 2.3 First residence permits (1 year or longer) issued for Moroccan civilians

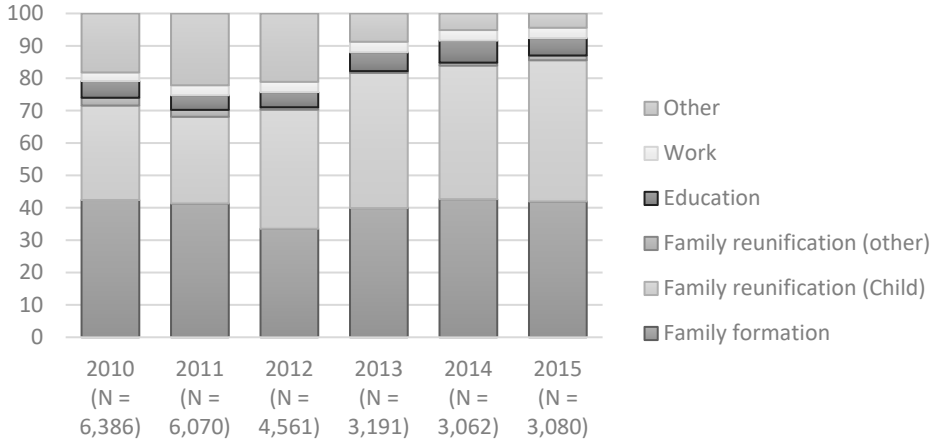
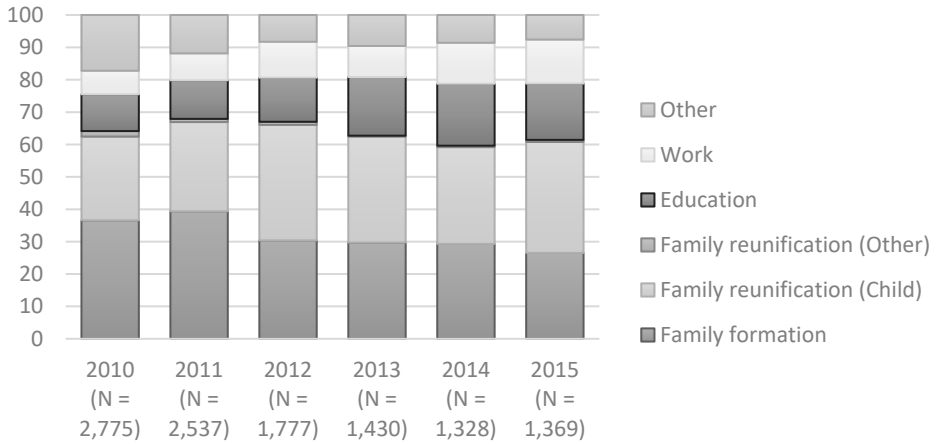


Figure 2.4 First residence permits (1 year or longer) issued for Turkish civilians



2.5 Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium

The previous sections discuss two aspects that influence partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minority members living in Belgium: family systems prevalent in the origin countries, and the context in which migration to Belgium originated and continues, which generates a selective group of minority members. In the following sections, I elaborate on some characteristics of these minority groups that are important for understanding their partner selection patterns and the mechanisms of change within these groups. I discuss the size of Turkish and Moroccan minority groups in Belgium and issues regarding the determination and definition of an ethnic minority group, as well as the societal position of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgian society.

In 2005, there were about 240,000 and 139,00 individuals living in Belgium with, respectively, a Moroccan or a Turkish nationality at birth.¹¹ However, the size of the complete Turkish and Moroccan minority population, including Belgians by birth of Turkish or Moroccan descent, is much larger. Estimating the size of minority groups in Belgium is not easy because official statistics are based on nationality at birth or the current nationality of residents of Belgium and therefore exclude individuals of foreign descent born with Belgian nationality. Nevertheless, the Flemish Migration and Integration Monitor (Noppe et al., 2018) is able to estimate the size of the Turkish and Moroccan minority group by including individuals born with Turkish or Maghreb nationality, individuals with current Turkish or Maghreb nationality, and Belgians of Turkish or Maghreb descent, which is based on having a father and/or mother with Turkish or Maghreb nationality at birth. The data are retrieved from the Data Warehouse Job Market and Social Protection (Datawarehouse Arbeidsmarkt en Sociale bescherming or DWH AM&SB) and the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (Kruispuntbank van de Sociale Zekerheid or KSZ) and were analyzed by Statistics Flanders.¹² One limitation of these calculations that is relevant to the focus of this dissertation is that the data for Morocco are combined with other Maghreb¹³ countries. The

¹¹ Data source: Statistics Belgium, retrieved by the Center for Demographic Research at University of Louvain, or DEMO/UCL, with calculations done by the Belgian Federal Migration Centre, or Myria.

¹² <https://www.statistiekvlaanderen.be/>

¹³ Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania

Monitor calculates that on January 1, 2016, 239,611 and 580,666 individuals in the Belgian National Register belonged, respectively, to the Turkish or Maghreb minority population.

As indicated, calculating the size of ethnic minority populations is not easy because Belgian nationals of foreign descent are hard to identify in the National Register. Nevertheless, the size of this group increases over time because, from 1991 onwards, individuals automatically acquire Belgian nationality at birth if at least one parent is born, raised, and residing in Belgium (Caestecker, Renauld, Perrin, & Eggerinckx, 2016). The legislation regarding the acquisition of Belgian nationality is complicated but necessary for comprehending which individuals are included in our research population. In the following paragraphs, two important legislative changes are discussed: one occurred in 1991, another in 2000. Other minor changes before, during, and after these two are of less importance to the scope of this dissertation and are therefore not discussed.

2.5.1 Belgian nationality legislation

2.5.1.1 Legislation before 1991

Before 1991, a minor could automatically acquire Belgian nationality if at least one parent is Belgian (1) or became Belgian (2) (Caestecker et al., 2016). Children of immigrants, be they second- or third-generation minority members could acquire Belgian nationality, as they were born and raised in Belgium but only after meeting several criteria (3). This way to acquire Belgian nationality was not often used.

Adults could acquire Belgian nationality after marrying a Belgian partner and living together for at least six months (1). One could acquire Belgian nationality through naturalization after a stay of a minimum of 5 years (2). Or, one could choose to acquire Belgian nationality between the ages of 18 and 22 if several complicated criteria regarding one's connection to Belgium were met (3).

2.5.1.2 Legislative changes in 1991

Three major changes were implemented in 1991 (Caestecker et al., 2016). Most importantly, children belonging to the third generation could now acquire Belgian nationality automatically (1). Furthermore, children of the second generation could acquire Belgian nationality if their parents had been residents of Belgium for at least ten years and had signed a declaration (2). Finally, adult second-generation

members could acquire Belgian nationality between the ages of 18 and 30 if they had been born, raised, and resided in Belgium and had signed a declaration (3).

The impact of these legislative changes is visible in the national statistics: between 1992 and 1999, about 60 to 80 percent of all Turks and Moroccans that had acquired Belgian nationality were born in Belgium (Scheepers, Gijsberts, & Hello, 2002; Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014). In addition, the number of nationality acquisitions increased between 1991 and 1999 by 48,220 for Turks and 73,812 for Moroccans (see Figures 1.5 and 1.6).

2.5.1.3 Legislative changes in 2000

Three changes were implemented in 2000 (Caestecker et al., 2016). Most importantly, first-generation adults could acquire Belgian nationality if they lived in Belgium for a minimum of seven years and had a permanent residence permit (1). This legislation is the so-called 'snelbelg-wet.' Furthermore, adults belonging to the second generation could acquire Belgian nationality without a specific age restriction if they were born in Belgium and have always been residents (2). Additionally, one could acquire Belgian nationality via naturalization after a stay of three instead of five years (3).

These legislative changes made the acquisition of Belgian nationality easier for first-generation minority members (Scheepers et al., 2002; Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014). In 1992, more than 80 percent of new Turkish/Moroccan Belgians were born in Belgium; from 2000 onwards, more than half of nationality acquisitions were for Turks and Moroccans born abroad. These legislative changes also caused a steep increase in the number of nationality acquisitions in 2000 and 2001, as 31,717 acquisitions were granted for Turks and 45,935 for Moroccans. After 2001, the prevalence dropped again to a steady 3,000 a year for Turks and around 7,000 for Moroccans (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

Figure 2.5 Evolution of the number of nationality changes of Turkish nationals residing in Belgium, 1973-2009 (Source: Schoonvaere, 2013)

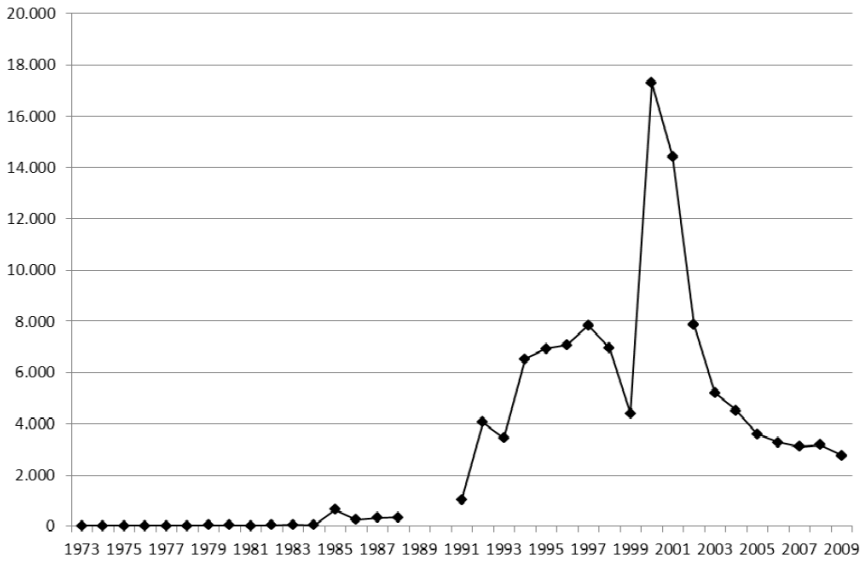
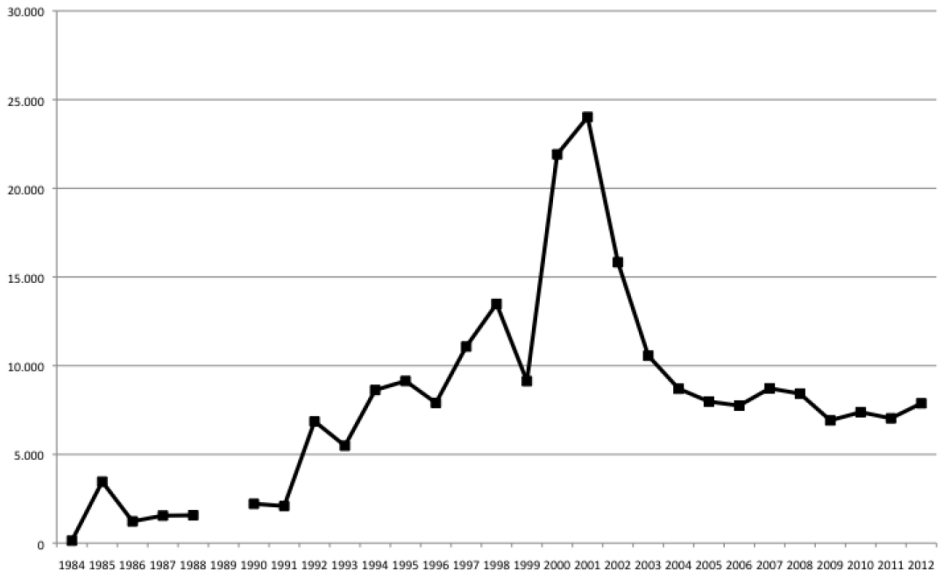


Figure 2.6 Evolution of the number of nationality changes of Moroccan nationals residing in Belgium, 1973-2009 (Source: Schoonvaere, 2014)



2.5.1.4 Ethnic boundaries in Belgian society

The societal position of Turkish and Moroccan minority members is often one of disadvantage because Belgian society is characterized by strong ethnic boundaries between Turkish and Moroccan minority groups and the Belgian majority population. As indicated earlier, Lamont and Molnár (2002) make a distinction between social and symbolic boundaries. Social boundaries are prevalent on a macro level and manifest themselves in behavioral patterns, such as marriage, as well as in inequalities in different domains. The link between marriage behavior and ethnic boundaries is discussed later in more detail (see section 2.6.2). Below, I illustrate how social boundaries manifest themselves in inequalities in terms of educational attainment, employment, and poverty rates, and end with a discussion of the prevalence of symbolic boundaries in Belgian society.

Phalet and Swyngedouw (2003) show that, based on Belgian census data from 1991, educational attainment levels of first-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members are low. These former guest workers entered Belgium with mostly low or no educational attainment, with the exception of a separate stream of highly educated Moroccans who enrolled in Belgian universities (Neels, 2000). In Flanders, more than 60 percent of men and 80 percent of women had received only primary education or no formal education at all. In Brussels and Wallonia, the numbers are slightly better, but still more than half of the first generation was reported to have a low educational attainment. Furthermore, first-generation women had even lower educational attainment levels than men, reflecting large gender inequalities, particularly in rural areas of Turkey and Morocco (Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2003). Despite increasing educational levels among second-generation members, especially among women, an educational disadvantage for Turkish and Moroccan minority members persists among the second generation. Based on Belgian census data from 2001, Phalet et al. (2007) show that 31 percent of the Moroccan and 36 percent of the Turkish second generation in Belgium (between ages 22 and 28) has less than a full secondary qualification, compared to 13 percent of their Belgian peers. A more recent study has shown that second-generation women in most European countries have, to a considerable extent, closed the gender gap (Crul et al., 2012). However, an educational gap between minority and majority members remains present (Korkmazer & Agirdag, 2015).

With regard to employment rates, the Flemish Migration and Integration Monitor reports the percentage of individuals between 20 and 64 years old who are working¹⁴ in Flanders (Noppe et al., 2018). In this age range, 73.5 percent of Belgian nationals were working in 2009, compared to 48.5 and 49 percent of individuals from, respectively, Turkish or Maghreb descent.¹⁵ Differentiating according to gender indicates that women, especially minority women, stay at home. Among Belgians living in Flanders, 78.9 percent of men and 68 percent of women work. For Turkish minority members, these numbers are 63.7 and 32.1 percent. Among the Maghreb population, they are 60.5 and 36.3 percent.

A final indicator that I discuss to compare the socioeconomic position of Turkish and Moroccan minority members to the Belgian majority population is the number of children born in poverty.¹⁶ The Flemish Migration and Integration Monitor reports that 6 percent of all children born in Flanders to a mother with Belgian nationality between 2013 and 2015 are born into an underprivileged family (Noppe et al., 2018). In comparison, 32 percent and 36.2 percent of all children born between 2013 and 2015 to a Turkish or Maghreb mother, respectively, were born in an underprivileged situation.

These social boundaries, which work to the disadvantage of minority members, can be the result of symbolic boundaries (Phalet & Heath, 2011). These symbolic boundaries manifest themselves as the idea that Turkish and Moroccan minority members are essentially different from Europeans; this difference often has a negative connotation. Hence, symbolic boundaries are often translated into social exclusion and discrimination. Tajfel and Turner (1986) explain how negative intergroup attitudes may result from the process of dichotomization or, as they call it, 'social categorization.' They state that individuals distinguish themselves

¹⁴ Data source: DWH AM & SB KSZ, with calculations done by Statistics Flanders. The 'Working' category includes people who are self-employed or who are an employee or both.

¹⁵ The definition for being of Turkish or Maghreb descent used in the Flemish Migration and Integration Monitor is explained on page 55. Individuals born with Turkish or Maghreb nationality, individuals with current Turkish or Maghreb nationality, and Belgians of Turkish or Maghreb descent, based on the Turkish or Maghreb nationality at birth of their father and/or mother, are all included.

¹⁶ Data source: Child and Family (Kind en Gezin). For each child born in Flanders, Child and Family uses six criteria to determine whether the family is underprivileged or not. The criteria are monthly household income, the parents' educational and occupational attainment, the child's development, housing, and the household's health situation. A family is considered underprivileged when at least three of these criteria are not satisfied.

from others by looking for group differences. Because people need to create and maintain a positive self-image, which is partially based on group memberships, they tend to evaluate the in-group as positively as possible. Viewing the in-group favorably could be a strategy for maintaining their own positive perception of their group. How strong the association is between viewing the in-group favorably and evaluating out-groups negatively depends on the extent to which individuals identify themselves with their in-group and on competition between different groups.

In both Belgium and Europe, ethnic prejudice in intergroup relations between Muslim minorities and European majorities is pervasive (Van Acker, 2012; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). Survey data collected in Flanders and Brussels in 2002 shows that 28 percent of respondents agree with the statement that Belgium should never have brought in guest workers, and 27 percent believe that 'generally, migrants are not to be trusted' (Meuleman & Billiet, 2003). These negative attitudes towards migrants are strongly related with perceiving the presence of minority members as a threat to, for example, employment opportunities (21%) or cultural identity (34%).

It is not only researchers who are able to identify ethnocentrism and prejudice among majority members—minority members also perceive these attitudes in their social contact with the majority. A survey based study conducted in two Belgian cities (Antwerp and Brussels) shows that the influence of ethnic prejudice is strongly present in the daily lives of minority members. Vandezande, Fleischmann, Baysu, Swyngedouw, and Phalet (2009) conclude that, on average, 30 percent or more of second-generation respondents of Turkish descent and 40 percent or more of respondents of Moroccan descent experience personal discrimination¹⁷ sometimes or often. More than half of the respondents claim the discrimination was based on their ethnicity.

¹⁷ Perceived personal discrimination is defined by the authors as the experience of unequal or hostile treatment in situated intergroup encounters.

2.6 Mechanisms of adaptation among Turkish and Moroccan minorities

So far, it is clear that the specific circumstances under which Turkish and Moroccan immigration to Belgium began, and continues, have generated a selective group of minority members originating from areas with low levels of urbanization and educational attainment. In these areas, collectivistic family systems are in place. These family systems could remain prevalent among minority groups in Belgium due to strong transnational networks and transplanted communities. However, as I illustrate, the family systems in the origin countries are also subject to change, as is seen in declining parental involvement and fertility rates (Desrués & Nieto, 2009; Yüceşahin & Özgür, 2008), as well as in an increase in marriage age and divorce rates (for Turkey) (Council of Europe, 2004; Courbage, 1995; Schoenmaeckers et al., 1999), for example. These changes move the collectivistic family system towards a system more in line with the family forming processes prevalent in countries like Belgium.

Since the 1960s, considerable changes in family formation have been seen in Belgium and other European countries as part of the Second Demographic Transition (Lesthaeghe, 1998; Surkyn & Lesthaeghe, 2004; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001; Van de Kaa, 1987). The notion of the Second Demographic Transition refers to these interrelated changes in family arrangements. These changes are attributed to structural-economic and cultural shifts such as increased female emancipation, female labor market participation, use of anticonception, importance of independence, and individualism (Bulckens, Mortelmans, Casman, & Simaÿs, 2007). Regarding family formation patterns, they have resulted in more equality and more autonomy in relationships, postponement of marriage and parenthood, lower levels of fertility and marriage, and higher levels of cohabitation, divorce, and non-marital fertility (Kuijsten, 1996; Prioux & Mandelbaum, 2007; Van de Kaa, 1987).

Hence, family formation and partner selection behavior of minority members residing in Belgium might change towards the Belgian system due to the combination of exposure to the residence country's family system and changes in the origin country. However, minority members may preserve collectivistic systems because, as indicated earlier, they are generally in a disadvantaged position in Belgian society, which is characterized by strong ethnic boundaries. Maintaining

norms, values, and customs can be a coping strategy and a way to maintain ethnic identity (Dumon, 1989). Empirically, there are many possibilities for adapting to living in another society: assimilation is one, maintenance is another. Throughout this dissertation, I will use the term adaptation to refer to these processes of change, without implying a particular direction of change. Adaptation can refer to changes more in line with majority members' behavior or more in line with the own co-ethnic group. Assimilation is seen as change towards more similarities with the majority, but, contrary to, for example, Alba and Nee (1997), without necessarily losing all distinctions between majority and minority members. The concept of integration is used to indicate a process wherein characteristics of minority and majority groups are combined, and members of both groups find a way to live together. This is a two-way process and entails changes among minority as well as majority populations. American scholars refer to this as the concept of incorporation.

In the following sections, general insights into the mechanisms of adaptation—discussed in section 2.1—are applied to Turkish and Moroccan minority members and their family systems. Initially, I discuss several aspects of family formation, then focus on partner selection. In a last step, I consider the connection between partner selection behavior and ethnic boundaries.

2.6.1 Family formation and partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minorities

Several studies from Belgium and neighboring countries show that collectivistic family systems form the base of family forming and partner selection behavior of both first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members.

Marriage and finding a suitable marriage partner play a central role in the lives of young adults, especially girls (Yalcin, Lodewyckx, Marynissen, Van Caudenberg, & Timmerman, 2006). Adolescent boys generally enjoy more freedom of movement, often resulting in more contact with majority members and sometimes (secret) premarital relationships with Belgian girls (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009). Female minority members experience high levels of social control and severe consequences for having premarital relationships in general and mixed partnerships in particular (Esveldt & Kulu-Glasgow, 1994; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Finding a suitable partner is essential, and parents are generally trusted to offer reliable insight and the best guidance in the partner selection process. Parental

involvement is especially high in transnational partnerships (Huschek, de Valk, & Liefbroer, 2012), as partner compatibility can be evaluated beforehand, which is important given the greater uncertainties and risks of this partner type (Aybek, Straßburger, & Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, 2015). Parents and family members often serve as matchmakers between two partners living in different countries; however, high levels of parental involvement are also present in the formation of local partnerships (Hense & Schorch, 2013). Adolescents generally accept parental and family involvement in response to family pressure as well as their own desire for family cohesion and solidarity (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007). Therefore, arranged partnerships are frequently accepted because they are based on a supportive network and the compatibility of the partners rather than on emotions alone (Aybek, 2015). As family cohesion and solidarity is generally higher among Turkish minority members, the prevalence of arranged partnerships and parental involvement in partner selection is higher among them compared to Moroccan minority members (Huschek, De Valk, & Liefbroer, 2010).

Both parents and adolescents' preferences regarding ideal marriage partners are oriented towards the origin country (Callaerts, 1997; de Vries, 1987; Hooghiemstra, 2001; Van der Hoek & Kret, 1992). It is generally believed that partners from the home country are more eligible—e.g. have the same norms and values and are a better cultural fit—compared to local co-ethnics, who have a bad reputation and are not considered appropriate partners (Callaerts, 1997; Sterckx & Bouw, 2005), or members of the majority, who are not considered eligible because of social and religious norms regarding homogamy and strong cultural differences (de Vries, 1987; Van Kerckem, Van de Putte, & Stevens, 2014). In addition, Reniers (2001) shows that, based on survey data from the 1990s,¹⁸ around one third of the marriages of Turkish and Moroccan minority members are consanguineous, mostly with first cousins on the father's side. Almost all of these consanguineous marriages were transnational. Baykara-Krumme (2016) analyzes more recent data (2000 Families study), but her results are similar to Reniers': around one third of the marriages of both first- and second-generation Turkish minority members are with a family member. She agrees with Reniers that the higher prevalence of

¹⁸ Two Migration History and Social Mobility (MHSM) surveys, which are representative surveys carried out from 1994 to 1996 by the universities of Brussels (VUB), Ghent (UG), Liège (ULG), and Louvain-La-Neuve (UCL).

consanguineous marriages among minority communities compared to the origin countries

seems to be linked to cultural motivations and structural conditions in a minority context, which we could further identify with our data only to some extents. We could support one explanation, which is dominant in the literature, namely, the positive association of consanguineous marriages with cross-border partner choice and marriage. Families in the country of origin and destination become (re)joined; kin obligations are met, immigration restrictions are circumvented, and marriage negotiations are facilitated. (Baykara-Krumme, 2016, p. 592)

In describing minority members' family systems, some authors have shown that gender roles are often traditional (Timmerman, 2006), strong stigma is attached to divorce (Van Robaey, Perrin, Vranken, & Martiniello, 2006; Welslau & Deven, 2003), and having children is highly valued and reserved for married life (Sterckx, Dagevos, Huijnk, & van Lisdonk, 2014). Consequently, fertility rates are high compared to Belgian rates. Based on the 1991 Belgian Census data, Schoenmaeckers et al. (1999) find age-specific fertility levels that are two (for Turkish minority women) to three (for Moroccan minority women) times as high. Although Turkish women have a younger fertility pattern, overall, they have fewer children than Moroccan women. Moroccan women have, according to the TFR, 4.2 children compared to 3.2 for Turkish women. The origin countries show a similar pattern.

Although family formation and partner selection behavior of minority members in Belgium and other countries are based on family systems prevalent in the origin countries, their behavior changes. During the 1990s and 2000s, several changes were reported, of which I discuss four: age at marriage, fertility, parental influence in partner selection, and divorce rates.

Lodewijckx et al. (1997) show that, based on Belgian survey data collected between 1991 and 1993, Turkish minority women marry at a younger age than Moroccan minority women, but among both groups, marriage age is higher in younger cohorts. The difference between older and younger cohorts can be explained mainly by differences in educational attainment: the likelihood to marry at a younger age is higher for lower educated women; the opposite is true for women with a higher educational attainment. Generally, marriage age is lower among minority members in a transnational marriage, compared to local co-ethnic or

mixed marriage (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, Van de Putte, Lievens, & Caestecker, 2017; Huschek et al., 2012).

One of the factors that influences the declining fertility rates of Turkish and Moroccan minority women, in addition to the wish to delay childbirth in marriage and a decline in the number of children desired, is the increase in marriage age (Schoenmaeckers et al., 1999). Researchers report declining trends over time and over successive generations. In 2000, the TFR of first-generation women of Moroccan origin was 3.6 children, whereas the TFR of the second generation was 2.1. The TFRs for Turkish women were, respectively, 2.7 and 1.8 (Gadeyne, Neels, & De Wachter, 2009). Furthermore, fertility rates of second-generation Turkish and Moroccan women in Belgium differ according to partner type: women in mixed marriages have lower first birth rates (Van Landschoot, Willaert, de Valk, & Van Bavel, 2018), as well as lower second and subsequent birth rates (Van Landschoot, de Valk, & Van Bavel, 2017), than women in homogamous¹⁹ marriages. Contrary to the authors' expectations, rates do not differ between women in local co-ethnic versus transnational marriages.

Reniers and Lievens (1997) show that with regard to parental influence in the partner selection process of Turkish and Moroccan minority members of the second generation in Belgium, the number of marriages formed based on parental initiative is lower compared to the first generation. Moreover, the number of marriages formed based on the initiative of the partners has the opposite evolution. More recently, Van Zantvliet et al. (2014) report declining parental involvement in partner selection across migration generations of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in the Netherlands. The authors also confirm the association between parental involvement and educational attainment as well as marriage age. Minority members with a higher education (Moroccans only) or those who married at an older age report less parental influence in the partner selection process. Qualitative research shows that minority parents are becoming more reluctant to have an extensive influence on their children's partner selection (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Hooghiemstra, 2003). The partner selection process has evolved from being initiated by parents and family to being initiated by partners with parental consent. Parental approval, thus, is still important and a

¹⁹ Local co-ethnic and transnational marriages combined.

well-accepted condition for getting married (Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010).

Finally, with regard to divorce rates, Dupont et al. (2019a) compare the 2008 rates of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium who married between 2001 and 2003 to the results of Eeckhaut et al. (2011), who performed similar analyses in 1996 of minority members married between 1988 and 1990. The results reveal that in the past 15 years divorce rates have doubled for Turkish and Moroccan minorities, and that the rates are much higher among the Moroccan group. Furthermore, clear differences are seen according to partner type. Local co-ethnic marriages have the lowest divorce rates, followed by transnational marriages and mixed marriages. These results correspond with a literature review and qualitative study by Welslau and Deven (2003) discussing a diminishing taboo regarding divorce and a more positive attitude regarding single mothers, especially among second-generation minority members. Nevertheless, lower educated women (Yalcin et al., 2006) and female partner migrants, if they (have) had to return to the origin country after a divorce (Lodewyckx, Geets, & Timmerman, 2006; Van der Heyden, 2006), still report strong stigmatization.

The increase in age at marriage and in divorce rates, and a decrease parental influence and fertility rates, are changes towards the family system prevalent in Belgium that occur over time and over successive migration generations. Among Moroccan minority members, these changes seem to evolve more easily; several authors explain this by pointing out differences in the characteristics of the first wave of migration from Turkey versus Morocco (Lievens, 1999a; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). Turkish, in contrast to Moroccan, collectivistic family systems might be better maintained because of strong transnational ties, group cohesion, and the existence of transplanted communities.

Regarding several aspects of family formation—parental influence, marriage age, and consanguineous marriages—transnational partnerships seem to be associated with family behavior that is more in line with collectivistic family systems (Carol, Ersanilli, & Wagner, 2014; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Huschek et al., 2012). The fact that transnational marriages are prevalent among both first- and second-generation minority members, compared to local co-ethnic and mixed marriages, and remains prevalent over time, is therefore often seen as problematic by policy makers and researchers as well as by the general public. In his analysis of Belgian population data from 1991, for example, Lievens (1999a) describes a

high percentage of transnational marriages among Turkish (around 70%) and Moroccan (around 56%) minority members. In 2004, similar results were reported in Flanders. Approximately 60 percent of second-generation Turkish minority members (Yalcin et al., 2006) and second-generation Moroccan women (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009) chose a transnational partner. Among second-generation Moroccan men, in 2004, the prevalence was around 40 percent (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009).

Migration theories consider marrying a partner from the origin country to be a sign of segregation (Lichter et al., 2011; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996), as minority members may then isolate themselves from the destination culture and retain the cultural praxis of the origin country (Berry, 1997; Ward, Furnham, & Bochner, 2005). Furthermore, as indicated in section 2.4, a high prevalence of transnational partnerships indicates a strong system of chain migration that results in an ongoing influx of first-generation migrants (Reniers, 1999). There is a concern that these marriages could slow down processes of integration within minority groups (Heyse, Pauwels, Wets, Timmerman, & Perrin, 2007).

In contrast to transnational marriages, mixed marriages are considered an expression of successful integration by both policymakers and scholars (see e.g. Dribe & Lundh, 2008; Gordon, 1964; Kulu & González-Ferrer, 2014; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). Gordon (1964) was the first to explicitly link intermarriage and the process of assimilation, as he sees intermarriage as an inevitable outcome of structural assimilation.

As we examine the array of assimilation variables again, several other relationships suggest themselves. One is the indissoluble connection, in the time order indicated, between structural assimilation and marital assimilation. That is, entrance of the minority group into the social cliques, clubs, and institutions of the core society at the primary group level inevitably will lead to a substantial amount of intermarriage. If children of different ethnic backgrounds belong to the same play-group, later the same adolescent cliques, and at college the same fraternities and sororities; if the parents belong to the same country club and invite each other to their homes for dinner; it is completely unrealistic not to expect these children, now grown, to love and to marry each other, blithely oblivious to previous ethnic extraction. (Gordon, 1964, p. 80)

According to this perspective, minority members initially differ from the majority population with regard to culture and socioeconomic position, which hinders the prevalence of mixed marriage (Gordon, 1964). The process of integration includes acculturation and structural integration, and when this process is complete, there should be no perceived differences between minority and majority members. Ethnic identity decreases and interethnic contact increases, as does the likelihood of mixed marriage. Therefore, mixed marriages are the logical outcome of the integration process (Lieberson & Waters, 1988). Studies that have built on Gordon's idea of structural assimilation consider the prevalence of intermarriage to be a measure of the degree to which minority members are integrated into the majority society (see e.g. Alba & Nee, 2003; Lee & Edmonston, 2005; Warner & Srole, 1945).

This perspective led to an expectation that the choice for transnational marriages among Turkish and Moroccan minority members would become less prominent over time, particularly as more members of the second generation began looking for a partner (Böcker, 1994; Esveldt et al., 1995). The second generation's better structural and social integration would alter their partner selection preferences and behavior. The wish for an ethnically homogamous marriage would be fulfilled by a local co-ethnic partner and followed by a growing openness towards mixed marriages. However, the majority of first- and second-generation minority members were still opting for a transnational partner in the mid-1990s and early 2000s (Böcker, 1994; Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Lievens, 1999a; Milewski & Hamel, 2010; Yalcin et al., 2006).

Hence, this line of reasoning does not supply a satisfying explanation for partner selection trends prevalent among Turkish and Moroccan minority members. It displays a rather one-dimensional and linear approach to assimilation, while contextual factors, for example, are neglected (Fokkema & De Haas, 2015). In section 2.7.2, more information is given on different aspects affecting the prevalence of transnational marriages and its trend over time. Here, I argue that although partner selection patterns can be a factor in the integration process of minority members, considering a high prevalence of transnational marriages to be an indicator of failed integration might be too drastic.

The high prevalence of transnational marriages can be attributed to the mutual interests of both minority members residing in Europe and family and friends living in the origin countries, and can be facilitated by the existence of strong

transnational ties between them (Aybek, 2015; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Yalcin et al., 2006). Minority members often have a strong orientation towards the origin country and thus consider partners from the origin country or region to be more desirable, and highly value the origin country's social and religious family norms. Moreover, socioeconomic conditions in Turkey and Morocco are important push factors for migration (Schoorl, 2000; Timmerman et al., 2009). Socioeconomics combined with European policies restricting immigration opportunities from outside Europe (Caestecker, 2005) make marriage one of most accessible migration channels. This situation generates a large pool of possible partners in the origin countries and increases pressure on minority members to marry a partner from the origin country (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Furthermore, transnational marriages take place within transnational communities (Williams, 2013), which find their origin in strong migration networks between the sending and receiving societies that were established at the beginning of Turkish and Moroccan immigration. These migration networks consist of strong, often familial ties which are created and maintained by continuous migration (De Haas, 2010). In a context where marriage migration is one of the only ways to migrate, these transnational communities facilitate transnational marriages through transnational ties. Hence, transnational marriages could be considered a logical outcome of a migration process and part of broader group processes (Williams, 2013).

While some have questioned transnational marriages as a sign of failed integration, the assumption that mixed marriages are an indicator of successful integration has also been criticized. Song (2009) argues that there are several methodological and theoretical problems with establishing an association between the prevalence of mixed marriages and levels of integration. Both mixed marriage and integration are concepts that are hard to define and as a consequence have numerous conceptualizations. *Mixed* can be based on ethnicity but is mostly defined by nationality at birth. From a minority member's perspective, the partner in a mixed marriage is often considered to be a majority member, overlooking the possibility of minority members marrying members of another minority group. *Integration* can refer to social integration or acculturation, structural integration, or assimilation (see section 2.1 on the use of different concepts).

Gordon (1964) asserts that structural assimilation, or economic integration, precedes marital assimilation, but this is not always the case. Some empirical

studies have found a positive correlation between mixed marriage and economic assimilation among minority members (see e.g. Baker & Benjamin, 1997; Meng & Gregory, 2005), but again, this is not always the case. Coleman (1994) notes that

intermarriage is proceeding faster than might be expected in immigrant populations which seemed in economic terms to be imperfectly integrated. Up to 40% of West Indians born in the UK, for example, appear to have white partners as do high proportions of young Maghrebians in France. (p. 107)

For some, the fact that people wish to marry someone similar to themselves in terms of education, values, religion, and culture (Kalmijn, 1998) supports the idea that the prevalence of intermarriage only increases when minority members have gone through successful structural and cultural integration, which may take generations (Logan & Shin, 2012). However, others, like Portes and Zhou (1993), de-couple acculturation and upward economic mobility. They assume that minority members can achieve upward mobility but retain ethnic practices and ties. They make no assumption that those minority members that assimilate will also marry a member of the majority.

Others assume social integration by using the term integration and state that mixed marriage indicates an overall acceptance into the mainstream. However, the assumption that minority members in mixed partnerships feel appreciated in majority structures and are exempt from experiences of ethnic prejudice in society or their social network may be too simplistic. Asian Americans, for example, who are considered a typical case of successful integration via intermarriage (Chow, 2000) still report feelings of being seen as foreign and inferior (Song, 2001).

2.6.2 Partner selection behavior and ethnic boundaries

The previous section illustrates the link between partner selection patterns and ethnic boundaries in a society. However, I elaborate on the topic because partnerships permeate the private sphere and involve making intimate choices; group boundaries are more prominent and visible within this domain (Pagnini & Morgan, 1990). The prevalence of mixed partnerships measures the degree of social interaction between different ethnic groups, as a mixed partnership unites individuals as well as their networks (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010; Lichter et al., 2011; Lieberman & Waters, 1988; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Song, 2010; Waters & Jiménez, 2005; Wildsmith et al., 2003). Mixed partnerships reveal meaningful

interaction across group boundaries and indicate that, at least to some degree, members of different groups are able to accept each other as social equals. Hence, when a society is characterized by bright boundaries between ethnic groups and, consequently, relatively low levels of social acceptance and a high ethnic distance, the prevalence of mixed partnerships will probably be rather low. Ethnic boundaries have both a symbolic and a social dimension (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). In a context of bright symbolic boundaries, people see members of another ethnic group as essentially different and, therefore, less suitable partners. Social boundaries are reflected in patterns of ethnicity-based social inequality and differentiation on an aggregate level. High levels of ethnic inequality and differentiation reduce the chances that members of different ethnic groups will marry each other because of limited opportunities for interaction (in the case of ethnic differentiation), for example, or because of status differences (in the case of ethnic inequalities).

Barth (1998) indicates that because marriage can be considered a mechanism for the transmission of ethnically specific cultural values and practices to the next generation, intermarriage may fundamentally affect boundaries between ethnic groups. Mixed partnerships are therefore often viewed as constituting a bridge between different cultures, which, in turn, can have a positive influence on the social integration of minority members and the interethnic understanding between groups (Bystydzienski, 2011; Gordon, 1964; Kalmijn, 1991; Pagnini & Morgan, 1990; Rodríguez-García, 2006). A growing population of children from mixed marriages would also blur symbolic boundaries between ethnic groups (Laboy & Jacobs, 1998), as children of mixed marriages identify themselves less frequently with a single ethnic group, and the prejudices and stereotypes their family and friends hold may thus be lower when confronted with diversity among members of other groups (Kalmijn, 1998; Rosenfeld, 2008).

However, intermarriage does not necessarily minimize the significance of ethnic boundaries. On a macro level, the overall increase in the prevalence of mixed marriages globally has not abolished negative attitudes towards intermarriage itself or towards multiracialism (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Rodríguez-García, 2015; Wang, 2012). On a micro level, Rodríguez-García, Solana-Solana, and Lubbers (2016) argue that mixed partnerships can, to some extent, help to decrease ethnic boundaries and to increase intergroup contact. Nevertheless, this bridging effect should not be overestimated, especially when

discussing minorities that are severely stigmatized, as is the case with Muslim communities in Europe (Van Acker, 2012).

Furthermore, intermarriage does not guarantee a reconciliation of two partners' differences or beliefs; this can result in conflict. In line with this perspective, ethnic competition theorists (see Olzak (1992)) argue that a minority member marrying a member of the out-group does not necessarily indicate the loss of or decrease in ethnic identity. On the contrary, they argue that ethnic awareness may be heightened because of the direct and intense contact with members of the out-group. A number of studies show that divorce rates are higher among mixed compared to homogamous marriages (Kalmijn, De Graaf, & Janssen, 2005; McPherson et al., 2001). Dupont et al. (2019a), for example, show that divorce rates among Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium who married between 2001 and 2003 are almost double for mixed compared to local co-ethnic marriages. This can be explained by three important dynamics: socioeconomic disparities (Goldstein & Harknett, 2006), cultural dissimilarity (Kalmijn et al., 2005; Smith, Maas, & van Tubergen, 2012; Van Huis & Steenhof, 2004), and social discrimination, as well as lack of support from third parties, especially parents (Milewski & Kulu, 2014).

In contrast, when the prevalence of mixed marriage is low, it does not necessarily mean both groups are 'closed' (Kalmijn, 1998). If members of one group show openness towards mixed marriage, but members of the other do not, the prevalence of mixed marriage will still be low. Moreover, the prevalence of mixed marriage is a combination of preferences and opportunities. Low prevalence does not necessarily mean there is no openness towards this partner type. The opportunity structure could prevent mixed marriages from happening. I elaborate on factors influencing the prevalence of mixed marriages in section 2.7.1.

Song (2009) concludes that

the link between intermarriage and integration is both more tenuous and more complex than many social scientists have posited. The link between the two . . . needs a critical reappraisal. We should be careful about interpreting high rates of intermarriage (with Whites) as an indicator of a minority group's "success" and inclusion. It seems that intermarriage, while revealing the declining of social distance between the majority and certain minority groups, can also entail a complex co-mingling of economic and social integration and marginalization. (p. 343)

2.7 Partner selection: Trends and predictors

The final section of this chapter discusses the partner selection trends of Turkish and Moroccan minority members and the different factors influencing their partner selection behavior. Researchers agree that, from a sociological standpoint, three factors influence partner selection: individual preferences (micro level), influence of third parties (meso level), and characteristics of the marriage market (macro level) (Kalmijn, 1991). The previous sections contain some crucial information on meso and macro factors that influence the partner selection process of Turkish and Moroccan minority members living in Belgium. The family systems prevalent in origin countries greatly influence both first- and second-generation minority members because of a strong orientation towards the origin country, strong transnational ties with the origin country or region, and high levels of parental influence in the family formation process. Over time and over successive generations, some aspects of this process change, often in line with the family system prevalent in Belgium; other aspects remain the same. The preference for ethnic homogamy is one of the latter.

In the following section, I combine information from previous sections with studies focusing on the partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minorities, specifically, to create an overview of the determinants that influence partner selection behavior and to describe the trends over time. Although the empirical chapters focus on partner selection processes and their micro-level predictors, the overview below also discusses factors at the meso and macro level to give a more comprehensive view of the mechanisms of partner selection. Similar to the empirical analyses, this is done separately for mixed versus co-ethnic marriages and for transnational versus local marriages. Special attention is given to the most recent indications of change in partner selection patterns and the possible dynamics behind these changes. Finally, the section ends with a discussion about the choice to cohabit as an alternative to marriage. Although the prevalence of cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minority members is small, a study of their partner selection process is not complete without including cohabitation as well as marriage. Cohabitation is a rare partnership type within Turkish and Moroccan family systems, however, its prevalence is high in systems characterized by the Second Demographic Transition. Hence, dynamics behind choosing to cohabit instead of marrying could possibly provide unknown insights into how family systems adapt over time.

2.7.1 Mixed versus homogamous marriages

Because of the societal and scientific relevance of the prevalence of mixed marriages, as explained earlier, it is not surprising that a large part of sociological studies on partner selection of minority members focus on mixed marriages (see e.g. Clark-Ibáñez & Felmlee, 2004; Coleman, 1992, 1994; Dribe & Lundh, 2008; Gray, 1987; Gurak & Fitzpatrick, 1982; Hwang, Saenz, & Aguirre, 1997; Kalmijn, 1993; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2006; Lievens, 1998; Milewski & Kulu, 2014; Pagnini & Morgan, 1990; Qian & Lichter, 2001; Rodríguez-García, 2015; Rodríguez-García et al., 2016; Van Kerckem et al., 2014; Van Tubergen & Maas, 2007).

In general, as indicated earlier, people prefer a partner who is similar to them; this results in homogamy or assortative mating (McPherson et al., 2001). Sharing the same ethnicity increases the likelihood to share similar cultural resources, which leads to personal attraction (Byrne, 1971) and enables individuals to establish and maintain shared activities and a joint lifestyle (Kalmijn, 1998).

The influence third parties have on partner selection often reinforces this process. Mixed marriage with a member from outside the own group can be a threat to the social cohesion and homogeneity of the group. Influencing the partner choice of group members can be a way of maintaining group boundaries. Kalmijn (1998) discusses two mechanisms third parties use to prevent new generations from marrying outside the own group: group identification and group sanctions. Norms regarding partner selection are internalized during childhood by stressing group identification. The more strongly young adults identify with the own group, the more strongly they internalize norms regarding partner choice. How strongly young adults identify themselves with the group depends to a great extent on the homogeneity of their social network. When group members do marry outside the own group, they can be sanctioned by no longer being considered rightful members of the group.

Qualitative research shows that the internalization of partner selection norms is strong among Turkish and Moroccan minority members (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Van Kerckem et al., 2014). The internalization of these norms is high because minority members often have a strong ethnic identity and are part of homogeneous networks characterized by high levels of social cohesion, as indicated earlier. Transplanted communities play an important part in maintaining group cohesion and social control (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). Turkish and Moroccan

family systems are characterized by high levels of influence by third parties, which is generally well-accepted. Qualitative research shows that parents are the main actors with regard to sanctioning mixed partnerships, and young minority members do not consider mixed partnerships to be an option because of social resistance and fear of possible sanctions (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Van Kerckem et al., 2014). Religion also functions as a third party because norms regarding virginity and homogamy are also understood as religious norms (Buskens, 2010; de Vries, 1987).

Although the social and religious family norms which are strongly internalized and controlled for, explain the generally low prevalence of mixed marriages among Turkish and Moroccan minorities, variation in the prevalence is present.

First, I discuss several macro-level characteristics that can determine the prevalence of mixed marriages. Blau's structuralistic framework (1994) uses the structural conditions of the context in which the interactions take place to explain the prevalence of intergroup contacts. Regarding mixed marriages, the structural characteristics of the marriage market are assumed to set the conditions that promote or inhibit intergroup contacts. During the first wave of migration to Belgium, the ethnic community was small and mainly consisted of male minority members (Reniers, 1999). Hence, opportunities to find a partner in the local co-ethnic community were limited, motivating labor migrants to look for a spouse among the majority population or in the country of origin. Over time, as the size of the ethnic community increased and the sex ratio became more equal, the influence of an imbalanced sex ratio became less relevant. However, other factors are important to consider and are discussed below.

Community size remains an important demographic characteristic of the local marriage market. The size of the ethnic community determines the opportunities to meet a co-ethnic partner and is likely to strengthen the potential to exercise social control. Hence, mixed marriages may be less prevalent in larger ethnic communities (Dupont, Van de Putte, et al., 2017; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2006). Additionally, when ethnic diversity levels are higher, the likelihood of relations between groups increases (Blau, 1994). A high level of ethnic diversity may weaken group boundaries and promote interethnic contacts and create conditions in which mixed marriages are more common (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017). Moreover, Huschek et al. (2011) show that strong levels of social embeddedness in non-co-ethnic friendship networks increase their resemblance to characteristics

of the family system of majority members. The more socially embedded young second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members (living in the Netherlands) are in non-co-ethnic networks, the more likely they are to postpone union formation, to opt for cohabitation before marriage, and to have a non-co-ethnic partner. The authors hypothesize that strong non-co-ethnic ties may offer different views on family formation and partner selection.

However, the influence of contact with members of other ethnic groups on partner selection behavior depends on the quality of social interaction. Interethnic contact can lead to interethnic partnerships only when there is a certain level of mutual acceptance and respect. The contact theory, founded by Allport, Clark, and Pettigrew (1954), and further developed by Pettigrew (1998), describes the underlying process. Optimal intergroup contact has five requirements: "The situation must allow equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support . . . and it must have 'friendship potential'" (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 80). However, as explained in section 2.5.2, these conditions might be problematic for Turkish and Moroccan minority members, as they are confronted with both social and symbolic boundaries.

Regarding symbolic boundaries, psychological literature states that the intergroup attitudes of ethnic minorities are strongly influenced by ethnic prejudice (Livingston et al., 2004; Monteith & Spicer, 2000). Research concerning discrimination of African American minorities shows that minority members who experience ethnic prejudice frequently have negative expectations regarding future interethnic social contact and try to avoid unnecessary interethnic contact (Tropp, 2003, 2007). Experiencing ethnic prejudice could affect partner selection behavior of minority members because of the following mechanisms: the rejection identification model or the rejection dis-identification model. The rejection identification model developed by Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey (1999) states that experiencing ethnic prejudice creates the perception of a threat to the in-group, leading to greater identification with the in-group and to negative attitudes towards the discriminating out-group, which can reinforce ethnic boundaries (Dion, 2000). Additionally, unfair treatment based on ethnic or religious characteristics can strengthen ethnic and/or religious identity (Connor, 2010) and may result in stronger adherence to prevailing religious norms that advocate a pattern of ethnic homogamy in the partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minorities (Hooghiemstra, 2001). The rejection dis-identification model states that experiencing discrimination on the grounds of group differences does not so

much lead to a strong identification with the in-group, as suggested by the rejection identification model, as it leads to a stronger dis-identification with the discriminating out-group (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009). Dissociating from the discriminating out-group can reinforce group boundaries and be a coping mechanism to deal with the negative consequences of discrimination, such as low self-esteem (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009).

As suggested earlier, with regard to meso-level factors influencing the partner selection process and the choice for a mixed marriage, the social network uses social and religious norms regarding virginity and homogamy to regulate the partner selection process and exert a high level of social control over young adults, especially girls. The level of influence and control differs between minority members, which may explain three variations in the prevalence of mixed partnerships. First, it may explain why men are more likely to choose a mixed marriage compared to women (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; González-Ferrer, 2006; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Huschek et al., 2012). Second, it may also explain why older minority members are more likely to choose a mixed marriage compared to minority members marrying at a younger age (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2006). Age at marriage is often considered a proxy for the degree of maturity and influence a person has on the partner selection process (Lodewijckx et al., 1997). Minority members selecting a partner at an older age may have more autonomy in their partner selection and may experience less social control. Third, it may also explain the higher prevalence of mixed marriages among Moroccan compared to Turkish minority members, because co-ethnic social networks of the latter are characterized by higher levels of cohesion, social control, and transnationalism than those of the former, as is explained in section 2.4 (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). In addition, Moroccan minority members may have better language proficiency,²⁰ which can contribute to a higher likelihood to marry a partner from the majority (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017).

The prevalence of mixed marriages can also vary depending on individual characteristics other than gender, age, and ethnicity, such as educational attainment and migration generation.

²⁰ French, one of Belgium's official languages, is the second language in Morocco.

Among Turkish and Moroccan minority members, the likelihood to choose a mixed marriage increases with educational attainment (Carol et al., 2014; Huschek et al., 2012). Highly educated minority members are expected to hold less traditional norms and values concerning partner selection (Huschek et al., 2012). Higher educational attainment may also weaken both attachments to the origin community and the strength of ethnic identity, and thus reduce cultural barriers to mixed marriages (Hwang et al., 1997; Kalmijn, 1993; Lieberman & Waters, 1988). Moreover, minority members pursuing a tertiary education in the residence country experience greater exposure to that country's values system during their education and have more opportunities to meet non-co-ethnic peers (Kalmijn, 1998). Educational homogamy may replace homogamy based on ethnicity, as highly educated minority members may consider higher educated majority members more similar than lower educated minority members.

The likelihood to choose a mixed partnership is higher for minority members of the second compared to the first generation (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Huschek et al., 2012). To be clear, members of the first generation included in these studies do not belong to the first wave of labor migrants. Migration generation is operationalized based on the stage in the socialization process in which one migrated, since the socialization process influences the development of attitudes and values (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). Hence, first-generation minority members have been primarily socialized in the origin country and migrated after they completed at least a part of their education in the origin country. Second-generation minority members have been, for the most part, socialized in Belgium, as they migrated at a young age or were born in the residence country. They are, therefore, more likely to be exposed to an alternative family model and could have more meeting opportunities with majority members. This line of reasoning is supported by research showing that second-generation members have more liberal values regarding gender-role attitudes (Timmerman, 2006), cohabitation, premarital sex, and divorce (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018), and that the likelihood of mixed marriage is higher among minority members with a longer duration of stay in the residence country (Lieberman & Waters, 1988).

To conclude, the prevalence of mixed marriages varies according to the characteristics described above, but mechanisms such as social and religious norms regarding homogamy combined with high levels of influence by third parties and strong ethnic boundaries keep the prevalence low over time. Among

the first members of the second generation that reached marriageable age in the 1990s, the prevalence of mixed marriages was around 10 percent, with a higher prevalence among Moroccan men (around 25%) (Lievens, 1999a). More recently, Corijn and Lodewijckx (2009) have shown that in Flanders, in 2004, the prevalence remained around 10 percent for the second generation, again with a higher prevalence among Moroccan men (around 30%).

2.7.2 Transnational versus local co-ethnic marriages

As indicated above, a strong preference for ethnic homogamy is often found among partners who live in the origin country rather than the local ethnic community. The high preference for transnational marriages could indicate that minority members may isolate themselves from the residence country's culture, retaining the cultural praxis of the origin country (Berry, 1997; Ward et al., 2005). However, previous studies have shown that the high prevalence of transnational marriages among Turkish and Moroccan minority members is the result of a combination of factors (e.g. migration context, immigration policies, social and familial obligations, economic circumstances) and cannot be understood as only a consolidation of tradition and resistance to change. Below, I give an overview of the trends in the prevalence of transnational marriages and of the factors contributing to variation in this prevalence.

Among first-generation (labor) migrants, the prevalence of transnational marriages was high, which can be explained by their strong orientation to the origin country and by the structural conditions of the marriage market during the first and second wave of immigration (Hooghiemstra, 2003; Lievens, 1996). However, the prevalence of transnational marriages remained high over time, despite an increase in community size and a more equal sex ratio. Of all marriages registered between 1985 and 1990 by first-generation (non-labor) and (young) second-generation minority members, around 70 percent are transnational (Lievens, 1999a). Similar results have been reported more recently, in 2004, in Flanders. Approximately 60 percent of second-generation Turkish minority members (Yalcin et al., 2006) and second-generation Moroccan women (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009) chose a transnational partner. Among Moroccan men of the second generation, in 2004, the prevalence was around 40 percent (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009). Several aspects on different levels explain the high prevalence of transnational marriages, but also variation in the prevalence.

On a macro level, structural factors such as transnational networks, socioeconomic conditions in the origin country, and immigration policies in the residence country are important to consider. First, as indicated earlier, the existence of transplanted communities (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996; Timmerman, 2006) generates transnational networks that preserve social and cultural structures from the origin country and enable transnational partnerships, as the marriage market transcends national borders. However, although a strong commitment to the origin community exists, these transnational ties are weaker among Moroccan minorities, as are social cohesion and social control (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). This could explain why transnational marriages are slightly less prevalent among Moroccan minorities (Carol et al., 2014; Lievens, 1999a). Second, socioeconomic conditions in the origin country are important push factors for migration (Timmerman et al., 2009). Partner migrants' motives to immigrate are often related to the partnership and to the hope of improving their social position (Esveldt et al., 1995; Timmerman et al., 2009). The latter, combined with limited opportunities to migrate to Europe, makes marriage one of the most common migration channels (Caestecker et al., 2016). This generates a large pool of possible partners in the origin country, putting pressure on young minority members to choose transnational partners. Because there is such a large pool of potential partners in the origin country, young minority members are attractive as marriage partners, giving them a better chance of finding a suitable partner in the origin country compared to the local co-ethnic community (Van Kerckem et al., 2013).

On the meso level, the influence of third parties—parents in particular—is crucial. In the previous section, I indicated that the social networks of young minority members use social and religious family norms to regulate the partner selection process and exert a high level of social control. Because adhering to these norms leads to certain levels of ethnic and gender segregation and, thus, limits opportunities to meet potential partners, parents and close relatives can play an active role in the selection process.

Qualitative and anthropological studies from the late 1980s and early 1990s indicate that parents of Turkish descent have distinct preferences for transnational marriages (Callaerts, 1997; de Vries, 1987; Van der Hoek & Kret, 1992). Several factors explain this orientation. First, minority parents often have strong ties to their families in Turkey and Morocco through transnational networks characterized by high levels of solidarity and pressure or have a sense of obligation to help kin who stayed behind (Sterckx & Bouw, 2005; Timmerman et al., 2009).

Transnational marriages can help maintain and strengthen those transnational networks. Second, parents belonging to the first generation may find themselves living in a largely unfamiliar society and culture, which may lead to a preference for transnational marriages, making them adhere more rigidly to their traditions, customs, and ethnic identity (Timmerman, 2006). Third, parents generally believe partners from the origin country are more compatible (e.g. sharing norms and values and being a better cultural fit) than local co-ethnics, who often have a bad reputation (Callaerts, 1997; Sterckx & Bouw, 2005). Several studies, in fact, indicate that both parents and children have an idealized view of transnational partners and attribute to them characteristics that they do not find among local co-ethnics (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Timmerman, 2006). Consequently, the local co-ethnic marriage market may be perceived as restricted when potential local co-ethnic partners acquire a bad reputation or have been previously married, and turning to the origin country can be seen as a strategy to optimize the chance of finding a partner (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, Van de Putte, Lievens, & Caestecker, 2019b; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). This could explain why older minority members are more likely to choose a transnational marriage compared to their peers who marry at an average age (Carol et al., 2014; Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Lievens, 1999a). A perception of subjective scarcity in the local co-ethnic marriage market or of a damaged reputation might steer minority members towards a transnational partner after a long period of searching (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). However, the effect of marriage age on the likelihood to choose a transnational marriage is curvilinear: minority members marrying at both a younger and an older age have a higher likelihood to choose transnational marriage compared to those marrying at an average age. High levels of parental influence may explain why minority members marrying at a younger age are more likely to have a transnational marriage. As indicated earlier, marriage age is often considered a proxy for the degree of parental influence in the partner selection process (Lodewijckx et al., 1997).

Some authors note traditional motives for transnational marriages (Lievens, 1999a; Timmerman et al., 2009) that are associated with higher levels of religiosity, with maintaining and strengthening ethnic identity and ties with the origin country (Carol et al., 2014), and with lower educational levels (González-Ferrer, 2006; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). However, other studies report gendered motives for transnational marriages: highly educated women are more likely to engage in a transnational marriage; the opposite is true for men (Abdul-Rida & Baykara-

Krumme, 2016; Autant, 1995; Lievens, 1999a; Liversage, 2012; Timmerman et al., 2009). Lievens (1999a) concludes that by choosing a transnational partner, highly educated minority women may gain more autonomy and power within the relationship because they are not subject to the generally strong influence of their in-laws and because their partner is new to the resident country. Hence, women may choose this partner type to satisfy modern goals, whereas men search within the origin country for more traditional spouses. Evidence for this hypothesis has been found mainly in qualitative studies (Autant, 1995; Liversage, 2012; Timmerman et al., 2009). In quantitative studies, Gonzalez-Ferrer (2006) and Milewski (2010) found no support for this hypothesis among Turkish minorities. Carol et al. (2014) did find some support but questioned using educational attainment as a proxy for traditional orientation, as the interaction remained significant while controlling for religiosity. Hence, the choice for transnational partnerships could also be the result of a lack of appropriate partners in the residence country (Straßburger, 2003). While highly educated women may need to turn to the origin country to find a co-ethnic partner with a similar level of education, this is less true for men, as it is more common for them to marry a less educated partner.

2.7.3 Recent partner selection dynamics

There are recent indications that partner selection behavior may be changing after remaining constant for decades. Van Kerckem et al. (2013) have studied all partnerships formed between 2001 and 2008 by second-generation Turkish minority members in Belgium. Transnational partnerships were the most common partner type in 2001 (56.5% for men and 59.9% for women). However, over the next seven years they observe a steep decline, which is mostly compensated for by local co-ethnic partnerships. For men, the prevalence of transnational partnerships declines to 33.7 percent in 2008, while local co-ethnic partnerships increase to 48.5 percent. For women, the prevalence of transnational partnerships declines to 42.1 percent and local co-ethnic partnerships increase to 46.8 percent. This decline also led to an increase in mixed partnerships for men: 7 to 14.3 percent. Among women, the increase in mixed partnerships is less visible, rising from 5 to 8.1 percent. In their analysis of a similar dataset containing all homogamous partnerships formed between 2001 and 2008 by first- and second-generation Moroccan minority members in Belgium, Dupont, Van de Putte, et al. (2017) also report a declining percentage of transnational partnerships from

around 59 percent in 2001 to 45 percent in 2008. This trend is similar to declines in the Netherlands (Loozen, de Valk, & Wobma, 2012; Sterckx et al., 2014), Sweden (Carol et al., 2014), and Germany (Aybek et al., 2015), although transnational partnerships in Germany have been lower than in other countries (Carol et al., 2014). During the first migration wave, the influx of Turkish labor migrants was much higher in Germany compared to other countries, and levels of heterogeneity with regard to region of origin were higher too (Straßburger, 2004). As a consequence, transnational ties and transplanted communities are less strong among Turkish minorities in Germany compared to for example Belgium or the Netherlands.

These studies seem to indicate that local co-ethnic instead of transnational partnerships had become the most common partner type for Turkish and Moroccan minority members by 2008. The declining prevalence of transnational partnerships could—to a lesser extent—also be accompanied by an increase in the occurrence of mixed partnerships, at least for some minority members. Dupont et al. (2019b) conclude, when researching remarriages of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium, that the recent indications of change may be primarily present among first marriages. Although concluding that partner selection trends are structurally changing, based on these results, might be premature, I give an overview of possible dynamics at play.

The first mechanism of change concerns the potential attitudinal change in the preferences concerning ideal partnerships among young minority members reaching marriageable age nowadays (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). In the past, the belief was that the most eligible partners would be found in the origin region (de Vries, 1987; Timmerman, 2006). Transnational marriages were idealized because of the expectation that partners would share the same religion, norms, and values, and have a similar ethnic-cultural identity (Sterckx & Bouw, 2005). More recently, minority members of marriageable age looking for cultural homogamy may find it in the local co-ethnic community (Sterckx et al., 2014), because they are looking for potential partners who know what it is like to be a minority member.

These changes in ideas about homogamy could lead to an increase in generational conflict between young minority members and their parents, but would not necessarily lead to a decline in transnational partnerships. However, in their qualitative study, Van Kerckem et al. (2013) argue that transnational partnerships are declining partially because parents may be taking less initiative in selecting

partners for their children. Parents are assumed to have a stronger preference for transnational partnerships than their children do. Hence, when parental involvement decreases, partner-initiated partnerships that are more likely to occur in the local co-ethnic community instead of in the origin country will increase. It follows that adolescents will be less likely to use their increased autonomy in a generational conflict with their parents, though parental opinions remain highly respected. Van Kerckem et al. (2013) describe a change related to this dynamic—a growing acceptance of premarital relationships that could make transnational marriages less prevalent, because an eligible local (co-ethnic) partner may already have been found by the time adolescents have reached a marriageable age. The qualitative study of Turkish minority members living in Belgium shows that premarital relationships with other minority members are common, despite strict virginity norms for women. When interviewed, minority members often attributed the decline in transnational partnerships to premarital relationships being more acceptable.

Nevertheless, parental consent remains broadly accepted as a condition for getting married, even though the partner selection process has evolved from being initiated by parents and family members to being initiated by the partners with parental consent (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Hence, parental attitudes regarding ideal marriage partners may also have changed as a result of this evolution, reducing generational conflict and contributing to the decline of transnational partnerships. This assumption is supported by qualitative research showing that minority members claim to have changed their minds about this partner type after witnessing relationship difficulties in transnational marriages (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Zemni, Casier, & Peene, 2006). Several studies report a growing awareness of the possible risks associated with transnational marriages (Eeckhaut et al., 2011; Sterckx & Bouw, 2005; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Partner migrants from Turkey or Morocco might be motivated mainly by the opportunity to migrate and the possibility it offers to settle legally in the host country. Moreover, for the second generation, transnational marriages are known to be less stable due to cultural differences. Minority members that are born and/or raised and educated in Belgium have a cultural frame of reference that is a mixture of both Belgian and Turkish/Moroccan cultural elements. Other reported complications are language skills, unemployment and financial troubles, contradictory expectations, and social isolation. These potential risks and difficulties associated with transnational marriages are reflected in the divorce

rates. Turkish minority members who married a partner from Turkey between 2001 and 2003 had a divorce rate between 14.2 and 15.2 percent in 2008, depending on the gender of the minority member residing in Belgium (Dupont et al., 2019a). In comparison, a marriage between two Turkish minority members during the same period had a divorce rate of 9.9 percent. Moroccan minority members who married a partner from Morocco had a divorce rate between 22.9 and 24.8 percent, compared to 19 percent for local co-ethnic marriages between two Moroccan minority members.

As indicated earlier, a culture of migration was also an important push factor in explaining the high levels of willingness in certain regions of Turkey to migrate (Timmerman et al., 2009). However, more recent research reports a trend of 'diminutive causation,' which negatively impacts this culture of migration and the migration aspirations of potential marriage migrants (Engbersen, Snel, & van Meeteren, 2013; Timmerman, Hemmerechts, & De Clerck, 2014). Macro-level factors, including a lack of labor market opportunities, strict immigration policies, and frequent experiences of ethnic prejudice, have changed minority members' opinions regarding transnational partnerships. These changes in opinions are relayed to family members and friends in the origin country. This migration-undermining feedback can affect the migration aspirations of potential marriage migrants and result in a decline in migration culture (Engbersen et al., 2013).

Moreover, the growing number of second- and third-generation minority members of marriageable age could lead to the increased prevalence of mixed marriages, as more recent cohorts are more likely to engage in a mixed marriage (González-Ferrer, 2006; Joyner & Kao, 2005). Younger cohorts are born and raised in Belgium, potentially reducing social distance between minority and majority populations. Growing up together may blur ethnic distance and lead to more mixed marriages over time. Additionally, transnational networks between relatives may decrease in intensity, especially for the second and third generations, potentially reducing the strength of emotional ties and sensitivity to kin obligations (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huschek et al., 2012) and increasing autonomy in partner selection processes (Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). The resident country's culture could also influence the ethnic identity of the second and third generations and possibly result in less emphasis on ethnic homogamy (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huschek et al., 2012).

Finally, immigration policies, especially those regulating family formation migration, substantially enable or inhibit transnational marriages, as illustrated by research on Turkish and Moroccan minorities in neighboring countries (Carol et al., 2014; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). An individual legally living in Belgium, a Belgian resident, has the right to be united with his/her partner who lives in a third country. This right to family formation (in case of a new partnership) or reunification (in case of an existing partnership) makes it possible for the transnational partner to migrate and legally reside in Belgium. The requirements for exercising this right depend on the nationality of the Belgian resident, the sponsor²¹. Nevertheless, the Belgian immigration legislation is complex, and has changed extensively during the timeframe of this study. Therefore, a detailed overview is given below of the requirements for exercising the right to family formation.

In 2003, 22 EU member-states signed an European Directive, which contained non-binding guidelines regarding the right to family formation (De Bruycker & Pascouau, 2011), in an attempt to reduce immigration in general and family formation in particular. This directive was partially a result of policymakers' concerns about ethnic minorities' level of integration in the face of a constant influx of immigrants (Aybek, 2012; Schmidt, Graversen, Jakobsen, Jensen, & Liversage, 2009). The aim was also to prevent misuse of the right to family formation, such as marriages of convenience or forced marriages (Heyse et al., 2007; Huschek et al., 2012; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). In 2006, Belgium made use of the European Directive, to slightly tighten the provisions for family formation in the Belgian Immigration Act. Before the implementation of the 2006 policy changes, there were no strict requirements for family formation in Belgium.

The policy changes made in September 2006 and implemented from June 2007 onwards include several conditions that sponsors with third-country nationality have to meet to exercise the right to family formation (EMN, 2017). Both partners must be 21 not 18 years old. The sponsor must have an accommodation suitable for the size of the family and have healthcare insurance covering all family members. In addition, the period before partner migrants were granted a permanent residence permit was extended from 15 months to 3 years. During the

²¹ The term sponsor is often used to refer to the person using his/her right to family reunification/formation. In the context of this dissertation, the sponsor refers to a Turkish or Moroccan minority member residing in Belgium.

first three years, partner migrants' right to resident in Belgium depends on whether the requirements for family formation remained fulfilled.

On July 8 of 2011, policies changed again, adding an income requirement, as had been suggested by the European Directive (EMN, 2017). The third-country national residing in Belgium – the sponsor – must have sufficient, stable, and regular means of subsistence to cover the needs of all family members to avoid them becoming a burden to the public authorities. The level of income is set at 120 percent of the living wage.

Up until 2011, nationals from Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and the former Yugoslavia²² were well-positioned to exercise the right to family formation/reunification because of the bilateral agreements issued in the 1970s, which originally allowed recruited guest works to relocate their families (spouses, children, and ascendants) to Belgium (Lens, 2013). These bilateral agreements enabled Turkish and Moroccan nationals to invoke their right to family formation without meeting any other requirements, provided that they had been residing and working in Belgium for three months and had secured decent housing. However, from 2011 onwards, the Immigration Affairs Department abolished the legal distinction between minority members whose migration was governed by bilateral agreements and minority members from other third countries (EMN, 2017). Consequently, Turkish and Moroccan minority members no longer receive preferential treatment and have to fulfill the same requirements to exercise their right to family formation as other third-country nationals. One important implication is that the prohibition of cascade reunification—initiated in the Immigration Act of 1984 for third-country nationals—also now applies to those from countries with bilateral agreements. This law aimed to restrict chain migration by banning cascade reunification, i.e. when individuals relied on family reunification procedures for legally entering Belgium, they can no longer invoke the same procedures for their family members or second spouse when they remarry. These legislative changes were amended in the Immigration Act of July 8, 2011. Subsequently, only third-country nationals newly recruited to work in Belgium are able to invoke the privileges of the bilateral agreements to be reunited with their spouse or children in Belgium.

²² Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro.

From 2011 onwards, the requirements regarding age, accommodation, healthcare insurance, and income discussed above are also applicable to Belgians wanting to exercise their right to family formation (EMN, 2017).

EU citizens²³ residing in Belgium have a more favorable position with regard to exercising the right to family formation compared to Belgians or third-country nationals, because European citizens can move and reside freely within the European Union (Caestecker, 2005). They are only required to have a residence permit, which allows them to reside and work in Belgium for over three months.

The requirements to establish a transnational partnership described above are the same for married or legally cohabiting couples if their legally registered partnership is considered an equivalent to marriage (EMN, 2017). This is the case for legal cohabitations registered in Denmark, Germany, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the UK, and Sweden. Legal cohabitations registered in another foreign country, or in Belgium, are also eligible for family formation and have to meet the same requirements described above, as well as several additional requirements:

- Partners need to be unmarried/single and not be in a long-term relationship with another person.
- Partners cannot be each other's family member.
- Partners have to prove the stability and sustainability of their relationship in one of three ways: by living together for at least one year, by knowing each other for at least two years and proving that they have regularly kept in touch, or by having a child together.

The migration of a transnational partner on the basis of a legally registered partnership was regulated by a circular letter from in 1997. It was a discretionary decision of the minister, and considered a favor instead of a right (De Bruycker & Pascouau, 2011). From 2007 onwards, legally registered partnerships are included in the Belgian Immigration Act.

²³ Including nationals from Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein.

2.7.4 Cohabitation versus marriage

Previous research on partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities has primarily studied only married couples, as marriage is the prevailing norm of partnership formation among these minorities (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Cohabitation is often not an option because marriage plays a central role in the family forming process, as explained earlier, and is often frowned upon within the ethnic community.

In the qualitative study of Descheemaeker et al. (2009), second-generation minority men of Turkish and Moroccan descent living in Belgium were questioned about cohabitation. The majority do not consider cohabitation to be an accepted or viable partnership type because marriage as an institution is highly valued. They declare that if the relationship is serious, marriage is the only acceptable partnership type because it incorporates religious norms regarding virginity and the preservation of family honor, and is the only context in which partners can fully fulfill their responsibilities to each other and to potential children. In addition, there is a fear of adverse social reactions, and cohabitation is considered to be a Western phenomenon and not something Turkish or Moroccan minority members do. Respondents that view cohabitation more positively consider it an appropriate way to get to know their partner before marriage, although their cohabitation may remain secret from family members.

Despite marriage being the primary—or only acceptable—partnership type (Adak, 2016; Buskens, 2010; Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Huschek et al., 2011; Prettitore, 2015), there are several indications that cohabitation could or will become an important living arrangement among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Western Europe. First, in a Dutch study by de Valk and colleagues (2007), between 30 and 50 percent of adolescent Turkish and Moroccan minority members would like to cohabit with their partner before marriage. Furthermore, over 40 percent of the Turkish and Moroccan minority members in the Dutch sample Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (2018) studied consider cohabitation to be an alternative to marriage.

Second, Lievens (1999b) explored the prevalence of cohabitation among the Turkish and Moroccan minority populations in Belgium using census data from 1991. Cohabitation is inferred from the household composition (number of persons in the household and their relationship to the reference person), as direct information on whether an individual was cohabiting or not was unavailable. In

total, Lievens' study identifies 1,530 (1%) Turkish and Moroccan minority members as cohabiting. Although the number is low, several differences were found. The probability of cohabiting instead of marrying was higher for men, minority members who formed a partnership at an older age, minority members in mixed partnerships, and minority members of Moroccan descent.

Third, the Flemish register data of 2004 shows that around 5 percent of all second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members between 25 and 29 years old lived together without being married (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009). When only minority members with (marital or non-marital) cohabiting experience are considered, non-marital cohabitation is scarce, except among Moroccan men: 19 and 14 percent of 20–24-year-old men and 25–29-year-old men, respectively, had experience with non-marital cohabitation. Again, a strong association with mixed partnerships is found. Fourth, Hartung et al. (2011) indicate that 6 percent of Turkish and 11 percent of Moroccan minority members in their sample (TIES dataset) were not married when living together. Again, the prevalence was higher among men, Moroccan minority members, and individuals in mixed partnerships. Although small, the group of minority members that deviates from the established family formation norms is potentially distinct.

If cohabitation is becoming an accepted alternative to marriage, this could indicate that the collectivistic family system, centered around marriage, is changing drastically. An increase in the occurrence of cohabitation could be due to a trend towards a more individualistic approach to partner selection, more liberal values about cohabitation, and a decrease in the importance of marriage as an institution. It is possible that cohabiting minority members deviate from traditional family norms because of assimilation towards a family system characterized by the Second Demographic Transition.

However, cohabitation could also be a way to form an official partnership when marriage may not be an option because minority members anticipate adverse social reactions to deviate behavior such as being in a heterogamous relationship, violating virginity norms, or having children out of wedlock. Legally registered cohabitation, as an alternative to formalizing the partnership, could enable them to avoid traditional marriage customs such as paying a dowry, proving the virginity of the bride, and organizing several ceremonies (Delaney, 1991), and therefore minimize adverse social reactions to their deviant family formation.

Chapter 3. Research outline

The aim of this dissertation is to research partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium to gain more insight into processes of adaptation present in these minorities and into the existence of ethnic boundaries in Belgian society. To that end, I discussed the most important theoretical insights on integration, assimilation, and boundary processes, which I later on applied to the specific context of Turkish and Moroccan minorities. The cultural and social reference frames in which minority members make their partner selection are described, as are the characteristics of the migration streams and the societal position of minority members in Belgium, two important aspects influencing partner selection dynamics. Finally, I elaborated on the different factors influencing partner selection patterns, paying special attention to the most recent indications of change. These recent developments within the partner selection process shape the five research questions of this dissertation, which I discuss below. Table 3.1 summarizes the research outline.

3.1 Describing recent partner selection trends of Turkish and Moroccan minorities

In the 1990s, based on a classical assimilation perspective, some authors expected the high prevalence of transnational marriages among Turkish and Moroccan minorities to decline rapidly (Böcker, 1994; Esveldt et al., 1995). However, indications that partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium and other European countries may be changing after remaining constant for decades, have been recent (Carol et al., 2014; Dupont, Van de Putte, et al., 2017; Loozen et al., 2012; Sterckx et al., 2014; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Two Belgian studies seem to indicate that local co-ethnic instead of transnational partnerships had become the most common partner type of Turkish and Moroccan minority members by 2008 (Van Kerckem et al., 2013; Dupont et al., 2017). Van Kerckem et al. suggest the decline in transnational partnerships could also be—to a lesser extent—accompanied by an increase in the prevalence of mixed partnerships, at least among some minority members. Dupont et al. (2019b) conclude, when researching remarriages of Turkish and Moroccan minority members, that the recent changes may be primarily present among first marriages.

These studies, however, present an incomplete picture; some deal only with homogamous partnerships or the second generation, others do not differentiate between marriage and cohabitation, or first and higher-order partnerships, although these are important factors in predicting partner selection trends. Furthermore, their focus is on the earliest stage of change, and thus they cannot demonstrate whether the observed changes are the onset of a structural trend or not. Hence, more comprehensive analyses over a longer period are necessary to assess whether and to what degree partner selection behavior has changed over the last decade. This leads to the first research question of this dissertation:

RQ₁ What are the recent trends in partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minority members marrying for the first time regarding different partner types? Are these trends different for minority members remarrying? And how are these trends different according to individual characteristics?

↳ To answer this question, Chapter 5 analyzes Belgian National Register data including all first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who married between 2005 and 2015. It discusses the distribution of three partner types and assesses the most recent trends in partner selection occurring between 2005 and 2015. We explore differences according to ethnicity, generation, gender, and marriage rank to obtain a comprehensive overview of recent partner selection behavior.

Previous studies on partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities have assessed married couples, as marriage is the prevailing norm of partnership formation among these minorities (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Recently, however, there have been indications that the preference of young Turkish and Moroccan minority members for cohabitation as a step towards marriage, or even as a full alternative to marriage, is increasing (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Huschek et al., 2011; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). In addition, authors have shown that the number of minority members deviating from the strongly embedded norms concerning marriage is small but distinct (Hartung et al., 2011; Lievens, 1999b). Cohabiting minority members are more likely to be male, of Moroccan descent, and in a mixed partnership.

Hartung et al. (2011) argue that focusing on marriage alone when studying partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities—as previous studies have done—no longer provides an accurate and complete picture. This might especially

be true when studying mixed partnerships, because the association between heterogamy and cohabitation is strong among Turkish and Moroccan minority members (Hartung et al., 2011; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010; Lievens, 1999b).

An increase in the occurrence of cohabitation could be due to a trend towards a more individualistic approach to partner selection, more liberal values about cohabitation, and a decrease in the importance of marriage as an institution. It is possible that cohabiting minority members deviate from traditional family norms because of assimilation towards a family system characterized by the Second Demographic Transition. This leads to the second research question of this dissertation:

RQ₂ What are the recent trends in the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minority members? And which minority members are more likely to choose cohabitation over marriage?

↳ Chapter 6 first describes the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium, as well as the trend in prevalence between 2005 and 2015. The second part studies which minority members are more likely to choose cohabitation over marriage. Besides predictors identified in previous research, such as partner choice, ethnicity, and gender, we assess the effect of having children out of wedlock, as deviating from social norms governing sexuality and childbirth (Obermeyer, 2000; Timmerman, 2006) could be strongly related to deviating from traditional norms concerning type of partnership. For the analyses, we use Belgian National Register data containing all first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who registered their first official partnership between 2005 and 2015.

3.2 Partner selection attitudes of Turkish and Moroccan minority members: Recent trends studied in-depth

In the second part, partner selection attitudes receive more attention to better understand recent partner selection patterns. The recent indications of changing partner selection patterns among Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium are similar to trends observed in neighboring countries (Aybek et al., 2015; Carol et al., 2014; Loozen et al., 2012; Sterckx et al., 2014). Recent policy changes implemented throughout Europe to reduce partner migration can partially explain this decline (Carol et al., 2014; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). However, we cannot ignore the possibility that attitudinal changes may also contribute to this decline. This may be especially true in Belgium, where immigration policies became stricter in 2011; however, indications of a decline are already observed in 2004 among the second generation (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Van Kerckem et al.'s (2013) qualitative research provides initial insight into the attitudinal mechanisms behind a recent decline in transnational partnerships. First, adolescent minority members tend to prefer local co-ethnic partners because they recognize the risks and downsides of transnational partnerships and evaluate the dependence of newly immigrated partners negatively. Second, premarital relationships are allowed more often, which may enable an increase in local (co-ethnic) partnerships. Third, and most importantly, lower levels of parental involvement among the more recent marriage cohorts could also contribute to the decline in transnational partnerships, as parents are believed to be more traditional and to prefer transnational partnerships for their children.

However, three observations should be made when considering parental influence. First, the partner selection process has evolved from being initiated by parents and family to being initiated by partners with parental consent (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Parental approval, thus, is still important and broadly accepted as a condition for getting married (Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Second, the literature attributing the decline in transnational partnerships to changes in parental involvement discusses the extent of their influence but overlooks preferences concerning specific partner types. The assumption is that parents prefer transnational partnerships for their children without researching specific parental preferences (see e.g. Huschek et al., 2012;

Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). Third, less parental involvement does not necessarily result in fewer transnational partnerships, as the prevalence of this partner type could also be a result of a match between the interests and objectives of all parties involved—parents and adolescents (Reniers & Lievens, 1997). Therefore, the question that arises is whether the decline in transnational partnerships could be associated with a change in attitudes and preferences of adolescents and parents in addition to policy changes. This leads to the third and the fourth research questions of this dissertation:

RQ₃ To what extent does parental influence in the partner selection process decline over time and how could it influence the prevalence of transnational partnerships and, potentially, mixed partnerships in the future?

↳ Research Question 3 is answered by analyzing population as well as survey data. In Chapter 5, multinomial regression models are built, based on Belgian National Register data including all second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who registered a marriage between 2005 and 2015. They analyze whether the effect of age at marriage on partner choice changes over time. As discussed earlier, age at marriage is often considered a proxy for the degree of maturity and influence a person has in their partner selection process (Lodewijckx et al., 1997). Minority members marrying at a younger age are known to be more likely to marry transnationally because of higher levels of parental involvement in their partner selection process, assuming those parents prefer transnational partnerships for their children. In addition, minority members marrying at an older age are known to be more likely to marry mixed because of lower levels of parental involvement in their partner selection, assuming those parents prefer ethnic homogenous partnerships for their children. Therefore, if the effect of marriage age on partner choice becomes smaller over time, it would be in line with the assumption that parental involvement in partner selection process decreases over time.

↳ In Chapter 7, data from the Sexpert survey, questioning Turkish minority members in Flanders, is analyzed. We describe whether respondents belonging to more recent marriage cohorts report lower levels of parental

influence in the formation of their partnership and determine to what extent parental influence interferes with freedom of choice.

RQ₄ To what extent is there a change in the partner selection attitudes of Turkish and Moroccan minority members regarding transnational partnerships? In view of possible changes, to what extent do minority members show openness towards mixed partnerships?

↳ Research Question 4 is also answered in two different ways. In Chapter 5, multinomial regression models are built, based on Belgian National Register data including all second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who married between 2005 and 2015. They analyze whether the effect of marriage age and of educational attainment on the odds to marry mixed changes over time. First, minority members marrying at an older age are more likely to choose a mixed marriage because they are less prone to influence of third parties. Hence, when the effect of marriage age on mixed marriages becomes smaller, this could indicate a decreasing parental influence as explained above, as well as an increasing openness towards mixed marriages. Second, higher educated minority members are more likely to choose a mixed marriage compared to lower educated minority members because of, for example, more liberal family values, more interethnic social contact and weaker attachments to the origin community. If social resistance towards mixed marriages is declining, mixed marriages may also become prevalent among the lower educated, reducing the positive effect of educational attainment on the odds to marry mixed.

↳ In Chapter 7, data from the Sexpert survey is analyzed to study which partner types parents prefer for their children and whether there is a difference for daughters versus sons. In view of possible attitudinal changes, we also address what characterizes parents who are more open to mixed partnerships for their children. Finally, adolescents' preferences about the ethnicity of their future partners is discussed as well. Including adolescents' attitudes is essential to obtain a comprehensive view of recent partner selection dynamics, since their role in the process may become more important over time (Van Zantvliet et al., 2014; Yalcin et al., 2006).

The most recent indications of change reveal a decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships balanced by an increase in the prevalence of local co-ethnic partnerships. As indicated earlier, ethnic homogamy as a predominant trend occurs for a variety of normative and structural reasons in addition to individual preferences. An example of a structural factor influencing the prevalence of ethnic homogamy may be the extent to which a society is characterized by ethnic boundaries. Many researchers have linked the prevalence of mixed partnerships to ethnic boundaries on an aggregate, structural level, as it can be an indicator of ethnic boundaries in a society. Hence, when a society is characterized by strong ethnic boundaries and, consequently, relatively low levels of social acceptance and a high ethnic distance, the prevalence of heterogeneous partnership will probably be rather low. The last research question of this dissertation turns to the micro level and questions whether and to what extent symbolic boundaries, manifesting as ethnic prejudice, may shape partner choice preferences.

RQ₅ To what extent is the preference of minority members for ethnic homogamy reinforced by the perception of ethnic boundaries?

↳ This question is answered by analyzing Sexpert survey data. Chapter 8 evaluates to what extent Turkish minority members experience ethnic prejudice in the Flemish society, and which minority members are more likely to experience ethnic prejudice. Furthermore, it discusses the effect ethnic prejudice has on a specific type of interethnic social contact: partner selection. To be more concrete, the multivariate analyses assess whether the partner selection attitudes of minority parents are affected by their experiences of ethnic prejudice. Experiencing ethnic prejudice could influence minority parents' openness towards mixed partnerships for their children and therefore consolidate ethnic boundaries. This would confirm the prevalence of mixed partnerships as an indicator of ethnic boundaries and confirm that experiences of prejudice or discrimination might hamper processes of integration (Glazer, 1993; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Table 3.1 Research outline

Chapter	Research Question(s)	Content
5	1, 3, and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the recent trends in partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium regarding different partner types? And are these trends different for minority members remarrying?• Whether and to what extent do the effects of age at marriage and educational attainment change over time?
6	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium?• Which minority members are more likely to cohabit instead of marrying?
7	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recent trends in partner selection of Turkish minority members in Flanders between 2001–2008.• To what extent does parental influence differ in partner selection across marriage cohorts of Turkish minority members?• Which partner types do Turkish minority parents prefer for their children and does the preference differ for daughters versus sons?• What characterizes Turkish minority parents that show openness towards mixed partnerships for their children?• What are Turkish minority adolescents' preferences about the ethnicity of their future marriage partners?
8	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent do Turkish minority members experience ethnic prejudice in their social interaction with the Flemish majority population?• Which Turkish minority members are more likely to experience ethnic prejudice?• To what extent is the preference of minority parents for ethnic homogamy reinforced by the perception of ethnic boundaries?

Chapter 4. Methodology

To answer the five research questions of this dissertation, quantitative methods are used on both population and survey data. The first two research questions are best answered by analyzing population data from the National Register because, in contrast to several previous studies on partner selection (see e.g. Carol et al., 2014; González-Ferrer, 2006; Hartung et al., 2011; Milewski & Hamel, 2010; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014), they provide a 'robust' picture of demographic behavior and trends over time. In addition, register data eliminate sample size problems common in studies among ethnic minority members. However, these data often do not provide additional, more detailed information, such as values, motives, and beliefs, because they give only information on a limited number of sociodemographic variables. These variables can only be used as proxies, which may lead to validity issues. Nevertheless, this kind of background information is necessary for interpreting trends observed in these data. The analyses of the register data are therefore complemented with information from the Sexpert survey and from regional datasets containing information on the highest degree obtained by all individuals residing in Belgium. The former contains survey data on Turkish minority members living in Flanders, and is included to acquire more information on minority members' attitudes regarding partner selection and their social interaction with majority members. The latter are included because educational attainment is an important predictor of partner selection preferences and behavior, and therefore indispensable when researching partner selection dynamics.

The first part of this chapter describes the different data sources and the additional selections that were made in each empirical study. The second part outlines the operationalization of the (in)dependent variables analyzed in the empirical chapters.

4.1 Data sources

4.1.1 Extraction from the Belgian National Register (BNR 2001–2008)

The first data source is an extraction from the Belgian National Register which was carried out in November 2011, and included all marriages and legally registered

cohabitations conducted between 2001 and 2010 by Belgian residents born with a third-country nationality. This data extraction and, therefore, the cleaning procedure, was part of an already existing research project realized between 2014 and 2019 (e.g. Dupont, 2019).

The initial extraction contained 268,842 couples, of which complete information was available for 201,102 couples and of which information was missing for 67,740 couples. In the initial step of the data cleaning process, only couples for whom complete information was available were selected ($N = 201,102$). Duplicates ($N = 1,144$) were removed from the dataset. Couples for whom the marital status link between partners was missing are not appropriate for further analysis and were therefore dismissed as well ($N = 437$). Given the focus on partner choices of minority members residing in Belgium, couples that were already married or were legally cohabiting before one of the partners migrated to Belgium were removed ($N = 13,610$). Furthermore, the following conditions had to be met for inclusion: at least one partner had to be a resident in Belgium one year before the partnership, and had to have been born with a third-country nationality. These requirements excluded the partner choice of residents with Belgian nationality at birth ($N = 53,417$).

A minority member is considered to be a Belgian resident if they have lived in Belgium at least one year before the registration of the partnership. This inclusion criterion is used in an attempt to differentiate between minority members entering Belgium because of a partnership (partner migrants) and minority members forming a partnership while living in Belgium (the research population). Because the migration motive of migrants is not included in the National Register, it is assumed that individuals migration in the same year of the partnership formation or later, are partner migrants.

In this data extraction, the majority of the partner migrants arrived after one year, 96 percent arrived within three years. Since information about partners was available only after their arrival in Belgium, complete and accurate information was available for marriages and legally registered cohabitations concluded in the period between 2001 and 2008. As a consequence, 32,783 partnerships formed after January 1, 2009, were excluded. After this data cleaning process, 99,711 couples, or 49.6 percent of all couples with complete information, were retained.

A second step dealt with couples for whom crucial information was missing ($N = 67,740$). First, the same four criteria that were applied to complete couples were

adopted, which led to a reduction of 59,891 couples. The remaining 7,849 couples were all qualified for inclusion, although most of the transnational partners in these couples were still living in the origin country, even after 10 years. Explanations for this missing information include a minority member that remains registered in Belgium but has moved abroad ($N = 2761$), the dissolution of the partnership before migration ($N = 1,179$), a possible second marriage within the timeframe of the extraction ($N = 1,012$), ex officio removal, decease, and exemption from registration ($N = 436$), and actual 'incomplete couples,' where a partner still resided in the origin country ($N = 2,461$).

In total, 107,560 couples (99,711 with complete information and 7,849 with incomplete information), or 53.5 percent of the initial dataset, were retained. Given the focus on partner choices of individuals rather than couples, the dataset was transformed to an individual-level dataset containing information on the partner choice of individuals who formed a marriage or a legally registered cohabitation between 2001 and 2008, resided in Belgium for at least one year before the formation of the partnership, and were born with a nationality from a third country ($N = 126,757$). Focusing on the partner choice of residents increases the number of cases because a proportion of the couples in the data extraction consists of two residents. Of the 107,560 couples, 19,197 consist of two residents. When the partner choice of both residents is included in the individual-level dataset, the overall total becomes 126,757, of which 38,394 ($19,163 \times 2$) are partner choices made by residents.

We analyze this data source in Chapter 7, awaiting the most recent extraction of the National Register which was requested in May 2016 as I describe in section 4.1.3. Chapter 7 examines attitudinal mechanisms behind trends in partner selection among Turkish minority members in Flanders by studying parental preferences. The attitudinal mechanisms are analyzed based on the Sexpert survey, discussed below, whereas the trends in partner selection are derived from the extraction from the National Register. To fit the aim of the chapter and to match the research population of the Sexpert survey, we made an additional selection to the extraction. We included all 1.5- and second-generation Turkish minority members living in Flanders who conducted a marriage for the first time between 2001 and 2008 ($N = 7,274$). A graphical representation of the data cleaning process and the additional selection to obtain the research population of Chapter 7, is included as Appendix 1.

4.1.2 Sexpert survey

An extension of the Sexpert survey (I) (2010–2013, financed by the Agency for Innovation by Science and Technology) is used as a second data source. The (Sexpert II) survey includes detailed and extensive data on the sexual health of Turkish (and Moroccan) minorities in Flanders, and on its bio-medical, psychological and sociocultural correlates. The data collection took place between 2012 and 2013 by means of face-to-face interviews, with a combination of computer-assisted personal interviewing and computer-assisted self-interviewing, the latter being used for the (most) sensitive information. Detailed study design and recruitment information have been previously described (Buisse et al., 2013). Data were gathered in a population-based probability sample drawn from the two largest minorities in Flanders originating from third countries: people of Turkish or of Moroccan descent. The sampling method followed a multistage procedure. The first stage included the selection of the primary sampling units, i.e. the Flemish municipalities ($N = 18$). By ordering and by systematic sampling, the chance of a municipality being selected was proportional to the number of inhabitants meeting the criteria for eligibility (being between 14 and 59 years of age, having Belgian nationality, and having at least one parent born with Turkish or Moroccan nationality). In a second stage, respondents were selected randomly from the Belgian National Register. Since the response rate obtained from the subsample of Moroccan descent was low (26%, $N = 132$), we proceeded with only the subsample of Turkish descent ($N = 430$, response rate: 57% of eligible respondents) in further analyses. The data from the latter subsample were weighted by gender and age in order to make them representative of the population of Flemish residents of Turkish descent, aged 14–59. Respondents could choose between a Dutch and Turkish questionnaire (responses were translated by independent translators); 36.4 percent answered in Turkish.

This data is analyzed in Chapters 7 and 8, which study attitudinal mechanisms behind trends in partner selection. This representative survey data allows us to adequately analyze attitudes regarding these topics, compared to register data, which contains only sociodemographic variables. However, the Sexpert dataset's sample size is rather small, limiting us to descriptive analyses and motivating us to interpret the findings with caution. Furthermore, in contrast to the data extractions from the National Register, the survey does not consider minority members living in Wallonia, more than 59 years old or of Moroccan descent.

4.1.3 Extraction from the Belgian National Register (BNR 2005–2015)

To gain more insight into the most recent trends in the partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minority members living in Belgium, a second and more comprehensive extraction from the Belgian National Register was carried out in March 2018 by Statistics Belgium.²⁴ The application²⁵ was submitted in May 2016, and the data was delivered stepwise between March 2018 and January 2020. Before each delivery, the data was pseudonymized by Statistics Belgium's legal department. The original identification number of a Belgian resident, as recorded in the National Register, was encrypted to generate a unique identifier for each individual without violating privacy rules.

Although the extraction was carried out in March 2018, we considered partnerships formed from 2005 through 2015 only, because in cases of transnational partnerships it can take some time for the partner migrant to arrive in Belgium. For partner migrants still residing in the origin country, only their sex and birth year is recorded in the National Register; all other information is supplemented upon arrival in Belgium. On average, partner migrants arrive one year after the partnership registration. After three years, more than 80 percent of the transnational partners of Turkish and Moroccan minority members have arrived in Belgium (See Appendix 2 for a complete overview of the percentage of partner migrants arriving in Belgium per year).

The extraction consists of seven different datasets regarding (1) marriages formed between 2005 and 2015, (2) the civil status history of all individuals in the first dataset, (3) cohabitations legally registered between 2005 and 2015, (4) sociodemographic characteristics of the children of all individuals in datasets 1 and 3, (5) the nationality of parents and grandparents of all individuals in datasets 1 and 3, (6) regional-level datasets containing information on the highest degree obtained by all individuals in datasets 1 and 3, and (7) IPCAL dataset containing information on the net taxable annual income of all individuals in dataset 1. These seven datasets are combined into one. The following sections explain the cleaning

²⁴ We are very grateful to Patrick Lusyne (Algemene Directie Statistiek—Statistics Belgium) for providing the data.

²⁵ The standard procedure to acquire microdata from Statistics Belgium was followed. For more information see <https://statbel.fgov.be/en/about-statbel/privacy/microdata-research>

procedure, as well as the additional selections that were made for empirical Chapters 5 and 6.

4.1.3.1 Marriages

The first dataset contains all marriages registered in the National Register between 2005 and 2015 by at least one non-Belgian. All marriages ($N = 365,100$) met one of the following conditions: (a) at least one partner was born in a foreign country, (b) at least one partner was born with a foreign nationality, (c) at least one partner currently has a foreign nationality, or (d) at least one partner has a temporary identification number. With regard to the latter, all individuals born in Belgium or legally residing Belgium are logged in to the National Register and are given an identification number. This number consists of six numbers indicating date of birth, three numbers which count individuals born on the same day, and a control number based on the previous nine numbers. When transnational partnerships are registered at a Belgian administration office, partner migrants receive are given a temporary identification number in anticipation of their arrival in Belgium. These temporary numbers are fictitious and easy to distinguish from actual identification numbers.

In an extensive data cleaning process, we excluded

- 8,107 marriages because information on nationality at birth and/or year of birth was missing for at least one partner, and this partner had no temporary identification number
- 5,457 marriages because both partners were the same gender, and our focus was on heterosexual partnerships, as we were researching partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities and homosexuality is frowned upon within those communities (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018)
- 9,842 marriages because both partners were born with Belgian nationality. These marriages were part of the initial data extraction because these individuals were born in a foreign country but had Belgian nationality
- 44,571 marriages that were already formed before migration because
 - both partners migrated after marrying
 - both partners migrated in the same year that they married

- one partner migrated in the year they married and the other at least one year later
- 117 marriages because for one of the partners, the indicated year of arrival in Belgium preceded the year of birth, which is impossible

Therefore, we retained 297,007 marriages.

After this extensive data cleaning process, we aimed at creating a dataset containing information on individuals born with a foreign nationality residing in Belgium and on the partner choice they made between 2005 and 2015. To that end, we transformed the couple-dataset to an individual-level dataset containing information on individuals that formed a marriage between 2005 and 2015 ($N = 594,014$) who were residing in Belgium at least one year before the marriage and who were born with a foreign nationality, excluding, respectively, 182,667 and 125,396 individuals and resulting in a dataset containing 285,951 partner choices. The dataset contains information on the marriages, namely, the year they started and/or ended, the place and country of registration, and the status of the marriage (ongoing, ended due to divorce, annulled, etc.). Regarding both partners, the datasets contain information on sex, year and place of birth, current place of residence, nationality at birth, current nationality, and year of registration in Belgium.

4.1.3.2 Civil status history

A second dataset contains all changes in the civil status (single, married, divorced, widowed, etc.) of all individuals included in the first dataset. Every record ($N = 1,597,130$) in this dataset indicates a change in civil status that was registered with the Belgian National Register. Hence, changes in civil status that occurred abroad and were not registered in Belgium are not included. This dataset makes it possible to determine the partnership rank (first versus higher-order partnerships) of partnerships formed between 2005 and 2015 that were included in the first and third datasets.

4.1.3.3 Legally registered cohabitation

The third dataset contains all legally registered cohabitations recorded in the Belgian National Register between 2005 and 2015 by non-Belgians. All cohabitations ($N = 106,681$) met one of the following conditions: (a) at least one partner was born in a foreign country, (b) at least one partner was born with a

foreign nationality, (c) at least one partner currently has a foreign nationality, or (d) at least one partner has a temporary identification number.

In an extensive data cleaning process, we excluded

- 3,947 couples because both partners were the same gender.
- 10 couples because essential information on nationality at birth and/or year of birth was missing for at least one partner, and this partner had no temporary identification number
- 7,866 couples because both partners were born with Belgian nationality.
- 181 couples who had already formed a cohabitation before migration because
 - both partners migrated after the registration of the cohabitation
 - both partners migrated the same year as the cohabitation was registered
 - one partner migrated the same year as the cohabitation was registered and the other at least one year later
- 50 couples because for one of the partners, the indicated year of arrival in Belgium preceded the year of birth, which is impossible

Therefore, we retained 94,627 couples.

After an extensive data cleaning process, we transformed the couples-dataset to an individual-level dataset containing information on individuals that registered a cohabitation between 2005 and 2015 ($N = 189,254$) who were residing in Belgium at least one year before registering the cohabitation and who were born with a foreign nationality, excluding, respectively, 24,465 and 61,962 individuals and resulting in a dataset containing 102,827 partner choices. The dataset contains information on the partnership, namely, the year it started and/or ended, the place and country of registration, and the status of the cohabitation (ongoing, ended due to separation, etc.). Regarding both partners, the datasets contain information on sex, year and place of birth, current place of residence, nationality at birth, current nationality, and year of registration in Belgium.

4.1.3.4 Children

The fourth dataset contains sociodemographic information from the Belgian National Register on all children born to the individuals (both men and women) the first and the third dataset. Information regarding sex and year of birth of all children ($N = 562,634$), whether they were born in Belgium or migrated to Belgium, is included in this extraction.

4.1.3.5 (Grand)Parents

The fifth dataset contains information recorded in the Belgian National Register on the (grand)parents of all individuals in the first and the third dataset. For parents ($N = 712,423$) and grandparents ($N = 688,649$) who were born in Belgium or who migrated to Belgium and are therefore registered in the National Register, information on sex, country of birth, nationality at birth, and current nationality is included in the data extraction.

4.1.3.6 Educational attainment

When studying partner selection dynamics, educational attainment is an important indicator, an indicator not provided by the National Register. However, Statistics Belgium combined regional datasets containing information on the educational attainment of Belgian residents with the extractions from the National Register to obtain information on the educational attainment of all individuals in both the marriage and the cohabitation dataset.

As indicator of educational attainment, we use the highest diploma obtained and registered at the regional level. Several regional-level datasets had to be combined because Belgium is divided into three regions (Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels). For residents of Wallonia and Brussels, the highest diploma obtained in Belgium is included; for residents of Flanders, recognized foreign degrees can also be included. These regional-level datasets contain information on the highest diploma obtained on January 1, 2011. In total, the highest diploma obtained is known for 260,742, or 67.07 percent, of all individuals in datasets 1 and 3. Of the missings, 93.62 percent are found among individuals not born in Belgium. It is possible they obtained a foreign degree that is not recorded in any of the regional registers.

Using information on the educational attainment of Belgian residents available on January 1, 2011, has several implications. First, individuals who were still studying

are not identified as students, nor are ongoing studies taken into consideration. Second, for minority members who obtained their diploma abroad before migrating to Belgium or who migrated after January 1, 2011, a valid educational attainment would not appear in these regional datasets. Third, the highest diploma registered in our data extraction is not necessarily the same as the highest diploma obtained by the start of the partnership, because the timeframe of the data extractions ranges from 2005 through 2015.

4.1.3.7 IPCAL

The IPCAL²⁶ dataset of the federal department of Finance includes the tax information of every Belgian resident. Statistics Belgium linked the IPCAL and marriage dataset and was able to retrieve the net taxable annual income in the year prior to the marriage. The information with regard to income is available for each minority member in the marriage dataset from 2006 onwards. The net taxable income is the sum of all income from real estate, income from movable property and capital, professional income (wages and salaries, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, pension benefits,...) and others, minus deductible expenses (such as childcare, alimony payments, gifts,...).

4.1.3.8 One combined dataset

The information from the seven datasets is combined into one dataset based on the unique identifier of each resident ($N = 388,778$). An additional cleaning step was performed because some couples formed a partnership with each other more than once. From a partner selection perspective, these repeated partnerships are not considered different partner choices because it involves the same partner. Therefore, only the first of these partnerships was included in the dataset, which led to the exclusion of the following 872 partner choices:

- 180 partner choices because 180 residents married the same partner twice
- 665 partner choices because 665 residents chose to cohabit with the same partner twice
- 24 partner choices because 12 residents chose to cohabit with the same partner three times

²⁶ IPCAL stands for Impôt des Personnes physique CALculé

- 3 partner choices because 1 resident chose to cohabit with the same partner four times

After these exclusions, we retained 387,906 partner choices of which 97,629 were made by Turkish and Moroccan minority members.

When two partners formed a partnership with each other more than once but changed partnership type, either from cohabitation to marriage or vice versa, both partner choices were included in the dataset because of the scope of Chapter 6—the choice to cohabit instead of marrying. More details on the additional selections that were made are given in the next section.

4.1.3.9 Additional selections for the empirical studies

Additional selections to the combined dataset were made to fit the aim of each empirical study. In Chapter 5, we study the most recent trends in partner selection regarding different partner types for Turkish and Moroccan minority members marrying for the first time as well as remarrying. Therefore, we needed to make an additional selection from the combined dataset. All individuals born with either Turkish or Moroccan nationality who married between 2005 and 2015 ($N = 91,916$) were selected. All individuals meeting these criteria are included, regardless of the rank or place of marriage or of the characteristics of their partner. By using these selection criteria, all cohabitations ($N = 102,135$) and all individuals born with a non-Turkish/Moroccan nationality ($N = 191,855$) were excluded.

In Chapter 6, we study the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation as first partner choice among Turkish and Moroccan minority members, as well as which minority members are more likely to cohabit instead of to marry. To that end, we made an additional selection from the combined dataset. All individuals born with Turkish or Moroccan nationality who married or registered a cohabitation for the first time between 2005 and 2015 were selected ($N = 68,805$). By using these selection criteria, all individuals born with a non-Turkish/Moroccan nationality ($N = 191,855$), and higher-order partnerships ($N = 27,905$) were excluded. The latter are excluded for two reasons. First, the empirical chapter's objective is to study the extent to which minority members consider cohabitation rather than marriage as a possible first official partnership type. Second, partner selection patterns and motives differ extensively between first and later partnerships (Dupont et al., 2019b; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010; Wu & Schimmele, 2005).

We use the second dataset on marriage history to determine the rank of the partnership. However, this dataset includes the (Belgian) marriage history of minority members who married between 2005 and 2015. Hence, for minority members who registered a marriage between 2005 and 2015, we can determine whether their marriage is a first marriage or not. For minority members who registered a cohabitation between 2005 and 2015, we do not have such a history; therefore, we do not know if they had registered a prior cohabitation or marriage. We have information on their partner formation history only if they also married between 2005 and 2015. Hence, the rank of cohabitations is an estimation.

Additionally, for those minority members who first registered a cohabitation within our timeframe and subsequently married each other, we consider only their first union formation—the cohabitation—and exclude their marriage ($N = 904$). Similarly, for couples who married within our timeframe and later on changed their marriage to a cohabitation, we consider their marriage and exclude their cohabitation ($N = 15$). A graphical representation of the data cleaning process and the additional selections made to obtain the research population of Chapters 5 and 6, are included in Appendix 3.

Table 4.1 gives an overview of the research outline of this dissertation, including the data sources analyzed in each empirical chapter.

Table 4.1 Research outline

Chapter	Research Question(s)	Content	Data
5	1, 3, and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the recent trends in partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium regarding different partner types? And are these trends different for minority members remarrying? • Whether and to what extent do the effects of age at marriage and educational attainment change over time? 	BNR 2005– 2015
6	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minority members registering a first partnership? • Which minority members are more likely to cohabit instead of marrying? 	BNR 2005– 2015
7	3 – 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent trends in partner selection of Turkish minority members in Flanders between 2001–2008. • To what extent does parental influence differ in partner selection across marriage cohorts of Turkish minority members? • Which partner types do Turkish minority parents prefer for their children and does the preference differ for daughters versus sons? • What characterizes Turkish minority parents that show openness towards mixed partnerships for their children? • What are Turkish minority adolescents' preferences about the ethnicity of their future marriage partners? 	BNR 2001– 2008 Sexpert survey &
8	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do Turkish minority members experience ethnic prejudice in their social interaction with the Flemish majority population? • Which Turkish minority members are more likely to experience ethnic prejudice? • To what extent is the preference of minority parents for ethnic homogamy reinforced by the perception of ethnic boundaries? 	Sexpert survey

4.2 Operationalization of dependent variables

4.2.1 Partner type

Dataset: BNR 2001–2008 and 2005–2015

The partner type of minority members is operationalized into three categories: a transnational, local co-ethnic, or mixed partnership. The categorization depends on several characteristics of the partner because the Turkish and Moroccan minority members whose partner choices are included in the data extraction all have the same characteristics: being born with the Turkish or Moroccan nationality and being a Belgian resident. The variable partner type is analyzed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 (an overview of which variables are included in which chapter can be found in Table 4.11). In Chapters 5 and 6, the second extraction from the Belgian National Register (2005–2015) is used; in Chapter 7, the first extraction (2001–2008). We start with the operationalization of the latter.

In Chapter 7, a transnational partnership is defined as a partnership with a partner with the same nationality at birth who did not reside in Belgium for at least a year before partnership formation. The partner in a local co-ethnic partnership shares the same birth nationality but is also a Belgian resident. The partner in a mixed partnership is a Belgian resident and is born with Belgian nationality as well.

In the second extraction from the Belgian National Register 2005–2015, which is analyzed in Chapters 5 and 6, some different choices were made. Below, Table 4.2 shows a more detailed explanation of this operationalization, which is based on all Turkish and Moroccan minority members from the combined dataset BNR 2005-2015 ($N = 97,629$).

The partner in local co-ethnic partnerships has the same nationality at birth as the minority member and is either a Belgian resident or is currently a European Union member-state resident. Hence, the 'local' in local co-ethnic is not restricted to Belgium alone, because Belgian immigration policies make a distinction between partners originating from the EU,²⁷ on the one hand, and third countries, on the other hand (Caestecker, 2005). As indicated in section 2.7.3, the requirements to migrate to Belgium are significantly less strict for partners originating from EU

²⁷ Partners originating from Iceland, Norway, or Liechtenstein follow the same rules as partners from EU member states.

member-states compared to third countries. However, more than 99 percent of all local co-ethnic partners are Belgian residents (See Table 4.2).

The partner in a transnational partnership resided in a third country at least until the year of the partnership formation. He/she arrived in Belgium either in the year of the union formation or later or did not arrive in Belgium and has a temporary identification number in the National Register. This operationalization differs from the one used in the first extraction and those used in previous studies (e.g. Carol et al., 2014; Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Eeckhaut et al., 2011; Huschek et al., 2011) because transnational partnerships can be mixed as well. We chose the transnational character of a partnership over the possible heterogamy of the partners, because of the Belgian immigration policies that regulate transnational partnerships and which may have an important impact on the formation of a partnership. Table 4.2 shows that only 2.67 percent of all transnational partnerships are mixed.

The partner in a mixed partnership has a different nationality at birth than the minority member. When the nationality at birth is from a third country, rather than from an EU member state, the partner has to be a Belgian resident as well. In contrast to the first extraction, not only Belgian partners but all partners with a different nationality at birth are included because mixed partnerships are defined as partnerships with a partner with a different ethnic background.

We use nationality at birth as indicated in the Belgian National Register to determine descent of a partner; although this is a sound basis, it does have some drawbacks. First, children from mixed partnerships—in which one parent has Belgian nationality (either by birth or acquisition) and one Turkish/Moroccan nationality—are Belgian by birth and their Turkish/Moroccan descent is therefore not registered. Second, from 1991 onwards, individuals with foreign parents automatically acquire Belgian nationality at birth if at least one parent is born, raised, and residing in Belgium (Caestecker et al., 2016). These individuals then belong to the third generation. Given that marriages can take place from age 18 onwards and given that we are studying up to and including 2015, individuals born in Belgium between 1991 and 1997 that have at least one parent meeting the above criteria are Belgian by birth. The fact that their Turkish or Moroccan descent is not registered, has two consequences. On the one hand, their partner selection is not included in our data extraction. On the other hand, when Turkish or Moroccan minority members form a partnership with a Belgian partner born out

of a mixed partnership or a Belgian partner which is a member of the third generation, this partnership is considered mixed because the partner is identified as Belgian in the National Register. However, these partnerships could also be categorized as local co-ethnic because the partner is of Turkish or Moroccan descent. Hence, there may be a slight overrepresentation of mixed partnerships in our dataset due to the misclassification of these partnerships. Nevertheless, information on the nationality of parents and grandparents made it possible to determine a partner's descent as well as their nationality at birth. We identified 1,746 of the Belgian and European partners who are actually of Turkish or Moroccan descent because they have at least one parent born with Turkish or Moroccan nationality. These partnerships are reclassified as local co-ethnic instead of mixed as they are ethnically homogamous instead of heterogamous. Table 4.3 shows the final operationalization of the variable partner type.

Partner type, operationalized as described above, is analyzed in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, we make an additional modification to the variable. Transnational and local co-ethnic partnerships are combined in what we will call co-ethnic partnerships, for two reasons. First, previous studies have shown that whether a partnership is co-ethnic or not is one of the most important predictors of choosing to cohabit (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Hartung et al., 2011; Lievens, 1999b). Second, the prevalence of transnational cohabitations among the eight subpopulations is too small²⁸ to include it as a separate category in the multivariate analyses without risking the reliability and robustness of the results. As indicated above, transnational partnerships are not homogamous by definition, but in the dataset analyzed in Chapter 6, only 2.34 percent of the transnational partnerships are mixed.

²⁸ ($N = 772$ compared to 1,146 local co-ethnic cohabitations and 3,242 mixed cohabitations)

Table 4.2 Detailed operationalization of partner type based on all partnerships of Turkish and Moroccan minority members (N = 97,629)

Local co-ethnic partnerships		Transnational partnerships		Mixed partnerships	
Belgian resident	99.44%	Temporary ID number	14.23%	Nationality at birth: Belgian	54.82%
Non-resident, current nationality: EU member state	0.56%	Heterogamous	2.67%	Nationality at birth: EU member state	28.87%
		Homogamous	83.11%	Belgian resident; nationality at birth: other	16.31%
<i>N</i>	37,824 (100%)	<i>N</i>	41,991 (100%)	<i>N</i>	17,814 (100%)

Data source: BNR data 2005–2015

Table 4.3 Detailed operationalization of partner type based on all partnerships of Turkish and Moroccan minority members

(N = 97,629), after correcting the operationalization of mixed partnerships

Local co-ethnic partnerships		Transnational partnerships		Mixed partnerships	
Belgian resident	99.46%	Temporary ID number	14.23%	Nationality at birth: Belgian	51.99%
Non-resident, current nationality: EU member state	0.54%	Heterogamous	2.67%	Nationality at birth: EU member state	29.94%
		Homogamous	83.11%	Belgian resident; nationality at birth: other	18.08%
<i>N</i>	39,570 (100%)	<i>N</i>	41,991 (100%)	<i>N</i>	16,068 (100%)

Data source: BNR data 2005–2015

4.2.2 Partnership type

Dataset: BNR 2005–2015

In Chapter 6, we discuss which minority members are more likely to choose to cohabit instead of marrying. The dependent variable, partnership type, consists of two categories: legally registered cohabitation and marriage. In Belgium, from 2000 onwards, two cohabiting individuals could legally register their cohabitation, regardless of their gender or the nature of their relationship (Senaeve, 2015). This means that, in contrast to marriage, not all cohabitations are romantic partnerships. Some cohabitations could be registered between friends or family members living together. Because of the exclusions defined in the data cleaning process, only cohabitations between men and women are included; this criterion does not, however, exclude the possibility that some of the cohabitations in the data sample are not romantic partnerships. This limitation is not present among transnational cohabitations, as it is only possible to legally migrate to Belgium because of a cohabitation between (love) partners (EMN, 2017). Nevertheless, the number of transnational cohabitations is limited, as shown earlier.

4.2.3 Parental attitudes regarding ethnicity of their child(ren)'s future marriage partner

Dataset: Sexpert survey

In Chapters 7 and 8, we consider parental attitudes regarding the ethnicity of future marriage partners for their daughters or sons. Chapter 7 discusses the extent to which Turkish minority parents consider the ethnicity of the future partner important or not. Chapter 8 describes the extent to which Turkish minority parents show openness towards mixed partnerships for their children. Both of these variables are operationalized based on the same six variables discussed below.

All Sexpert respondents who were asked about their preferences concerning their children's future partners were either older than 25 (regardless of their relationship status) or younger and already married ($N = 305$). If respondents were childless ($N = 173$), they were asked to imagine which partner type they would want for their

children if they had any.²⁹ Six variables are used as indicators of parental preferences concerning child(ren)'s partner type. All are measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important). The variables were obtained from the following questions, asked separately for male and female children: "How important is it to you that the future marriage partner of your child is (1) of Turkish descent and currently living in Turkey, (2) of Turkish descent and currently living in Belgium, or (3) of Belgian descent?" These six variables were recoded from five categories into three— unimportant (1-2), in-between (3), important (4-5)—and presented in three-way crosstabs (See Tables 4.4 and 4.5).

Table 4.4 Parental preferences for future partner types for daughters

(N = 255, 100%)

		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	8.63%	0.78%	19.61%
	In-between	0.39%	10.59%	5.88%
	Important	0.78%	0.39%	18.04%
In-between	Unimportant	2.35%	1.18%	5.49%
	In-between	0.00%	5.88%	2.35%
	Important	0.00%	0.00%	3.92%
Important	Unimportant	1.57%	0.00%	2.35%
	In-between	0.78%	0.39%	1.96%
	Important	0.00%	0.39%	6.27%

Data source: Sexpert survey, cfr. Chapter 7

²⁹ We find no important differences between the preferences of respondents with children and those talking about hypothetical children (See Appendix 4). For those with children, we have no knowledge of the relationship status of their children or which partner type their children chose.

Table 4.5 Parental preferences for the future partner type for sons*(N = 251, 100%)*

		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	6.77%	1.20%	12.75%
	In-between	0.00%	7.17%	4.38%
	Important	1.99%	0.40%	11.95%
In-between	Unimportant	0.40%	0.40%	6.37%
	In-between	0.00%	8.37%	3.59%
	Important	0.00%	0.00%	6.37%
Important	Unimportant	1.20%	0.00%	5.58%
	In-between	0.00%	1.59%	3.98%
	Important	0.00%	0.00%	15.54%

Data source: Sexpert survey, cfr. Chapter 7

In Chapter 7, we use these three-way crosstabs to discuss the extent to which parents consider ethnicity important in their children's partner choice. Two dichotomous variables are created based on these crosstabs: one concerning the type of partner for daughters and one concerning the type of partner for sons. A distinction is made between parents with no distinct preference for partners of Turkish descent and thus who consider ethnicity unimportant in their children's partner choice, and parents who do have a distinct preference for a partner of Turkish origin and thus consider ethnicity important. Table 4.6 shows the operationalization of these dichotomous variables. A "1" indicates parents who consider ethnicity unimportant. These respondents find a partner of Belgian descent important, regardless of their answers on the other two items concerning a partner of Turkish descent. Additionally, respondents who find the choice of a Belgian partner to be of in-between importance and a partner of Turkish descent to be unimportant are included in this category, together with respondents who do not consider ethnicity of any importance regarding the partner selection of their children (they answered unimportant on all three items). A "0" indicates parents who consider ethnicity important. They consider the choice for a local co-ethnic and/or a partner living in Turkey to be at least in-between important, without considering the choice for a native Belgian to be important.

Table 4.6 Operationalization of considering ethnicity unimportant:

1 = not important, 0 = important

		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
	Unimportant	1	0	0
Unimportant	In-between	0	0	0
	Important	0	0	0
	Unimportant	1	0	0
In-between	In-between	0	0	0
	Important	0	0	0
	Unimportant	1	1	1
Important	In-between	1	1	1
	Important	1	1	1

Data source: Sexpert survey, cfr. Chapter 7

In Chapter 8, these three-way crosstabs are used to discuss the extent to which parents show openness towards mixed partnerships for their children. The variable openness towards mixed partnerships is created in a manner similar to the variable considering ethnicity unimportant in Chapter 7. However, based on the suggestion of an anonymous reviewer, more variation was created in the operationalization by differentiating between three instead of two categories. Hence, two trichotomous variables are created based on these crosstabs: one concerning the partner of daughters and one concerning the partner of sons. A distinction is made between parents who have a specific preference for an ethnically homogenous partnership (regardless of the partner's country of residence) and are less open to interethnic partnerships (1), and parents who show an openness to a partner of Belgian descent without excluding a homogenous partnership (2). The third category consists of parents with no clear-cut preferences (3). The inclusion of this third—in-between—category is the addition to the operationalization in Chapter 7. Because this classification is rather conceptual, a latent class analysis in Latent Gold was carried out to verify the operationalization (see Appendix 5).

Table 4.7 shows the operationalization of these trichotomous variables. A "1" indicates parents with a distinct preference for ethnically homogenous partnerships and less openness to interethnic partnerships. They find a partner of Turkish descent (living in Turkey and/or living in Belgium) to be important and a

partner of Belgian descent unimportant or in-between important. A “2” indicates parents that do show openness to interethnic partnerships without excluding a homogamous partnership. These respondents find a partner of Belgian descent important, regardless of how they answer the other two items concerning a partner of Turkish descent. Additionally, respondents who find the choice of a Belgian partner to be of in-between importance and a partner of Turkish descent to be unimportant are included in this category, together with respondents who answered unimportant on all three items. In the third category, “3” indicates parents that have no distinct preference regarding the ethnicity (Turkish or Belgian) of the future partner of their child. They find at least one partner type of in-between important but find none of the partner types important.

Table 4.7 Operationalization of openness towards mixed partnerships:

1 = less openness towards mixed partnerships, 2 = more openness towards mixed partnerships, 3 = no distinct preference regarding ethnicity

		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	2	3	1
	In-between	3	3	1
	Important	1	1	1
In-between	Unimportant	2	3	1
	In-between	3	3	1
	Important	1	1	1
Important	Unimportant	2	2	2
	In-between	2	2	2
	Important	2	2	2

Data source: Sexpert survey, cfr. Chapter 8

4.2.4 Ethnic prejudice

Dataset: Sexpert survey

In Chapter 8, a second dependent variable is analyzed, namely, the extent to which Turkish minority members report ethnic prejudice in their social interaction with the majority population, measured by 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (completely). The 10 items are listed in Table 4.8. Different dimensions were discovered using a factor analysis with oblimin rotation (Table 4.8). In the first and second round, two items were excluded from the factor analysis because their loadings did not discriminate between factors. The third and final round shows two factors: one concerning the experience of ethnic prejudice, explaining 26.85 percent of the variance, and one assessing the influence of ethnic prejudice, explaining 21.44 percent of the variance. Items with a higher (> 0.45) loading on one of the factors are indicated in bold and are included in the construction of two sum scales, both rescaled from 1 to 5. A high score on the scale that measures the experience of ethnic prejudice indicates more frequent exposure to prejudice. The items on the scale assessing the influence of ethnic prejudice were rescaled so that a higher score indicates a larger degree of influence. Furthermore, both the experience of ethnic prejudice and the influence of ethnic prejudice scales have a medium internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.60 and 0.58, respectively.

Table 4.8 Structure matrix experiencing ethnic prejudice.

Results of a principle factor analysis with oblimin rotation

	Round 1			Round 2			Round 3	
	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Factor 1 Experiencing ethnic prejudice</i>	<i>Factor 2 Influence of ethnic prejudice</i>
Ethnic prejudice concerning people of Turkish descent does not affect me personally	0.049	0.345	0.603	0.058	0.277	0.697	0.054	0.507
I never worry that my behavior could be interpreted as typical of someone of Turkish descent	0.123	0.375	0.656	0.135	0.359	0.602	0.137	0.576
When I interact with natives, I feel my behavior is interpreted as typical for someone of Turkish descent	0.480	0.071	0.146	0.464	0.045	0.106	0.478	0.100
My ethnicity does not affect my interaction with natives	0.066	0.724	0.384	0.092	0.537	0.378	0.083	0.560

When I interact with natives, I almost never think about the fact that I'm of Turkish descent	0.063	0.545	0.332	0.081	0.797	0.310	0.075	0.526
My ethnicity affects how people treat me	0.472	0.241	0.233	0.470	0.215	0.209	0.478	0.259
Most natives experience more fear and aversion towards people of Turkish descent than they admit	0.660	0.183	0.073	0.673	0.130	0.086	0.675	0.132
Most natives have trouble considering people of Turkish descent as equals.	0.629	0.036	-0.108	0.623	-0.035	-0.070	0.599	-0.073
I often think that natives are being falsely accused of been afraid of someone of Turkish descent	0.264	0.321	0.123	0.254	0.246	0.131	/	/
Most natives do not judge people of Turkish descent based on their ethnicity	0.210	0.467	0.305	/	/	/	/	/

Data source: Sexpert survey, cfr. Chapter 8

4.3 Operationalization of independent variables

4.3.1 Migration generation

Datasets: BNR 2005–2015 and Sexpert survey

In all four empirical chapters, migration generation is constructed based on the stage in the socialization process in which a person arrived in Belgium, since the socialization process influences the development of attitudes and values in general (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) as well as partner selection and family formation values in particular (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). A distinction is made between three generations. The first generation migrated at age 15 or older. The 1.5 generation migrated between the ages of 6 and 14, and the second generation has been, for the most part, socialized in Belgium, as they either migrated before age 6 or were born in Belgium.

The 1.5 generation category contains a relatively small number of minority members compared to the other two categories (see Table 4.9). Furthermore, in Chapters 5 and 6, the partner selection trends and other descriptive results of first and 1.5 generation members are rather similar (See Appendices 6 and 7, respectively); therefore, these two groups were combined into the first generation. In the results Chapter 7 and 8 the 1.5 generation takes up a middle position or is more similar to the second generation (See Appendices 8 and 9); therefore these two groups were combined into what is called the second generation.

Additionally, in Chapter 8, we were able to make a further distinction according to migration motive included in the Sexpert survey. We differentiate between two groups within the first generation. A differentiation is made between partner migrants ($N = 65$) and minority members who migrated for other reasons ($N = 78$). The most important motives to immigrate, besides partner migration, were family reunion (32.39%), work (4.93%), and education (3.52%). This differentiation is made to test whether reports of ethnic prejudice differ according to migration motive. The duration of partner migrants' stay in the residence country (in the Sexpert survey) is on average 4.5 years shorter than that of individuals who migrated for other reasons. A longer socialization period in Belgian society is expected to decrease the cultural distance between minority groups and the majority population (Scheepers et al., 2002), leading to experiencing less ethnic prejudice and discrimination because of, for example, less cultural distance, a

stronger orientation towards the country of residence, and better language skills (Romero & Roberts, 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Table 4.9 Operationalization of migration generation in the empirical chapters

	Chapter 5 BNR 05–15	Chapter 6 BNR 05–15	Chapters 7 & 8 Sexpert survey
First generation	34.70%	20.57%	33.02%
1.5 generation	6.03%	6.59%	6.28%
Second generation	59.27%	72.84%	60.70%
<i>N</i>	91,916 (100%)	65,805 (100%)	430 (100%)

4.3.2 Educational attainment

Datasets: BNR 2005–2015 and Sexpert survey

In Chapter 5, educational attainment is based on the highest diploma obtained in Belgium that was available at the regional level on January 1, 2011. We distinguish four categories: no diploma, primary education, or lower secondary into low; higher secondary into middle; higher education into high; and missing. The missing category is included in the analyses because we have no information on the educational attainment of 16.94 percent of the data sample. As 82.75 percent of these missing cases belong to the first generation, we can assume that a majority may have obtained a diploma in the origin country that is not registered in the National Register.

In Chapters 7 and 8, educational attainment is operationalized into three categories: primary school and lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary education. The information is based on the highest diploma obtained (regardless of where it was obtained) as self-reported in the Sexpert survey.

4.3.3 Children

Datasets: BNR 2005–2015 and Sexpert survey

In Chapter 6, based on National Register data 2005–2015, we operationalized the effect of having children as having a child born prior to the registration of the partnership. Minority members whose first child was born at least one year before

partnership registration are distinguished from minority members whose first child was born during or after the partnership or those without children.

In Chapter 8, we operationalized the effect of having children as a dummy (yes/no) as self-reported in the Sexpert survey.

4.3.4 Religious attendance

Dataset: Sexpert survey

Religious attendance, analyzed in Chapter 7, is measured using the item “In the past six months, how often did you attend religious gatherings or services?” Possible responses on a 6-point scale are never, only on special occasions, monthly, weekly, and more than once a week. The six categories are recoded into three for ease of interpretation: never or on special occasions, at least once a month, and at least weekly.

4.3.5 Maintaining financial stability

Dataset: Sexpert survey

Maintaining financial stability, analyzed in Chapter 8, is measured by a subjective evaluation of the extent to which respondents felt they were able to maintain financial stability: easy, normal, or difficult.

4.3.6 Age at partnership formation

Dataset: BNR 2005–2015

Age at partnership formation (Chapter 6), or marriage age, as it is called in Chapter 5, is considered an indicator of a degree of maturity and how much influence a person has in the partner selection process (Lievens, 1999a). Therefore, the absolute age at partnership formation seems less interesting than an operationalization that distinguishes respondents who married at a younger, an average, or an older age in comparison with their peers. The definition of what is young, average, or older depends on the subpopulation and is based on gender, ethnicity, and migration generation. Table 4.10 indicates the operationalization of these categories for the different subpopulations based on the quantiles of age at partnership formation. With this method, we ensure the comparability of the effect of age at partnership formation between subpopulations. As this proxy is primarily

meaningful in cases of first partner choice, in Chapter 5, minority members that remarry are included in a fourth category.

I end this Chapter with an overview of the four empirical chapters, the research questions these chapters answer, and the datasets and variables analyzed in these chapters (See Table 4.11).

Table 4.10 Operationalization of age at partnership formation in Chapters 5 and 6

	Turkish men		Turkish women		Moroccan men		Moroccan women	
Chapter 5	2 nd gen.		2 nd gen.		2 nd gen.		2 nd gen.	
Younger age	< 23		< 21		< 25		< 21	
Average age	23–28		21–25		25–31		21–27	
Older age	> 28		> 25		> 31		> 27	
Chapter 6	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.
Younger age	< 24	< 23	< 21	< 21	< 26	< 25	< 22	< 21
Average age	24–33	23–28	21–29	21–26	26–36	25–31	22–32	21–27
Older age	> 33	> 28	> 29	> 26	> 36	> 31	> 32	> 27

Data source: BNR 2005-2015

Table 4.11 Research outline

Chapter	Research Question(s)	Content	Data	Dependent variable(s)	Independent variables
5	1, 3, and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the recent trends in partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium regarding different partner types? And are these trends different for minority members remarrying? Whether and to what extent did the effects of age at marriage and educational attainment change over time? 	BNR 2005–2015	Partner type	Educational attainment Marriage age Year of marriage
6	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium? Which minority members are more likely to cohabit instead of marrying? 	BNR 2005–2015	Partnership type: cohabitation or marriage	Age at partnership formation Partner type Child(ren) born prior to partnership Year of partnership formation
7	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent trends in partner selection of Turkish minority members in Flanders between 2001–2008. To what extent does parental influence differ in partner selection across marriage cohorts of Turkish minority members? Which partner types do Turkish minority parents prefer for their 	BNR 2001–2008 Sexpert survey	Considering ethnicity unimportant	Age Sex Migration generation Educational attainment Religious attendance

		<p>children and does the preference differ for daughters versus sons?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What characterizes Turkish minority parents that show openness towards mixed partnerships for their children? • What are Turkish minority adolescents' preferences about the ethnicity of their future marriage partners? 			
8	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do Turkish minority members experience ethnic prejudice in their social interaction with the Flemish majority population? • Which Turkish minority members are more likely to experience ethnic prejudice? • To what extent is the preference of minority parents for ethnic homogamy reinforced by the perception of ethnic boundaries? 	Sexpert survey	<p>Experiencing ethnic prejudice</p> <p>Influence of ethnic prejudice</p> <p>Openness towards mixed partnerships</p>	<p>Age</p> <p>Sex</p> <p>Migration generation</p> <p>Educational attainment</p> <p>Maintaining financial stability</p> <p>Having children</p> <p>Influence of ethnic prejudice</p>

Chapter 5.

Partner Selection Patterns in Transition: The Case of Turkish and Moroccan Minorities in Belgium



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Revised and resubmitted³⁰ to Demographic Research

Background

The majority of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Western Europe prefer transnational marriages over local co-ethnic and, to a lesser extent, mixed marriages. Recent studies indicate partner selection patterns might be changing after remaining constant for decades. The picture these studies reveal, however, is incomplete and limited to the earliest stage of change.

Objective

This paper provides a comprehensive insight into the most recent partner selection trends of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium and assesses whether and to what degree known dynamics may change over time.

Methods

National Register data is analyzed, including all Turkish and Moroccan minority members who married between 2005 and 2015 ($N = 91,916$). After describing (trends in) the prevalence of three partner types, multinomial logistic regressions estimate the effect of marriage age and educational attainment on partner choice.

Results

The prevalence of transnational marriages declines for all minority members. Local co-ethnic marriages mostly absorb this decline, but an unprecedented increase in mixed marriages is also observed. The influence of marriage age and educational attainment on partner choice has changed over time.

³⁰ Some small stylistic adjustments are made to increase the consistency of this dissertation.

Conclusion

Results reveal a structural decline in transnational marriages, reinforced by stricter immigration policies but initiated by other – possibly attitudinal – mechanisms. Dynamics regarding ethnic homogamy are subject to change, as mixed marriages are also increasing among women and the lower educated.

Contribution

The comprehensive overview given in this paper reveals unprecedented changes in partner selection and its dynamics. These changes influence immigration from Turkey and Morocco, demographic characteristics of the minority groups, and their relationship to the majority population.

5.1 Introduction

Belgium is characterized by large populations of Turkish and Moroccan minorities that originated in the context of labor migration in the 1960s (Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014). Despite a moratorium on labor migration in the 1970s, immigration continued due to family reunification and, more importantly, marriage migration. The preference for a transnational³¹ over a local (co-ethnic) marriage is a phenomenon observed among both first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minorities. Lievens (1999a) analyzes Belgian National Register data from 1991 and finds a high prevalence of transnational marriages among Turkish minorities (around 70%) and Moroccan minorities (around 55%). The prevalence of local co-ethnic marriages varies between 18.3 and 33.3%; mixed marriages are the least preferred. Similar partner selection patterns are described among these minorities in the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Sweden (Carol et al., 2014; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010).

The assumption that transnational marriages are motivated by tradition led to the expectation that the choice for this partner type would become less prominent over time, particularly as more members of the second generation began looking for a partner (Böcker, 1994; Esveldt et al., 1995). The second generation's better structural and social integration, as well as improved assimilation in different aspects of minority members' lives, would alter their partner selection preferences and behavior. The wish for an ethnically homogenous marriage would be fulfilled by a local co-ethnic partner and followed by a growing openness towards mixed marriages. However, the majority of the first and second generation were still opting for a transnational marriage in the mid-1990s (Böcker, 1994; Esveldt et al., 1995) and early 2000s (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Timmerman et al., 2009).

Indications that partner selection behavior may be changing after remaining constant for decades, have been recent. Van Kerckem et al. (2013) study Belgian National Register data containing all second-generation Turkish minority

³¹ A transnational marriage refers to Turkish or Moroccan minority members living in Belgium marrying a partner living in a non-European Union member-state who migrates to Belgium because of this marriage. As migration motives are not included in the National Register, we assume individuals who migrate in the same year of the marriage or later, are marriage migrants. We consider marriages between a minority member and a partner living in a EU member-state to be local instead of transnational because European citizens can move freely within the EU (EMN, 2017).

members who formed a partnership³² between 2001 and 2008. Transnational partnerships were the most common partner type in 2001 (56.5% for men and 59.9% for women). However, they observe a steep decline over the next seven years, which is mostly absorbed by local co-ethnic partnerships. For men, the prevalence of transnational partnerships declines to 33.7% in 2008, while the prevalence of local co-ethnic partnerships increases to 48.5%. For women, the prevalence of transnational partnerships declines to 42.1% and the prevalence of local co-ethnic partnerships increases to 46.8%. For men, this also led to an increase in mixed partnerships, from 7% to 14.3%. In their analysis of a similar dataset containing all first- and second-generation Moroccan minority members who formed a homogamous partnership between 2001 and 2008, Dupont, Van de Putte et al. (2017) also report a declining percentage of transnational partnerships from around 59% in 2001 to 45% in 2008. These studies seem to indicate that local co-ethnic partnerships had become the most common partner type by 2008.

However, the information on recent trends in Turkish and Moroccan minorities' partner selection is not complete. Because these trends have only started to appear recently, there is little insight into their evolution and characteristics. Differences according to migration generation, first or higher-order partnerships, and differences between cohabitation and marriage, for example, could be expected, but have not yet been studied (Dupont et al., 2019b; Hartung et al., 2011; Lievens, 1999a). Furthermore, these studies are limited to the earliest stage of change, and thus cannot demonstrate whether the observed changes are the onset of a structural trend or rather indicate fluctuations over time. Therefore, we here provide a detailed analysis of the most recent trends by analyzing Belgian National Register data including all marriages formed by first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minorities between 2005 and 2015. We start by discussing the distribution of the three partner types and assess the most recent trends up until 2015. We explore differences according to ethnicity, generation, gender, and rank of the marriage. Finally, we build multivariate regression models to establish the effects of sociodemographic characteristics and include interaction terms with marriage year to determine possible changes over time. As we will discuss, these effects - and especially their possible change over time -

³² The term 'partnership' refers to marriages and legally registered cohabitations, which are two types of unions that are officially registered in the National Register.

could reveal insight in the decreasing role of parents in the partner selection of their children and the increasing openness towards mixed marriages.

If the prevalence of transnational marriages continues to decline, while the opposite is true for the prevalence of local co-ethnic and mixed marriages, it would be unprecedented and significant for two reasons. First, until now, immigration from Turkey and Morocco was considered to be self-perpetuating because of the strong popularity of marriage migration. Hence, a continuing decline in transnational marriages could influence the characteristics of Turkish and Moroccan immigration, and significantly alter the structure of minority populations. Second, the popularity of transnational partnerships has been placed high on the European political agenda because policymakers' concerns about ethnic minorities' level of integration in the face of a constant influx of immigrants (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). Marrying a non-co-ethnic partner on the contrary, is considered to be an indicator of integration, which diminishes ethnic boundaries and can stimulate the growth of inter-group solidarity (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010; Lieberson & Waters, 1988; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Waters & Jiménez, 2005).

5.2 Turkish and Moroccan immigration

Turkish and Moroccan minority members are part of the two largest minority groups in Belgium originating from third countries (Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014). Turkish and Moroccan immigration to Belgium – like immigration to many other Western European countries – started in the early 1960s because of a shortage of laborers as a result of the booming economy. This first wave of (labor) immigration ended in 1974 when European governments imposed a moratorium as the economy underwent the postindustrial transition and additional low-skilled laborers became unnecessary. The guest workers' stay was expected to be temporary, but instead became permanent; this was the foundation for the second wave of family reunification immigration. Male laborers were reunified with their families throughout the 1970s (Reniers, 1999). The expectation was that immigration would end shortly, as the number of family members that stayed behind would eventually subside. However, immigration has continued unabatedly since the early 1980s. This third wave consists mainly of people arriving as newlywed partners of minority members already living in Belgium. In 2006

about 250,000 and 140,000 individuals were living in Belgium with, respectively, a Moroccan or Turkish nationality at birth (Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014).

Besides the similarities between these two minority groups (period of arrival, legal conditions, cultural and religious characteristics), there are also differences, especially with regard to the characteristics of the migration and the recruitment policies (Reniers, 1999). Part of the Moroccan migrants arriving in Belgium in the 1960s came independently, and not via official recruitment channels, in the search for better living conditions, rather than in the context of official labor migration. This is mainly reflected in the more individualistic character of Moroccan immigration in comparison to the more family-oriented Turkish immigration, resulting in social networks characterized by lower levels of transnationalism and social cohesion among the former.

5.3 Dynamics of partner selection

5.3.1 Transnational versus local marriages

The high prevalence of transnational marriages can be motivated by mutual interests of minority members residing in Europe and of family and friends living in the origin countries, and is facilitated by the existence of strong transnational ties between them (Aybek et al., 2015; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Lievens, 1999a). First, minority members often have a strong orientation towards the origin country. They consider partners in the origin country the most eligible, since they have the same norms and values and are a better cultural fit compared to local co-ethnics, who have a bad reputation and are often not considered appropriate partners (Sterckx & Bouw, 2005). Second, socioeconomic conditions in the origin countries are important push factors for migration (Timmerman et al., 2009). Socioeconomics combined with European policies restricting migration opportunities from outside Europe (Caestecker, 2005) make marriage one of most accessible channels of migration. This situation generates a large pool of possible partners in the origin countries and can create pressure on minority members to marry transnationally (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Minority members in turn become more attractive marriage partners, potentially giving them a better chance of finding a suitable partner in the origin country than in the local community (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007). Third, transnational marriages take place within transnational communities (Williams, 2013), which find their origin in strong migration networks between the sending and receiving societies, established in

the beginning of Turkish and Moroccan migration. These migration networks consist of strong, often familial ties which are created and maintained by continuous migration (De Haas, 2010). In a context where marriage migration is one of the only ways to migrate, these transnational communities facilitate transnational marriages through the transnational ties.

Nevertheless, variation in the prevalence of transnational marriages is present, depending on numerous factors on a micro-, meso- and macro-level (Kalmijn, 1998). Because this article focusses on the influence of micro level characteristics, we only discuss individual differences.

Transnational marriages are more prevalent among the first generation because of their stronger orientation on the origin country and stronger transnational ties, compared to the second generation (Huschek et al., 2012; Lievens, 1999a). For the same reasons transnational marriages also are more prevalent among Turkish compared to Moroccan minorities (Carol et al., 2014; Lievens, 1999a). Furthermore, minority members who remarry more often choose a transnational partner than those who marry for the first time (Dupont et al., 2019b). The local co-ethnic marriage market may be perceived to be restricted when one has been married before, due to the stigma regarding divorce (Koelet et al., 2008). Turning to the origin country then can optimize their chances of finding a new partner.

Previous research suggests that transnational marriages are inspired by traditional motives, as they are especially preferred by lower educated minority members (González-Ferrer, 2006; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). However, others report gendered motives for transnational marriages: Higher educated women are more likely to engage in a transnational marriage, the opposite is true for men. Lievens (1999a) concludes that by choosing a transnational marriage, higher educated women from minority groups may gain more autonomy and power within the relationship because they are less subjected to the generally strong influence of their in-laws and because their partner is new to the resident country. Hence, women may choose this type of partner to satisfy modern goals, whereas men search within the origin country for more traditional spouses. Evidence for this hypothesis has mainly been found in qualitative studies (Liversage, 2012; Timmerman et al., 2009). In their quantitative studies, Gonzalez-Ferrer (2006) and Milewski (2010) find no support for this hypothesis among Turkish minorities. Carol et al. (2014) do find some supporting evidence but question educational attainment as a proxy for traditional orientation, as the interaction remained

significant after controlling for religiosity. Hence, the choice for transnational marriages could also result from a lack of appropriate partners in the residence country (Straßburger, 2003). While higher educated women may need to turn to the origin country to find a co-ethnic partner with a similar level of education, this is less true for men; it is more common for men to marry women lower educated than themselves.

5.3.2 Mixed versus homogamous marriage

The prevalence of mixed marriages is generally low among Turkish and Moroccan minorities because of a strong preference towards ethnic homogamy (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Marriage is seen as a bond between individuals as well as their families, and the reputation of potential partners is essential for the preservation of family honor (Esveldt et al., 1995). Young adult behavior is therefore determined by an honor and shame system accompanied by a virginity norm and a strong preference for homogamy. Third parties' involvement in partner selection is motivated by the central role marriage plays in the preservation of family honor. The social control is especially high for girls because the family system is characterized by a double standard regarding sexuality and the importance of homogamy. From a religious point of view, Islam does not consider the children from a Muslim woman and non-Muslim man as Muslims, while this norm is less strict for the children of Muslim men in mixed marriages (de Vries, 1987).

These levels of involvement and social control differ between minority members, which may explain two variations in the prevalence of mixed partnerships. It may explain, first, why men are more likely to choose a mixed marriage compared to women (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; González-Ferrer, 2006; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Huschek et al., 2012), and, second, why the prevalence is higher among Moroccan compared to Turkish minority members (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017). Additionally, Moroccan minority members may have a better language proficiency,³³ which can contribute to a higher likelihood to marry a majority member.

Furthermore, the likelihood to choose a mixed partnership is higher for the second compared to the first generation (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017;

³³ French, one of Belgium's official languages, is the second language in Morocco.

Hooghiemstra, 2003; Huschek et al., 2012). Second-generation minority members have been, for the most part, socialized in Belgium, as they migrated at a young age or were born in Belgium. They are therefore, more confronted with an alternative family model and could have more meeting opportunities with majority members. This line of reasoning is supported by research showing that second-generation members have more liberal values regarding gender-role attitudes (Timmerman, 2006), as well as cohabitation, premarital sex, and divorce (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018).

5.4 Possible mechanisms of change

Above, we discussed known partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minority members, which remained consistent for decades. However, two studies indicate that the prevalence of transnational partnerships may be declining, making local co-ethnic partnerships the most prevalent partner type (Dupont, Van de Putte, et al., 2017; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). This decline also can be – to a lesser extent – accompanied by an increase in mixed partnerships. Before investigating whether these changes are fluctuations over time or rather indicate profound structural trends, we discuss some possible explanations for these changes.

First, a growing acceptance of premarital relationships could make transnational marriages less prevalent because an eligible local (co-ethnic) partner may already have been found by the time adolescents have reached a marriageable age. The qualitative study by Van Kerckem and colleagues (2013) among Turkish minorities in Belgium, shows that premarital relationships with other minority members are common, despite strict virginity norms for women.

Second, preferences concerning ideal partners have changed, both among adolescents and their parents (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Sterckx et al., 2014; Van Kerckem et al., 2013; Van Pottelberge, Dupont, Caestecker, Van de Putte, & Lievens, 2019). In the past, the belief was that the most eligible partners would be found in the origin country (de Vries, 1987; Timmerman, 2006). More recently, minority members of marriageable age continue to look for ethnic homogamy but more often find it in the local community (Sterckx et al., 2014), because they are looking for potential partners who know what it is like to be a minority member. Furthermore, many parents and adolescents claim to have changed their minds about transnational marriages after witnessing relationship difficulties in this kind

of marriage (Aybek et al., 2015; Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Several studies report a growing awareness of the possible risks associated with transnational marriages, such as: unemployment and financial troubles, contradictory expectations, or social isolation of the partner migrant. These relationship difficulties result in a higher divorce risk compared to local co-ethnic marriages (Dupont et al., 2019a). Based on these assumptions we propose:

- **Hypothesis 1:** We expect a continued decline in the prevalence of transnational marriage over time, mostly compensated by an increase in the prevalence of local co-ethnic marriages.

Third, partner selection is generally characterized by high levels of parental influence. However, several studies indicate an increasing autonomy for young adults (Sterckx et al., 2014; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). Parents no longer wish to take full responsibility for the selection of a marriage partner. The process has evolved from being initiated by parents and family to being initiated by the partners with parental consent (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Parents are supposed to have a strong preference for transnational marriages and high levels of social resistance towards mixed marriages (Sterckx & Bouw, 2005). Hence, when parental involvement decreases, partner-initiated partnerships increase and are more likely to occur in the local marriage market instead of the origin country. Since parental influence is especially high among those who marry at a young age and marriage age can be considered to be a proxy for maturity and independence in choosing a partner (Lodewijckx et al., 1997), younger minority members are generally more likely to marry transnationally because of higher levels of social control (Lievens, 1999a). We then formulate:

- **Hypothesis 2:** We expect the negative effect of marriage age on transnational marriages to become smaller over time, in line with the decreasing parental influence in the partner selection of their children.

Furthermore, the consistent high prevalence of transnational marriages contributed to the strengthening of legal family reunification procedures in various European countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007; Caestecker, 2005; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). These policy changes partially resulted from policymakers' concerns about minorities' levels of integration in the face of a constant influx of immigrants, as well as concerns that the underlying motives for migration could be more economic. The policies establish a minimum age and include income, language, and housing

requirements. They have been implemented in an attempt to reduce immigration in general and transnational marriages in particular, as studies in the Netherlands and Sweden illustrate (Carol et al., 2014; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). Stricter immigration policies were implemented in Belgium in 2011³⁴ (EMN, 2017), where they could similarly have strongly influenced change to the partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities.

- **Hypothesis 3:** We expect a marked drop in the prevalence of transnational marriages after 2011.

With regard to mixed marriages, the Turkish and Moroccan family system is characterized by a strong preference towards ethnic homogamy. Nevertheless, the prevalence of mixed marriages may be slowly increasing.

The growing size of the group of the second and third generation reaching marriageable age, could lead to an increase in the prevalence of mixed marriages, as more recent cohorts are more likely to engage in a mixed marriage (González-Ferrer, 2006; Joyner & Kao, 2005). Younger cohorts are born and raised in Belgium, potentially reducing social distance between minority and majority populations. Growing up together may blur ethnic distance and lead to more mixed marriages over time. Additionally, transnational networks between relatives may decrease in intensity, especially for the second and third generation, potentially reducing the strength of emotional ties and sensitivity to kin obligations (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huscsek et al., 2012) and increasing autonomy in the partner selection process (Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). The resident country's culture could also influence the ethnic identity of the second and third generations and possibly result in less emphasis on ethnic homogamy (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huscsek et al., 2012).

Also among parents, social resistance towards mixed marriage may be declining slowly. Van Pottelberge et al. (2019) describe a strong preference of ethnic homogamy but also an openness among Turkish parents towards mixed

³⁴ On July 8, 2011, new migration policies were implemented in Belgium that contained several additional requirements to the right of family reunification (EMN, 2017). Both partners must be 21 years old, the partner residing in Belgium must have an accommodation suitable for the size of the family and must have healthcare insurance that covers all family members. In addition, the partner residing in Belgium must have sufficient, stable, and regular means of subsistence to cover the needs of all family members and to avoid them becoming a burden on the public authorities. The level of income is set at 120% of the living wage.

marriages: more than 25% of the respondents do not consider ethnicity an important characteristic for the future marriage partner of their children. Openness towards mixed marriages is associated with experiencing less ethnic prejudice and higher levels of educational attainment (Van Pottelberge & Lievens, 2018) and lower levels of religious attendance (Van Pottelberge et al., 2019). Hence, a gradual increase in openness towards local marriages combined with more individual agency in selecting a partner could lead to local co-ethnic and mixed marriages becoming increasingly prevalent.

- **Hypothesis 4:** We expect a continued increase in prevalence of mixed marriage over time, while remaining the least preferred partner type.

Based on the assumption that social resistance towards mixed marriages is decreasing, we formulate two hypotheses. First, we will test whether the effect of marriage age on the odds to marry mixed decreases over time. Minority members marrying at an older age are more likely to choose a mixed marriage because they are less prone to influence of third parties (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Lievens, 1999a). Hence, when the effect of marriage age on mixed marriages becomes smaller, this could indicate a decreasing parental influence in the partner selection process, as well as an increasing openness towards mixed marriages.

- **Hypothesis 5:** We expect the positive effect of marriage age, on mixed marriages, to become smaller over time.

Second, by testing whether the effect of educational attainment on the odds to marry mixed decreases over time. Higher educated minority members are known to hold less traditional norms and values concerning partner selection (Kalmijn, 1998; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). Moreover, they are extensively exposed to the resident country's value system during their education and have more opportunities to meet non-co-ethnic peers (Kalmijn, 1998). Higher educational attainment may also weaken attachments to the community of origin and reduce cultural barriers to mixed partnerships (Hwang et al., 1997). If social resistance towards mixed marriages is declining, mixed marriages may also become prevalent among the lower educated, reducing the positive effect of educational attainment.

- **Hypothesis 6:** We expect the positive effect of educational attainment, on mixed marriages, to become smaller over time.

5.5 Methods

5.5.1 Data

The National Register is a unique data source which can be particularly meaningful when analyzing partner selection patterns of minority members because it contains sociodemographic information on all individuals born or officially living in Belgium. The advantage of Register data is that, in contrast to several previous studies (e.g. Carol et al., 2014; González-Ferrer, 2006; Hartung et al., 2011; Milewski & Hamel, 2010; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014), it provides a 'robust' picture of demographic behavior and trends over time, and eliminates sample size problems common in studies among ethnic minorities. However, register data only contain sociodemographic variables and therefore do not provide additional, more detailed information, such as values, motives, and beliefs.

We analyze an extraction of the Belgian National Register that was carried out by Statistics Belgium³⁵ on March 1, 2018. The cross-sectional extraction includes all individuals, regardless of their country of birth, who married between 2005 and 2015, and meet the following conditions: (1) having Turkish or Moroccan nationality at birth, and (2) being a resident in Belgium at least one year before the marriage ($N = 91,916$). Using nationality at birth is a sound basis for determining descent, but it has an important drawback. Turkish and Moroccan minority members born with Belgian nationality are not included, which means two groups of minority members are missing from our data. First, individuals originating from mixed partnerships – in which one parent has the Belgian nationality (either by birth or acquisition) and one has the Turkish/Moroccan nationality – are Belgian by birth and their partner choices are therefore missing from our data. Second, from 1991 onwards, individuals with foreign parents automatically acquire Belgian nationality at birth if at least one parent is born, raised, and residing in Belgium (Caestecker et al., 2016). Given that someone can marry from age 18, and that we are studying up to and including 2015, the partner choice of individuals born in Belgium between 1991 and 1997 and with at least one parent meeting the above criteria is missing from our data.

³⁵ We are very grateful to Patrick Lusyne (Algemene Directie Statistiek—Statistics Belgium) for providing the data.

The second inclusion criterion, being a resident in Belgium at least one year before marrying, is created to exclude existing couples who migrated to Belgium after already being married, and to differentiate between minority members marrying while living in Belgium (our research population) and marriage migrants, who migrated to Belgium because of their marriage. The latter enter Belgium either in the year of marriage or later.

5.5.2 Operationalization

Marriages are categorized in three partner types: transnational, local co-ethnic and mixed. In case of a transnational marriage the non-resident partner lives in a third country and migrates to Belgium because of this marriage. 97.6% of the transnational partners migrate from the minority member's origin country. A local co-ethnic³⁶ marriage concerns a marriage of two residents with the same nationality at birth (Turkish or Moroccan). A mixed marriage is defined as a marriage in which the resident's partner has a different nationality at birth and lived in Belgium for at least one year before marrying. 81.63% of the mixed partners are born with Belgian or other European nationality.

Migration generation is constructed based on the stage in the socialization process at which one migrated, as the socialization process influences the development of attitudes and values (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). A distinction is made between three generations. The first generation migrated at age 15 or older. The 1.5 generation migrated between the ages of 6 and 14, and the second generation has been, for the most part, socialized in a Belgian context, as they migrated before age 6 or were born in Belgium. Because the (trends in) partner selection of first and 1.5 generation members are rather similar,³⁷ we combine these two groups (respectively $N = 31,902$ and $N = 5,539$) into what we will call the first generation. Because we focus on marriages formed between 2005 and 2015 (and

³⁶ Using nationality at birth to determine descent has an additional consequence, besides the ones mentioned in the previous section. Turkish or Moroccan minority members born with Belgian nationality could be included in the dataset as partners of Turkish or Moroccan minority members. However, as their nationality at birth is Belgian, these marriages are categorized as mixed, despite their Turkish/Moroccan descent. This could mean that mixed marriages in our data sample could be slightly overrepresented. However, because our data selection includes the birth nationality of all minority members' parents, we could identify 1,717 partners with at least one parent born with the Turkish/Moroccan nationality. Their marriages are reclassified as local co-ethnic instead of mixed marriages.

³⁷ Results available upon request.

the strong concentration of marriages between the ages of 27 and 40), the first generation identified here should not be confused with the first generation labor migrants who came in the 1960s and the 1970s or with family reunifiers who arrived in the 1970s. The first generation we observe here are recent newcomers from Turkey and Morocco and obtained residence permits mainly for humanitarian or educational reasons, or for a variety of other reasons (victims of human trafficking, unaccompanied minors, refugees, ...) (Eurostat, 2016).

As indicated above, marriage age is often considered to be an indicator of the degree of freedom a person has regarding their partner selection (Lodewijckx et al., 1997). Because this proxy is primarily meaningful for first partner choices, we opt for a categorical variable that compares respondents' age upon first marriage to that of their peers on average (i.e. first marriage at a younger, average, or older age). Respondents that remarried are included in a fourth category. Table 5.1 indicates the operationalization and distribution of these categories according to gender and ethnicity, based on the quantiles of marriage age within each group.

Table 5.1 Operationalization of marriage age

	Turkish men		Turkish women		Moroccan men		Moroccan women	
	Age	%	Age	%	Age	%	Age	%
Younger age	< 23	18.72	< 21	18.87	< 25	19.11	< 21	15.57
Average age	23–28	49.87	21–25	45.50	25–31	47.11	21–27	48.45
Older age	> 28	17.29	> 25	21.25	> 31	16.88	> 27	15.91
Remarriage	/	14.11	/	14.38	/	16.90	/	20.01
<i>N</i>	8,935		9,783		17,377		18,380	

Educational attainment is based on the highest diploma obtained, retrieved from a dataset combining National Register data and regional³⁸ datasets on all Belgian residents' level of educational attainment on January 1, 2011. For residents of Wallonia and Brussels the highest diploma obtained in Belgium is considered; for residents of Flanders foreign degrees can additionally be included. We distinguish four categories: no diploma, primary education, or lower secondary into "low"; higher secondary into "middle"; higher education into "high"; and "missing." The missing category is included in the analyses because we have no information on the level of educational attainment of 16.94% of the data sample. As 82.75% of

³⁸ Belgium is divided into three regions (Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels).

these missing cases belong to the first generation, we can assume they obtained a diploma in the origin country and are therefore missing from the data.

Marriage year ranges from 2005 through 2015 and is included to account for trends in partner selection over time.

5.5.3 Analyses

We start by discussing the distribution of three partner types and assess the trends in partner selection between 2005 and 2015. We explore differences according to ethnicity, migration generation, gender and marriage rank to obtain a comprehensive insight into recent partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minorities. Next, we use multinomial logistic regression models to assess the net effects of two predictors of partner choice, educational attainment and marriage age. By including interaction terms with marriage year we determine whether these effects change over time. If so, this could indicate that partner selection dynamics are changing because of respectively more openness towards mixed marriages and less parental influence. Since we miss information on educational attainment of 34.42% of the first generation, we restrict the multivariate analyses to the second generation. We use separate models for each subpopulation to assess whether effects differ according to gender and ethnicity, without having to include numerous interaction terms.

5.6 Results

5.6.1 Distributions

Table 5.2 shows the distribution of three partner types according to ethnicity and gender. For every subpopulation, the prevalence of transnational marriages is around 40%; the highest prevalence is for Moroccan men (49.08%). Among women, local co-ethnic marriages are slightly more prevalent than transnational marriages; the opposite is true for men. Mixed marriages are around 14% for every subpopulation, and 10.12% for Turkish women. We do not observe any of the previously reported gender differences regarding mixed marriages for Moroccans (González-Ferrer, 2006; Huschek et al., 2012; Lievens, 1999a). The prevalence of mixed marriages for Turkish minority members is 4.39 percentage points higher among men, compared to women. Furthermore, contrary to previous studies' findings (Carol et al., 2014; Lievens, 1999a) the prevalence of transnational

marriages is not higher among Turkish minorities, nor is the prevalence of mixed marriages higher among Moroccan minorities.

Table 5.2 Distribution of partner type according to ethnicity and gender between 2005–2015

	Turkish men	Turkish women	Moroccan men	Moroccan women
Transnational marriage	43.88%	43.46%	49.08%	40.00%
Local co-ethnic marriage	41.61%	46.42%	36.78%	45.77%
Mixed marriage	14.51%	10.12%	14.14%	14.23%
<i>N</i>	14,783 (100%)	12,700 (100%)	36,359 (100%)	28,074 (100%)

Table 5.3 presents the distribution of partner type in more detail by also differentiating according to migration generation and marriage rank. This offers additional insight into possible differences according to gender and ethnicity. The prevalence of mixed marriages is – as reported in previous research (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; González-Ferrer, 2006; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Huschek et al., 2012) – lower among women, but only when considering first marriages. Regarding ethnicity, Turkish minority members do prefer transnational marriages compared to Moroccan minorities, when we consider women from the second generation.

With regard to generational differences, the prevalence of transnational marriages is lower among the second (vs. the first) generation. This confirms earlier findings (Carol et al., 2014; Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017). For mixed marriages, previous research suggests that the prevalence increases with successive generations (Lieberson & Waters, 1988). Our results fine-tune this statement: Mixed marriages are more prevalent among second compared to first generation members, but only when they remarry.

Differentiating according to marriage rank shows that the prevalence of transnational marriages is higher among remarriages, confirming earlier findings (Dupont et al., 2019b). The difference ranges between 11.03 and 32.73 percentage points. Especially the first generation chooses a transnational marriage when remarrying. The prevalence of mixed marriages is lower among higher-order compared to first marriages, as reported by Dupont et al. (2019b), but only for the

first generation. Among the second generation, and especially women, the prevalence of mixed marriages is similar or higher among remarriages.

Table 5.3 Distribution of partner type according to ethnicity, gender, migration generation, and marriage rank between 2005–2015

	Turkish men		Turkish women		Moroccan men		Moroccan women	
	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.
First marriages								
Transnational	46.97%	30.68%	50.03%	38.51%	44.41%	29.51%	46.24%	29.28%
Local co-ethnic	35.87%	54.52%	38.48%	52.78%	30.37%	55.40%	38.25%	58.42%
Mixed	17.16%	14.80%	11.49%	8.70%	24.22%	15.09%	15.52%	12.30%
<i>N</i> (100%)	2,704	7,674	1,723	8,376	7,183	14,440	3,854	14,691
Remarriages								
Transnational	73.76%	43.14%	61.06%	49.96%	77.14%	43.99%	62.16%	41.10%
Local co-ethnic	17.59%	35.21%	29.40%	32.69%	16.52%	39.90%	23.20%	39.01%
Mixed	8.65%	21.65%	9.55%	17.34%	6.34%	16.10%	14.64%	19.90%
<i>N</i> (100%)	3,144	1,261	1,194	1,407	11,799	2,937	5,840	3,689

5.6.2 Trends

We assess trends in partner selection from 2005 up until 2015. Regarding first marriages (Figures 5.1-5.8), the prevalence of transnational marriages declines among all subpopulations from around 50% to around 15% among the second generation, and to around 30% among the first generation. For the second generation this decline is ongoing, with a marked drop after 2011. Among the first generation the decline only starts around 2011. Correspondingly, local co-ethnic marriages become the most preferred first partner choice by 2015. Its prevalence increases from around 30% to around 50% among the first generation. For the second generation the prevalence increases from around 40% to 65%. Mixed marriages are the least common partner type in 2005 among every subpopulation. Its prevalence increases, however, and mixed marriages are even as common as transnational marriages in 2015 among the second generation. It remains the least preferred among the first generation.

Some small differences aside, first marriage trends are very similar regarding gender and ethnicity. Especially generational differences are observed. However, Moroccan men of the first generation are an exception (Figure 5.5). The prevalence of both transnational and local co-ethnic marriages increases from 35% to 41% and from 29% to 38%, respectively. By contrast, the prevalence of mixed marriages declines from 35% to 21%.

Figures 5.9-5.16 display the trends in remarriages. Regarding the first generation (Figures 5.9, 5.11, 5.13 and 5.15), around 80% opt for a transnational marriage in 2005. After 2011, the percentage declines to around 40%. The decline is the smallest among Moroccan men: from 82.31% to 67.75%. The prevalence of local co-ethnic marriages increases, but transnational marriages remain the most prevalent type, except among Turkish women. Despite an increasing trend towards mixed marriages, their prevalence is low in 2005 and remains the least preferred partner type in 2015.

The partner selection trends of second-generation minority members who remarry (Figures 5.10, 5.12, 5.14 and 5.16) show that the prevalence of transnational marriages starts off high in 2005 but declines rapidly, making local co-ethnic marriages the most common partner type by 2012. Mixed marriages also increase and become as common as transnational marriages.

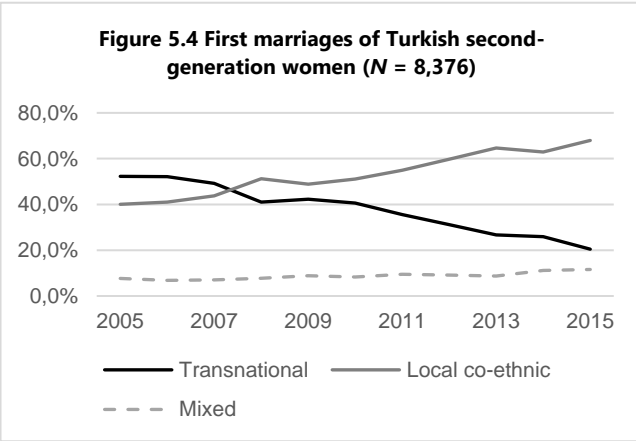
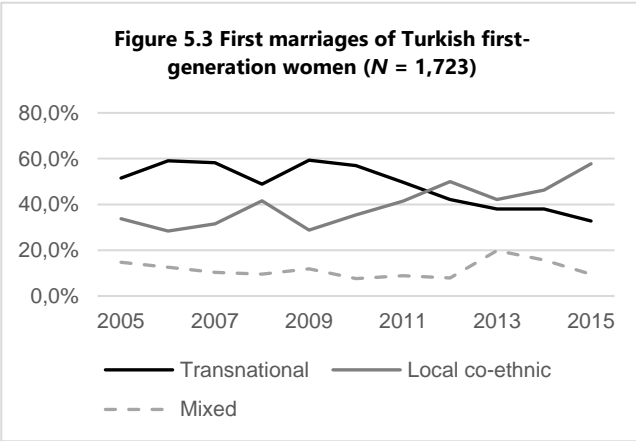
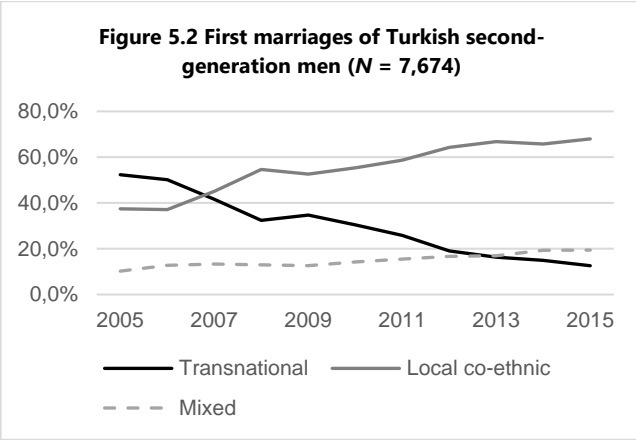
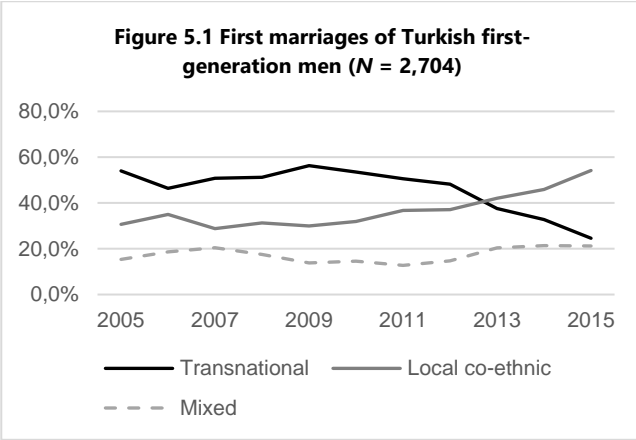


Figure 5.5 First marriages of Moroccan first-generation men (N = 7,183)

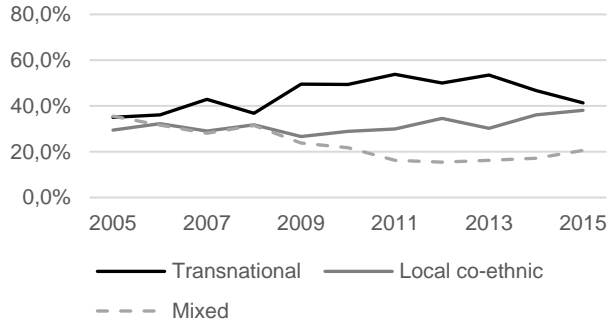


Figure 5.6 First marriages of Moroccan second-generation men (N = 14,440)

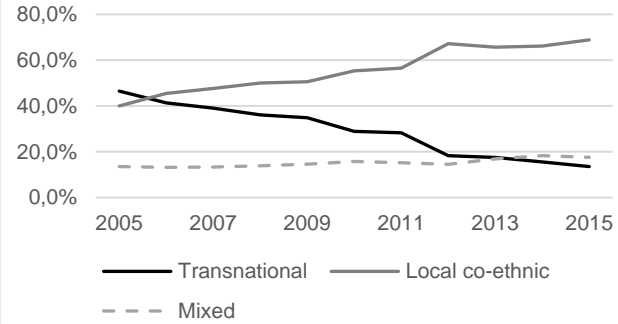


Figure 5.7 First marriages of Moroccan first-generation women (N = 3,854)

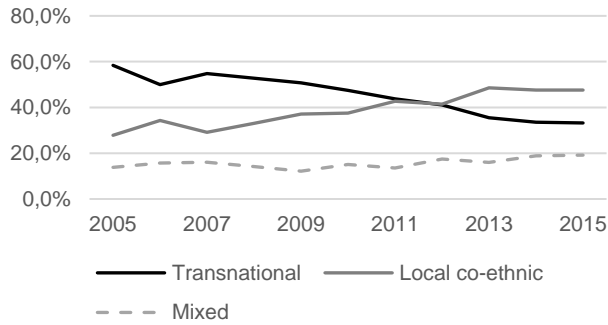


Figure 5.8 First marriages of Moroccan second-generation women (N = 14,691)

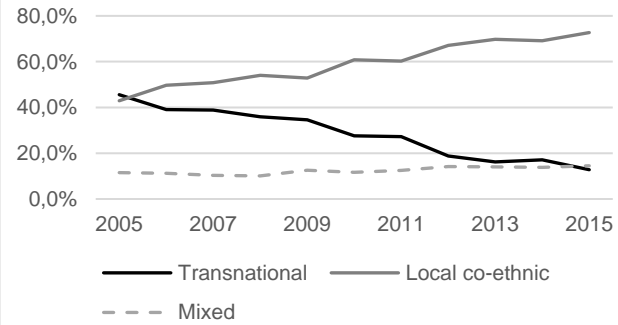


Figure 5.9 Remarriages of Turkish first-generation men (N = 3,144)

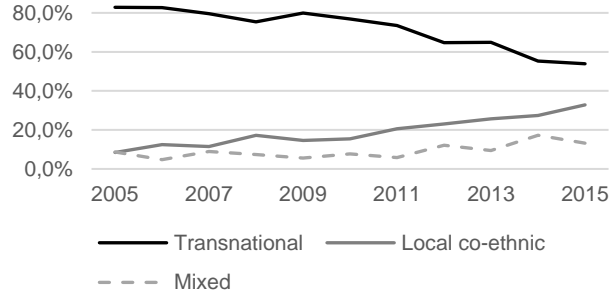


Figure 5.10 Remarriages of Turkish second-generation men (N = 1,261)

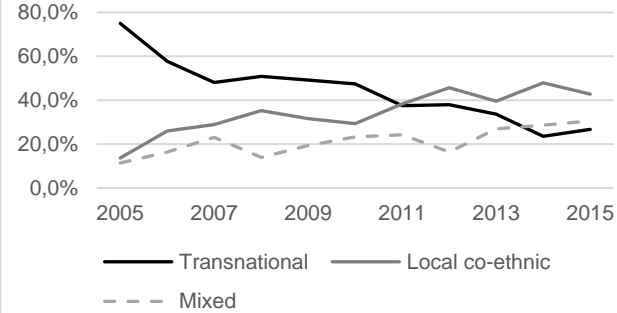


Figure 5.11 Remarriages of Turkish first-generation women (N = 1,194)

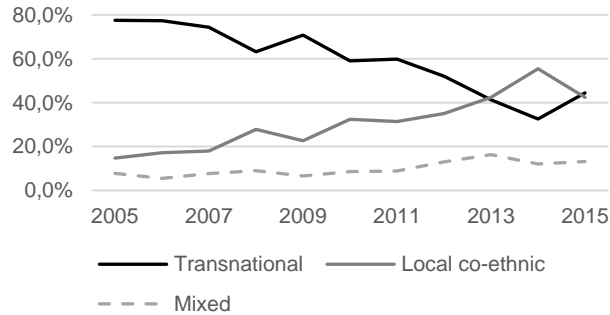
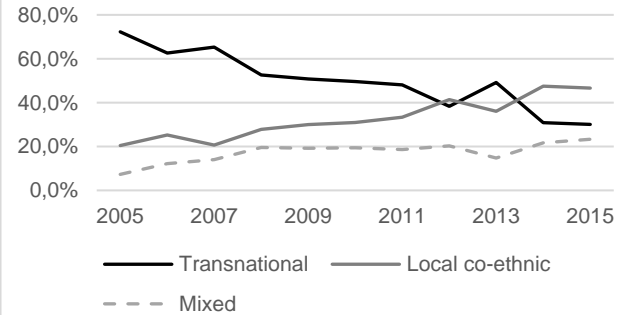
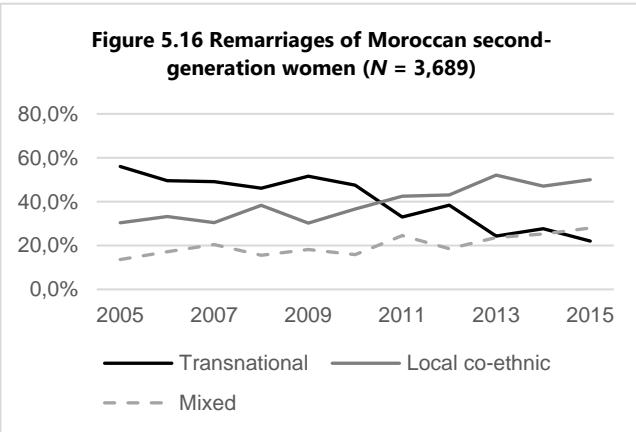
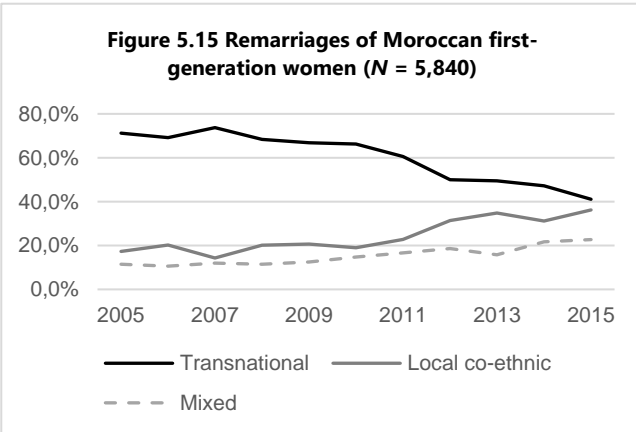
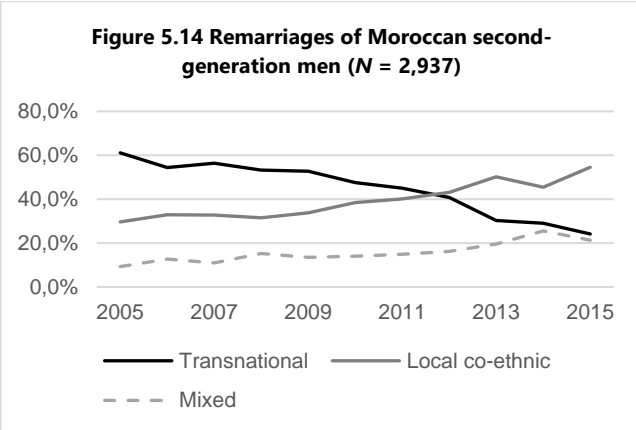
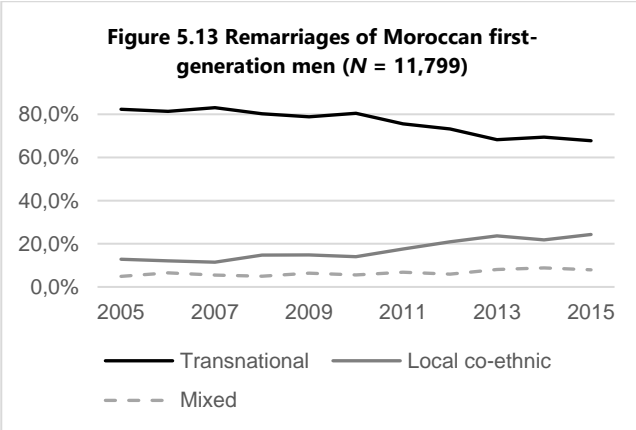


Figure 5.12 Remarriages of Turkish second-generation women (N = 1,407)





5.6.3 Multivariate analyses

The multivariate analyses assess the effect of educational attainment and marriage age on partner selection behavior of Turkish (Table 5.4) and Moroccan (Table 5.5) minority members. We use separate models for each subpopulation (M0s), and include interaction terms between marriage year and marriage age (M1s) to test Hypotheses 2 and 5. To verify Hypothesis 6, we include interaction terms between marriage year and educational attainment (M2s).

All minority members, except Moroccan men, who marry at a younger age are more likely to opt for a transnational (vs. local co-ethnic) marriage compared to their peers marrying at an average age (M0s, upper part Tables 5.4/5.5). This is also true for minority members marrying at an older age. The positive effect of marrying at a younger age declines over time (M1s, upper part Tables 5.4/5.5). Additionally for Moroccans, the positive effect of marrying at an older age increases. We make graphical representations of the expected log-odds to choose a transnational (vs. local co-ethnic) marriage, per year and age category, to show how the effect of marriage age changes over time. These graphs are based on the M1s in the upper part of Tables 5.4 and 5.5, and displayed in Appendix 10. The difference in the log-odds to marry transnationally between minority members marrying at a younger and an average age disappears by 2015. For Moroccan men, the difference disappears by 2007 and then reverses, indicating higher log-odds to marry transnationally at an average (vs. younger) age.

We observe a positive effect of marriage age on the odds to choose a mixed (vs. local co-ethnic) marriage among all subpopulations (M0s, lower part Tables 5.4/5.5). This effect decreases over time (M1s, lower part Tables 5.4/5.5). The graphical representations of the expected log-odds to marry mixed, per year and age category show that all age differences disappear over time (Appendix 11). An exception to this is the difference between marrying at an average and an older age for women.

The odds to marry transnationally are higher among remarriages for Turkish men and Moroccan women (M0s, upper part Tables 5.4/5.5). The opposite effect is found for Turkish women and Moroccan men. Furthermore, the odds to choose a mixed marriage are higher among remarriages for women (M0s, lower part Tables 5.4/5.5). The effect is the opposite among men. These effects are consistent over time (M1s, upper and lower part of Tables 5.4/5.5).

Regarding educational attainment, we observe a negative effect on the odds to choose a transnational (vs. local co-ethnic) marriage (M0s, upper part Tables 5.4/5.5). Furthermore, the negative effect of having a mid-level (only for Moroccans) or a higher level of education becomes smaller over time (M2s, upper part Tables 5.4/5.5). Eventually, this reduces the educational differences in the log-odds to marry transnationally by 2015, as shown by the graphical representations in Appendix 12. For Moroccan men, the educational differences decrease but remain present.

The effects of educational attainment on the odds to marry mixed are displayed in the M0s of the lower part of Tables 5.4 and 5.5. The odds to marry mixed are lower for minority members with a mid-level (vs. lower level) of education, except for Moroccan women. Furthermore, the odds to marry mixed are higher for highly (vs. lower) educated women. For men, the odds to marry mixed do not differ between higher and lower educated men.

The positive effect of being higher (vs. lower) educated on the odds to marry mixed decreases over time, except for Moroccan women (M2s, lower part Tables 5.4/5.5). Nevertheless, the graphical representations of the expected log-odds to marry mixed, per year and educational level, relay a more complex picture (Appendix 13). There is no difference in the log-odds to marry mixed between male minority members with lower and higher levels of education in 2005. However, the difference increases over time because the expected log-odds to marry mixed increase for the lower educated, while they stay the same or even decrease for the higher educated. Among Turkish women, the log-odds to marry mixed decrease for the higher educated and increase for the lower educated, reducing the difference between the two educational levels.

Table 5.4 Log odds of multinomial logistic regression analyses: partner type of the second generation, Turkish minority members*

	Turkish men (N = 8,935)			Turkish women (N = 9,783)		
	M0	M1	M2	M0	M1	M2
TRANSNATIONAL						
Intercept	0.36 (0.06)	0.38 (0.07)	0.45 (0.08)	0.41 (0.07)	0.35 (0.08)	0.42 (0.09)
Year	-0.21 (0.01)	-0.21 (0.01)	-0.22 (0.01)	-0.16 (0.01)	-0.13 (0.01)	-0.15 (0.01)
Marriage age						
Younger	0.22 (0.07)	0.34 (0.11)	0.24 (0.07)	0.26 (0.06)	0.44 (0.10)	0.25 (0.06)
Older	0.70 (0.07)	0.51 (0.14)	0.63 (0.07)	0.50 (0.06)	0.56 (0.12)	0.46 (0.07)
Remarriage	1.10 (0.08)	0.86 (0.15)	1.01 (0.08)	0.96 (0.07)	1.11 (0.14)	0.93 (0.07)
Educational attainment						
Middle	-0.27 (0.06)	-0.29 (0.06)	-0.37 (0.10)	-0.31 (0.05)	-0.33 (0.05)	-0.29 (0.10)
High	-0.70 (0.10)	-0.72 (0.10)	-1.12 (0.16)	-0.59 (0.08)	-0.60 (0.08)	-0.80 (0.14)
Missing	0.39 (0.12)	0.38 (0.12)	-0.09 (0.20)	1.29 (0.13)	1.36 (0.13)	1.58 (0.26)
Year*marriage age						
Year*younger		-0.04 (0.02)			-0.05 (0.02)	
Year*older		0.04 (0.02)			-0.02 (0.02)	
Year*remarriage		0.04 (0.03)			-0.03 (0.02)	
Year*educational attainment						
Year*middle			0.02 (0.02)			-0.01 (0.02)
Year*high			0.11 (0.03)			0.05 (0.03)
Year*missing			0.11 (0.04)			-0.04 (0.04)
MIXED						
Intercept	-1.20 (0.08)	-1.42 (0.10)	-1.35 (0.11)	-1.98 (0.12)	-1.96 (0.14)	-2.05 (0.17)
Year	-0.03 (0.01)	0.06 (0.01)	0.05 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Marriage age						
Younger	-0.60 (0.11)	-0.70 (0.19)	-0.31 (0.09)	-0.77 (0.17)	-1.25 (0.30)	-0.59 (0.15)
Older	0.97 (0.08)	1.44 (0.17)	0.73 (0.08)	1.35 (0.09)	1.56 (0.18)	1.12 (0.09)
Remarriage	0.97 (0.09)	1.00 (0.19)	0.67 (0.09)	1.62 (0.10)	1.58 (0.21)	1.39 (0.10)
Educational attainment						
Middle	-0.15 (0.07)	-0.15 (0.07)	-0.06 (0.14)	-0.23 (0.09)	-0.32 (0.09)	-0.12 (0.19)
High	-0.15 (0.11)	-0.19 (0.10)	0.18 (0.20)	0.38 (0.12)	0.23 (0.11)	0.63 (0.21)
Missing	0.28 (0.15)	0.26 (0.14)	0.28 (0.28)	0.77 (0.21)	0.75 (0.20)	1.40 (0.40)
Year*marriage age						
Year*younger		0.08 (0.03)			0.14 (0.05)	
Year*older		-0.12 (0.03)			-0.08 (0.03)	
Year*remarriage		-0.06 (0.03)			-0.04 (0.03)	
Year*educational attainment						
Year*middle			-0.02 (0.02)			-0.04 (0.03)
Year*high			-0.07 (0.03)			-0.08 (0.03)
Year*missing			0.01 (0.05)			-0.10 (0.06)
-2Loglikelihood	1,521.46	1,533.69	1,573.88	1,465.41	1,465.83	1,482.54

* Local co-ethnic marriage as the reference category

**Table 5.5 Log odds of multinomial logistic regression analyses:
partner type of the second generation, Moroccan minority members***

	Moroccan men (N = 17,377)			Moroccan women (N = 18,380)		
	M0	M1	M2	M0	M1	M2
TRANSNATIONAL						
Intercept	0.42 (0.05)	0.45 (0.06)	0.60 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.05)	0.01 (0.06)	0.18 (0.07)
Year	-0.19 (0.01)	-0.18 (0.01)	-0.21 (0.01)	-0.17 (0.01)	-0.16 (0.01)	-0.20 (0.01)
Marriage age						
Younger	-0.16 (0.05)	0.19 (0.08)	-0.12 (0.05)	0.66 (0.05)	0.95 (0.08)	0.66 (0.05)
Older	0.91 (0.05)	0.68 (0.10)	0.84 (0.05)	0.53 (0.06)	0.30 (0.10)	0.48 (0.06)
Remarriage	0.98 (0.05)	0.75 (0.10)	0.92 (0.05)	1.02 (0.05)	0.87 (0.08)	0.98 (0.05)
Educational attainment						
Middle	-0.48 (0.04)	-0.51 (0.04)	-0.68 (0.07)	-0.25 (0.04)	-0.29 (0.04)	-0.49 (0.07)
High	-0.96 (0.06)	-0.99 (0.06)	-1.29 (0.11)	-0.58 (0.06)	-0.60 (0.06)	-0.94 (0.10)
Missing	0.16 (0.08)	0.13 (0.08)	-0.47 (0.13)	0.88 (0.09)	0.91 (0.09)	0.91 (0.17)
Year*age						
Year*younger		-0.09 (0.02)			-0.08 (0.02)	
Year*older		0.04 (0.02)			0.05 (0.02)	
Year* remarriage		0.04 (0.02)			0.03 (0.02)	
Year*educational attainment						
Year*middle			0.04 (0.01)			0.05 (0.01)
Year*high			0.07 (0.02)			0.09 (0.02)
Year*missing			0.14 (0.02)			0.00 (0.03)
MIXED						
Intercept	-1.10 (0.06)	-1.05 (0.07)	-1.06 (0.08)	-1.83 (0.07)	-1.75 (0.08)	-1.76 (0.10)
Year	-0.03 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Marriage age						
Younger	-0.43 (0.07)	-0.48 (0.12)	-0.10 (0.06)	-0.43 (0.10)	-0.36 (0.16)	-0.25 (0.09)
Older	0.59 (0.06)	0.74 (0.12)	0.33 (0.06)	1.30 (0.06)	1.37 (0.11)	1.08 (0.06)
Remarriage	0.44 (0.06)	0.17 (0.14)	0.22 (0.06)	1.24 (0.06)	1.02 (0.11)	1.02 (0.06)
Educational attainment						
Middle	-0.17 (0.05)	-0.18 (0.05)	-0.22 (0.10)	0.01 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.06)	0.05 (0.12)
High	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.07 (0.07)	0.14 (0.13)	0.33 (0.07)	0.27 (0.07)	0.37 (0.13)
Missing	0.05 (0.11)	-0.01 (0.10)	-0.15 (0.19)	0.86 (0.12)	0.76 (0.12)	1.38 (0.23)
Year*age						
Year*younger		0.07 (0.02)			0.02 (0.03)	
Year*older		-0.07 (0.02)			-0.06 (0.02)	
Year* remarriage		0.01 (0.02)			0.00 (0.02)	
Year*educational attainment						
Year*middle			0.01 (0.02)			-0.01 (0.02)
Year*high			-0.04 (0.02)			-0.02 (0.02)
Year*missing			0.03 (0.03)			-0.12 (0.04)
-2Loglikelihood	1,894.68	1,829.51	1,900.61	1,841.97	1,791.08	1,819.33

*local co-ethnic marriage as the reference category

5.7 Discussion

Our results show that the partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities, and the dynamics behind those patterns, are changing after being constant for a long time. First, from the trend of transnational marriages we can firmly conclude that the previously reported decline until 2008 indeed was the first phase of a structural downward trend, resulting in a gradually diminishing prevalence of transnational marriages up until 2015 (confirmation Hypothesis 1). Although transnational marriages are still highly prevalent in 2005, by 2015, this is only the case for first-generation minority members who remarry. In 2015, local co-ethnic marriages are preferred by all subpopulations when marrying for the first time, and by the second generation when remarrying.

Transnational marriage remains an important partner type among first-generation minority members who remarry. This confirms findings of Dupont et al. (2019b), indicating first-generation minority members are more likely to remarry and to choose a transnational partner for their second marriage. The authors show that especially former marriage migrants are likely to choose a transnational partner when remarrying. The risk of socioeconomic disadvantage and social isolation after divorce (Koelet et al., 2008) might be higher for them, compared to residing minority members, whereas their transnational networks might be stronger (Dupont et al., 2019b).

This structural downward trend reveals a new dynamic within Turkish and Moroccan chain migration. Until now, immigration from Turkey and Morocco was considered self-perpetuating, as the majority of both the first and second generations chose a transnational partner. However, if marriage migration only remains prominent among first-generation minority members who remarry, it will both influence the characteristics of Turkish and Moroccan immigration to Belgium, which is currently defined by family migration, and significantly alter the structure of the minority populations in Belgium.

Second, we expected a negative effect of the implementation of restrictive requirements for marriage migration on the prevalence of transnational marriages (Hypothesis 3), as observed in the Netherlands (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011) and Sweden (Carol et al., 2014). Our results describe a limited but reinforcing negative effect of these restrictive measurements on the prevalence of transnational marriages, because the decline precedes the year of implementation,

especially among the second generation. For first-generation minority members, the decline in transnational marriages starts after 2011. Considering that their duration of stay in Belgium is shorter and more of their socialization process is experienced in the origin country, stronger transnational ties and a stronger orientation on the transnational marriage market is not surprising (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007). Hence, we question the efficacy of stricter immigration policies that target the prevalence of transnational partnerships because the restrictive measures merely reinforce an ongoing trend already occurring due to a multitude of possible mechanisms (e.g. increasing community size, decreasing transnational ties and parental influence, changing partner selection attitudes,...)

Third, we confirm Hypothesis 2, expecting a decreasing positive effect of marrying at a younger age on the odds to marry transnationally. As indicated earlier, this supports previous research assuming the prevalence of transnational partnerships declines partially because parents exercise less control over the partner selection process (Huschek et al., 2012; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). An evolution towards more autonomy and individualization has also been reported in Turkey. Kâğıtçıbaşı and Ataca (2005) describe an evolution in family values, facilitated by processes of modernization, from family-initiated to partner-initiated partnerships between generations. Nevertheless, this evolution does not mean that adolescents become completely autonomous in their partner selection. The partner selection process differs from the Western process in that the former assumes emotional dependence between parents and child instead of emotional separation. Hence, both in the origin country as well as among minority members in Belgium, an evolution towards more individualization in partner selection may be present, possibly contributing to a decline in transnational marriages.

Contrary to our expectations, we find a positive effect of marrying at an older (vs. average) age on the odds to choose a transnational marriage. Minority members marrying at an older age may be more likely to choose a transnational (vs. local co-ethnic) marriage because perceptions of subjective scarcity in the local co-ethnic marriage market or damaged reputations might steer them towards a transnational marriage after a long period of searching (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Older minority members could also have a higher likelihood of marrying transnationally because the stricter immigration policies require an accumulations of economic resources and implement age restrictions (EMN, 2017).

Fourth, educational attainment has a negative effect on the odds to marry transnationally, both for men and women. Therefore, our data and the period it covers does not confirm the emancipation-hypothesis, introduced by Lievens (1999a). Marrying transnationally in the 1990s could have been an emancipatory strategy for higher educated women to gain autonomy within a patriarchal family system. However, because of decreasing parental involvement and transnational networks, and because of changing attitudes regarding transnational partnerships, higher educated women may no longer feel the need for the same strategy. This could explain the absence of an interaction effect between gender and educational attainment on the odds to marry transnationally in our results. Furthermore, the negative effect of educational attainment decreases among all subpopulations. In fact, among Turkish minority members and Moroccan women, all educational differences on the odds to marry transnationally have disappeared by 2015. This is an unexpected result, which could be explained by a combination of factors: an increasing awareness of transnational marriages' risks and downsides (Van Kerckem et al., 2013), a changing interpretation of ethnic homogamy (Van Pottelberge et al., 2019), or the implementation of income and housing requirements that especially affect lower educated minority members' ability to marry transnationally (EMN, 2017). The combination of these factors could reduce the effect of educational attainment on partner selection.

Fifth, the structural change in partner selection patterns is not just found in the decline in transnational marriages and the complementary increase in local co-ethnic marriages. The prevalence of mixed marriages also increases among almost all subpopulations. Moreover, when the second generation marries, mixed marriages are not the least preferred partner type; transnational marriages are. Hence, these results partially confirm Hypothesis 4.

Although ethnic homogamy is strongly adhered, three of our results indicate that minority members' family system is changing as openness towards mixed marriages is slowly increasing. A first indication is the systematic increase in mixed marriages, especially among female minority members, which is unprecedented as women generally experience higher barriers to marry a non-co-ethnic partner than men. A second indication is the confirmation of Hypothesis 5, expecting a decreasing positive effect of marriage on the odds to marry mixed. This suggests a declining social resistance to mixed marriages as they are not exclusively formed by older, more mature and independent minority members anymore. Finally, Hypothesis 6 is also confirmed, although the results are more complex than

expected. For men and Turkish women, the odds to marry mixed of higher educated minority members decrease, while they increase so strongly amongst the lower educated that by 2015 their likelihood of choosing this partner type surpasses that of the higher educated. Hence, the largest changes occur among lower educated minority members. This is finding contradicts previous studies concluding mixed marriages are especially prevalent among the higher educated (Hartung et al., 2011; Huschek et al., 2012). Feelings of belonging to the minority group and adhering to the norm of ethnic homogamy are assumed to be less present among higher educated minority members (Hwang et al., 1997; Kalmijn, 1998; Lieberman & Waters, 1988). Furthermore, the higher educated are supposed to have a higher likelihood to marry mixed because they have had more contact with non-co-ethnic peers compared to the lower educated. However, ethnic distance between majority and minority populations may be declining among lower educated individuals as well, rendering these mechanisms no longer exclusive to the higher educated.

The unprecedented changes in the partner selection behavior observed here, disclose much about the orientation of minority members. The orientation shifted from the transnational to the local co-ethnic marriage market. Furthermore, the openness to strengthening connections with the majority population – regarding romantic relationships – is increasing among most minority members. After being oriented toward the origin country for decades, the shift toward the local marriage market is particularly relevant, because, on the one hand, marriage migration has recently been the focus of immigration policies and public debates in several European countries (Jørgensen, 2013; Kraler, 2010; Van Kerckem et al., 2013; Wray, 2009), as transnational partnerships are believed to hinder the integration process (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Lichter et al., 2011). However, our results indicate that the high prevalence of transnational marriages is diminishing, initiated by a multitude of possible mechanisms (e.g. increasing community size, decreasing transnational ties, changing partner selection attitudes,...) and reinforced by strict immigration policies. It seems that especially when there is a shortage of potential partners, minority members use their transnational networks to broad their search towards the origin country. On the other hand, the prevalence of mixed partnerships can be an indicator of ethnic boundaries in a society, because marriage connects individuals as well as their networks, marrying outside the own ethnic group is seen as a manifestation of integration, which diminishes social boundaries and can stimulate the growth of inter-group solidarity (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010;

Liebersson & Waters, 1988; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). Rodríguez-García et al. (2016) state that this bridging effect of mixed partnerships should not be overestimated, especially when discussing minorities that are severely stigmatized, as is the case with Muslim communities in Europe (Van Acker, 2012). However, without defining heterogamy as the main unifying force bridging ethnic differences, the increasing prevalence of mixed partnerships among all minority members could suggest that ethnic boundaries are becoming more permeable (Rodríguez-García et al., 2016).

Of course, this study is not without limitations. A comprehensive insight into recent partner selection trends would benefit from including all minority members of marriageable age in the analyses instead of only those minority members who 'successfully' registered a marriage. Knowing which minority members marry and which do not, and whether and to what extent these numbers differ over time or between subpopulations would help to identify which partner selection dynamics are at play. For example, do minority members remain single if they cannot marry their transnational partner because of restrictive requirements or when they are confronted with a lack of suitable co-ethnic candidates in the local marriage market; or do they postpone their partner choice?

Moreover, using information on the educational attainment of Belgian residents available on January 1, 2011, has several implications. First, the amount of missing values is high (16.94%) because for minority members who obtained their diploma abroad before migrating to Belgium or who migrated after January 1, 2011, a valid educational attainment would not appear in our dataset. Second, the highest diploma registered in our data extraction is not necessarily the same as the highest diploma obtained by the start of the partnership, because the timeframe of the data extractions ranges from 2005 through 2015.

Finally, analyzing register data has allowed us to comprehensively assess whether and to what degree the partner selection process of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium has changed over the last decade. It has not, however, allowed us to fully assess the possible mechanisms behind these changes, which creates several research opportunities for future research. For example, which minority members were prevented from forming a transnational union by the stricter immigration policies? Do these policies create socioeconomic and gender inequalities regarding the freedom to choose a partner, as reported in Dutch research (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011)? To what extent is social resistance

towards mixed partnerships declining among Turkish and Moroccan minority members, as well as among the majority population, and why are lower educated minority members increasingly choosing a mixed marriage?

Studying Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium is the equivalent of studying two minority groups in a small country. Notwithstanding our sample's specificity, however, its relevance lies in the fact that we identify partner selection trends that are also observed among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in other European countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden (Carol et al., 2014; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). We add to this existing research by giving a comprehensive overview of recent partner selection trends based on population data. This overview shows unprecedented changes in Turkish and Moroccan minorities' partner choice, and well as its dynamics. Moreover, it nuances previous statements about the negative effect of restrictive immigration policies on the prevalence of transnational marriages. We show that restrictive measures implemented in Belgium have a limited, reinforcing effect on partner selection patterns already in transition. Our research, thus, provides greater insight into current partner selection decisions which can be relevant for a wide group of minority members, and identifies changes that influence immigration from Turkey and Morocco, demographic characteristics of minority groups, and their relationship to the majority population.

Chapter 6.

Cohabitation versus marriage among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium



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Studies on partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minorities primarily assess marriage, the prevailing norm of partnership formation among these minorities. However, qualitative research observes an increase in the preference for cohabitation over marriage. Therefore, this paper examines legally registered cohabitations among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium. We analyzed Belgian National Register data containing all first partnerships (marriages and legally registered cohabitations) formed by Turkish and Moroccan minority members between 2005 and 2015 ($N = 65,805$). After describing (trends in) the prevalence of cohabitation, binomial logistic regressions were used to estimate the odds of cohabiting instead of marrying. The prevalence of cohabitation was small in 2005, but it doubles among the second generation and triples among the first by 2015. Especially among mixed partnerships, cohabitation is highly preferred. Positive effects of age and of having a mixed partnership on the odds to cohabit indicate assimilation towards the majority population's family system. A strong positive effect of having a child born out of wedlock suggests cohabitation may be a way to form an official partnership when marriage may not be an acceptable option. Cohabitation could potentially become an important first partnership type as more Turkish and Moroccan minority members start to deviate from social and religious family norms. This evolution could indicate that the collectivistic family system is changing in line with second demographic transition's expectations. Nevertheless, besides assimilation, other dynamics, such as uncertainty about the future or having children, may also influence the choice for cohabitation for some.

³⁹ Some small stylistic adjustments are made to increase the consistency of this dissertation

6.1 Introduction

Several Western European countries—such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and France—are characterized by large Turkish and Moroccan minority populations that originated in the context of 1960s labor migration (Hooghiemstra, 2003; Reniers, 1999; Schoonvaere, 2014). Despite a moratorium on labor migration in the 1970s, immigration continued due to family reunification and, more importantly, to partner migration. Because of the self-perpetuating character of this third wave of migration, a series of studies have focused on the partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Western Europe (Aybek et al., 2015; Carol et al., 2014; Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Furthermore, dynamics of partner selection are believed to be an indicator of change processes among ethnic minorities, such as assimilation and integration (Barth, 1998; Song, 2009). Marrying transnationally is believed to hinder the integration process (Lichter et al., 2011; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996), because it is viewed as an indicator of segregation, as minority members may isolate themselves from the culture of destination and retain the cultural praxis of the origin country (Berry, 1997; Ward et al., 2005). However, partnerships with local co-ethnic and majority population partners, especially, are interpreted as an expression of integration and assimilation (Lieberson & Waters, 1988; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). An increased focus on the local community and the majority population may contribute to a decrease in ethnic differences, improve social integration and diminish cultural distance (Lichter et al., 2011; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996).

Authors studying partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities have mainly assessed married couples, as marriage is the prevailing norm of partnership formation among these minorities (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Cohabitation is often not an option, because marriage plays a central role in the family-forming process, which is characterized by strongly embedded social and religious norms (Hooghiemstra, 2003). Recently, however, there are indications that the preference of young Turkish and Moroccan minority members for cohabitation as a step towards marriage, or even as a full alternative to marriage, is increasing (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Huschek et al., 2011; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). In addition, authors have shown that the number of minority members deviating from these strongly embedded norms concerning marriage is small but distinct (Hartung et

al., 2011; Lievens, 1999b). Cohabiting minority members are more likely to be male, of Moroccan descent, and in a mixed partnership.

Previous research has been able to draw only preliminary conclusions about cohabitation among these minorities, as the prevalence of this partnership type has been low and cohabiting couples hard to identify. The aim of the present study is, therefore, twofold. First, we describe the prevalence of legally registered cohabitations of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium, as well as its trend between 2005 and 2015. If cohabitation is becoming an accepted alternative to marriage, this could indicate that the collectivistic family system, centered around marriage, is changing drastically, driven by yet unknown dynamics. Are cohabiting minority members deviating from traditional family norms because of assimilation towards a family system characterized by the Second Demographic Transition, or are other dynamics also present? Therefore, in a second part, we study which minority members are more likely to choose cohabitation over marriage. Besides the influencing characteristics identified in previous research, such as partner choice, ethnicity and gender, we assess the effect of already having a child, as deviating from social norms governing sexuality and childbirth (Obermeyer, 2000; Timmerman, 2006) could be strongly related to deviating from traditional norms concerning type of partnership. For the analyses we use Belgian National Register data containing all first partnerships formed by Turkish and Moroccan minority members between 2005 and 2015.

6.2 Background

6.2.1 Three waves of Turkish and Moroccan immigration to Belgium

Turkish and Moroccan immigration to Belgium—as to other Western European countries—started in the early 1960s because of a shortage of laborers as a result of a booming economy (Khoojinian, 2006; Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014). This first wave of (labor) immigration ended in 1974 when European governments initiated a moratorium as the economy underwent the post-industrial transition and additional low-skilled laborers became unnecessary. The guest workers' length of stay was presumed to be temporary, but instead became permanent; this was the foundation for the second wave of immigration through the family reunification process. Male laborers were reunified with their families throughout the 1970s.

The migration was expected to come to an end rapidly, as the number of family members that stayed behind would eventually diminish (Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014). However, immigration has continued unabated since the early 1980s. This third wave consists mainly of people arriving as newlywed partners of migrants already living in Belgium (Lievens, 1999a). Since then, partner migration remains one of the most important ways for Turks and Moroccans to migrate to Belgium. In 2016, about 30 percent of the first residence permits were issued for a spouse joining a Belgian resident (Eurostat, 2016). Another 30 percent were issued for family reunification with children or other family members and an additional 30 percent for educational or humanitarian reasons. Annually, over the last decade, around 7,000 Turks and Moroccans have obtained a first residence permit. Consequently, Turkish and Moroccan minority members are the two largest groups of minority members in Belgium originating from third countries (Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014).

The literature about the partner selection of Turkish minority members is more extensive than literature about Moroccan minority members' partner selection. However, because of the similarities between these two minority groups (period of arrival, legal conditions, cultural and religious characteristics), we are able to draw parallels between them (Reniers, 1999; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). There are also differences; the most significant is the weaker transnational ties among Moroccan minorities and their origin country. This is mainly due to the more individualistic character of Moroccan immigration in comparison to the more family-oriented immigration of Turkish minority members (Reniers, 1999; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996).

6.2.2 Partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in a changing Belgian society

Until the 1960s, the majority of all young adults in Belgium married as soon as they left the parental home (Surkyn & Lesthaeghe, 2004). However, because of increasing individualization and declining institutionalization, and as a result of the Second Demographic Transition, partner selection and family formation underwent considerable changes (Lesthaeghe, 1998; Surkyn & Lesthaeghe, 2004; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001; Van de Kaa, 1987). These changes resulted in more equality and more autonomy in relationships, postponement of marriage and parenthood, lower levels of fertility and marriage, and higher levels of

cohabitation, divorce and non-marital fertility. As cohabitation became more prevalent, several Western European countries started to provide legal alternatives to marriage to avoid inequality in rights and benefits between the married and the cohabitants (Kiernan, 2004a). In Belgium, from 2000 onwards, two cohabiting individuals could legally register their cohabitation, regardless of their gender or the nature of their relationship (Senaeve, 2015). The prevalence of registered cohabitation in Belgium has increased gradually since its implementation (Corijn, 2012). Of all the partnerships registered in 2010, 46 percent were cohabitations and 54 percent were marriages. These registered cohabitations are often an alternative to marriage as they are primarily registered by individuals in their twenties or thirties who have never been married before, and less than 20 percent of these cohabitations change to marriage later on (Corijn, 2012).

In contrast, Turkish and Moroccan minority members living in Western Europe were brought up with family-forming traditions that differ widely from those of the majority. Within the traditional patriarchal family system, marriage is almost universal (Obermeyer, 2000; Reher, 2004). Marriage is seen as a bond between individuals as well as their families, and the reputation of potential partners is essential for the preservation of family honor. Young adult behavior is determined by an honor and shame system accompanied by a virginity norm and a strong preference for ethnic and cultural homogamy (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). For some, the belief is that this homogamy is more often found among partners still living in the origin country, making transnational marriages, which can be consanguineous as well, common among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Western Europe (Lievens, 1999a; Reniers, 2001). The social network of minority members uses these norms to regulate the partner selection process and exerts a high level of social control over young adults, especially girls. The family system is characterized by a double standard regarding female sexuality and the importance of ethnic homogamy. From a religious point of view, Islam does not view children of a Muslim woman and non-Muslim man as Muslim; this norm is less strict regarding children of Muslim men in mixed marriages (Buskens, 2010). Other gender dynamics are relevant as well. For example, although gender equality in Turkish and Moroccan society is increasing, family honor is still to a great extent dependent on the sexuality of women, which results in stricter social control of women's behavior and a certain gender hierarchy (Buskens, 2010; Kavas & Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2013; Prettitore, 2015). Once married, girls move in with their husband's family (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Marriage is therefore

a way of perpetuating family cohesion and patriarchal family ties. Because a woman's behavior affects the family's honor and reputation, marriage at a young age is closely followed by childbirth. Both sexual behavior and childbirth are reserved for married life (Obermeyer, 2000; Timmerman, 2006). The stigma attached to single-parent families—even in cases of divorce—is strong, especially in the case of single mothers, as women are not supposed to be the head of the household (Kavas & Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2013). Besides being stigmatized, other consequences of being a single parent are the loss of social and familial support, and difficulty finding a marriage partner because of a damaged (familial) reputation.

Although marriage remains the primary partnership type (Adak, 2016; Buskens, 2010; Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Huschek et al., 2011; Prettitore, 2015), there are several indications that cohabitation can or will become an important form of living arrangement among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Western Europe. First, even though cohabitation is not prevalent—because the ethnic community would frown upon it—a preference for cohabitation followed by marriage is increasing. Between 30 and 50 percent of the adolescent minority members in a Dutch study by de Valk and colleagues (2007) would like to cohabit with their partner before marriage. Furthermore, over 40 percent of the Turkish and Moroccan minority members in the Dutch sample that Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (2018) studied considered cohabitation to be an alternative to marriage.

Second, Lievens (1999b) explored the prevalence of cohabitation among the Turkish and Moroccan minority population in Belgium using census data from 1991. Cohabitation is inferred from the household composition (number of persons in the household and their relationship to the reference person), as direct information on whether an individual was cohabiting or not was not available. In total, Lievens' study identifies 1,530 (1%) of Turkish and Moroccan minority members as cohabiting. In spite of this small number, several differences were found. The probability of cohabiting instead of marrying was higher for men, minority members who formed a partnership at an older age, minority members in mixed partnerships and minority members of Moroccan descent.

Third, the Flemish register data of 2004 shows that around 5 percent of all second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members between 25 and 29 years old lived together without being married (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009). When only minority members with (marital or non-marital) cohabiting experience are

considered, non-marital cohabitation is scarce, except among Moroccan men: 19 and 14 percent of 20–24-year-old men and 25–29-year-old men, respectively, had experience with non-marital cohabitation. Again, a strong association with mixed partnerships is found. Fourth, Hartung et al. (2011) indicate that 6 percent of Turkish and 11 percent of Moroccan minority members in their sample (TIES dataset) were not married when living together. Again, the prevalence was higher among men, Moroccan minority members, and individuals in mixed partnerships. They indicate the necessity of including cohabitation when studying family formation among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Western Europe. Although small, the group of minority members that deviated from the established family formation norms is potentially distinct and may be motivated by yet unknown dynamics.

6.2.3 Dynamics underlying the choice for cohabitation

Migrating to or being born in Western Europe may influence family formation patterns and the values of minority members as a result of assimilation (Alba & Nee, 1997). Hence, an increase in the prevalence of cohabitation could be due to a trend towards a more individualistic approach to partner selection, more liberal values about cohabitation, and a decrease in the importance of marriage as an institution. Are cohabiting minority members deviating from traditional family norms because of assimilation towards a family system characterized by the Second Demographic Transition? If so, we expect minority members who are more likely to deviate from traditional family norms to be more likely to choose cohabitation over marriage as first partner choice (*Hypotheses 1 thru 5a, further developed below*). We also assess the possible prevalence of alternative dynamics with regard to having a mixed partner (*Hypothesis 5b*) or having children outside of marriage (*Hypothesis 6*) that assume cohabitation could be a way to form an official partnership when marriage may not be an option.

First, deviating from traditional partner selection patterns is easier for men than for women. Because women's behavior and sexuality affects the family's honor and reputation more, social control of women's partner selection is stricter, as indicated earlier (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). We expect women to have lower odds of cohabiting instead of marrying compared to men (H1).

Furthermore, we expect Turkish minority members to have lower odds of cohabiting instead of marrying compared to Moroccan minority members (H2).

Turkish social networks are characterized by higher levels of social cohesion than Moroccan social networks and are often more connected to the origin country, maintaining group norms regarding family formation (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996).

Norms and values are acquired through a complex process of socialization (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), so second-generation minority members could be expected to have more liberal norms regarding family formation than first-generation members who have also been socialized in the origin country. The second generation is known to have more liberal values regarding gender-role attitudes (Timmerman, 2006), as well as cohabitation, premarital sex, and divorce (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). Therefore, we expect second-generation members to have higher odds of cohabiting instead of marrying than first-generation minority members (H3).

Age at partnership formation is often considered as a proxy for the degree of influence parents and others have in the partner selection process (Lievens, 1999a; Lodewijckx et al., 1997). As cohabitation without marriage is often frowned upon by the ethnic community, we expect minority members forming a partnership at an older age to be less subjected to social family norms and therefore to have higher odds of cohabiting instead of marrying (H4).

Furthermore, we expect minority members in a mixed versus a co-ethnic partnership to have higher odds of cohabiting instead of marrying (H5a). Compared to marriages, cohabitations are more likely to be mixed (Hartung et al., 2011; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010; Lievens, 1999b). Choosing cohabitation instead of marriage and a mixed instead of a co-ethnic partner might be two different aspects of a single underlying dynamic of moving away from traditional norms governing family formation. As indicated earlier, ethnic homogamy is an important aspect in the partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minorities (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003), so deviating from traditional family norms might be easier for those minority members who chose a partner from outside the ethnic minority. Moreover, having a mixed partnership implies having an ethnically diverse social network and a certain degree of social integration with the majority group, both of which are important factors in obtaining more liberal family values (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). An alternative reason that mixed couples might prefer cohabitation is that choosing cohabitation may minimize adverse social reactions to their mixed partnership by not formalizing it through marriage. If this is the case, we expect the positive effect of a mixed partnership

on the choice to cohabit to be larger among female minority members, as religious and social norms regarding ethnic homogamy are stricter for women (H5b).

In line with the previous argument, we propose that there may be an alternative dynamic behind the choice to cohabit besides assimilation towards the prevailing family system and trying to minimize adverse reactions to mixed partnerships. Minority members deviating from social and religious family norms by having a child outside of marriage may encounter adverse reactions from their social environment when entering marriage, as having a child damages their reputation and their family's reputation. Legally registered cohabitation, then, as an alternative to formalizing the partnership, could enable them to avoid traditional marriage customs such as paying a dowry, proving the virginity of the bride, and organizing several ceremonies (Delaney, 1991). Therefore, we expect minority members with a child born before the registration of their first official partnership to have higher odds of cohabiting instead of marrying (H6).

6.3 Methods

6.3.1 Data

We analyze an extraction of the Belgian National Register that includes all individuals residing in Belgium who registered a cohabitation or a marriage between 2005 and 2015 and who meet the following conditions: (a) being a resident in Belgium at least one year before forming the partnership, (b) having Turkish or Moroccan nationality at birth and (c) forming a first⁴⁰ official partnership ($N = 68,805$). Using nationality at birth as indicated in the Belgian National Register is a sound basis for determining descent, but it does have some drawbacks. First, children from mixed partnerships—in which one partner has Belgian nationality (either by birth or by acquisition) and one has Turkish/Moroccan nationality—are Belgian by birth and their partner choice is therefore missing from our data. Second, from 1991 onwards, individuals automatically acquire Belgian nationality at birth if at least one parent is born, raised, and living in Belgium (Caestecker et al., 2016). Given that partnerships can only take place from age 18 on and given that we are studying up to and including 2015, individuals from the third generation who were born between 1991 and

⁴⁰ We focus on first partnerships only, because the dynamics and predictors of partner selection and partnership formation differ according to the rank of the partnership (Dupont et al., 2019b).

1997 and have at least one parent meeting the above criteria are missing from our selection.

6.3.2 Operationalization

Our dependent variable partnership type consists of two categories: legally registered cohabitation and marriage. Registered cohabitations and marriages have rights and obligations that are similar, but the process of formation and dissolution is shorter and easier for registered cohabitations (Senaeve, 2015). In contrast to marriage, signing a bilateral declaration is enough to register cohabitation, and signing a unilateral or bilateral declaration can terminate it. As described above, all residing minority members in our data formed a partnership while already living in Belgium. Hence, their residence permit had not been granted based on the formation of their partnership. However, they can form a transnational partnership, in which their partner migrates because of the partnership. In Belgium, the legal procedure to establish a transnational partnership is the same for married as for legally cohabiting couples (Caestecker, 2005). The only difference is that legally cohabiting minority members have to prove the stability and sustainability of their relationship to a greater extent in one of three ways: by living together for at least one year, by knowing each other for at least two years and proving that they have regularly kept in touch, or by having a child together (EMN, 2012).

Migration generation is operationalized based on the stage in the socialization process in which one migrated, since the socialization process influences the development of attitudes and values (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). A distinction is made between three generations. The first generation migrated at age 15 or older. The 1.5 generation migrated between the ages of 6 and 14, and the second generation has been, for the most part, socialized in Belgium, as they migrated before age 6 or were born in Belgium. Because preliminary analyses⁴¹ revealed that results did not differ between the first and the 1.5 generation, we combine these two groups for the final analyses and will call them the first generation.

The partner type of Turkish and Moroccan minority members residing in Belgium is operationalized in three categories: (1) a transnational partnership, in which the

⁴¹ Results available upon request.

partner did not reside in Belgium for at least one year prior to the partnership; (2) a local co-ethnic partnership, in which the partner has the same nationality at birth as the resident and lived in Belgium for at least one year before the partnership; (3) a mixed partnership, in which the partner has a different⁴² nationality at birth than the resident and lived in Belgium for at least one year prior to the partnership.

In the analyses that follow, we combine transnational and local co-ethnic partnerships in what we will call co-ethnic⁴³ partnerships, for two reasons. First, previous studies have shown that whether the partnership is co-ethnic or not is one of the most important predictors of choosing to cohabit (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Hartung et al., 2011; Lievens, 1999b). Second, the prevalence of transnational cohabitations is too small to include them in the multivariate analyses as a separate category without risking the reliability and robustness of the results.

The third predictor is having a child (or children) born prior to the registration of the partnership. Minority members with their first child born at least one year before partnership registration are distinguished from minority members whose children were born during or after the partnership and those without children.

The last predictor concerns age at partnership formation as proxy for the degree of maturity and influence a person has in their partner selection and family formation (Lodewijckx et al., 1997). We opt for a categorical variable that distinguishes respondents who formed a first partnership at a younger, an average or an older age in comparison to their peers. The definition of what is young, average or older depends on the subpopulation, which is defined by gender, ethnicity and migration generation. Table 6.1 indicates the operationalization of

⁴² As indicated earlier, nationality at birth is a sound basis to determine descent, but minority members with at least one Belgian parent (either by birth or acquisition) are Belgian by birth and their Turkish or Moroccan descent is therefore not registered. This has two consequences for this study. First, as explained above, the partner choice of these minority members is not included in our data sample because we selected the partner choice of Belgian residents born with Turkish or Moroccan nationality. Second, these minority members can be included in the dataset as partners of Turkish/Moroccan minority members. Nevertheless, as their nationality at birth is Belgian, these partnerships are categorized as mixed, despite their Turkish or Moroccan descent. This could mean that mixed partnerships in our data sample are overrepresented. However, because our data selection includes the nationality at birth of all minority members' parents, we are able to verify which Belgian (and European) partners are actually of Turkish or Moroccan descent. In total, 1,572 Belgian (and other European) partners with at least one parent born with Turkish/Moroccan nationality are identified. Their partnerships are reclassified as local co-ethnic instead of mixed partnerships as they are co-ethnic.

⁴³ Transnational partnerships are not by definition co-ethnic. However, of all transnational partnerships in the dataset, only 2.34 percent are mixed.

these categories for the eight subpopulations based on the quantiles of age at partnership formation. With this method, we ensure the comparability of the effect of age at partnership formation between subpopulations. Univariate as well as bivariate descriptives of the above variables—shown as the percentage of cohabitation for each category—are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.1 Operationalization of age at partnership formation

	Turkish men		Turkish women		Moroccan men		Moroccan women	
	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.	1 st gen.	2 nd gen.
Age at partnership formation								
Younger	< 24	< 23	< 21	< 21	< 26	< 25	< 22	< 21
Average	24–33	23–28	21–29	21–26	26–36	25–31	22–32	21–27
Older	> 33	> 28	> 29	> 26	> 36	> 31	> 32	> 27

Table 6.2 Univariate and bivariate descriptives of independent variables

	N (%)	% Cohabitation
Migration generation		
First	17,872 (27.16)	13.47
Second	47,933 (72.84)	5.74
Partner type		
Co-ethnic	53,712 (81.62)	3.57
Mixed	12,093 (18.38)	26.81
Age at partnership formation		
Younger	13,191 (20.05)	1.84
Average	37,583 (57.11)	4.49
Older	15,031 (22.84)	21.48
Child(ren) born before partnership formation		
Yes	5,403 (8.21)	47.34
No	60,402 (91.79)	4.31
<i>N</i>	65,805 (100%)	7.84

Next to the predictors discussed above, we also considered educational attainment, as it is an important predictor of partner selection and family formation behavior among Turkish and Moroccan minority members. Higher educated minority members are believed to have less conservative values

regarding marriage and sexuality (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). Higher educational attainment may also weaken attachments to the origin community and even reduce cultural barriers (Hwang et al., 1997). Hence, we could expect higher educated minority members to have higher odds of cohabiting (instead of marrying) than minority members with lower educational attainment. However, the high correlation between educational attainment and age at partnership formation necessitated a selection. Age at partnership formation was given priority, because we have no information on the educational attainment of 35.72 percent of the first generation, who probably obtained a degree outside Belgium (which is not registered in our data). Nevertheless, given the high association between age at partnership formation and educational attainment, we have to consider that effects of age also have to be understood partly as educational differences.

6.4 Results

6.4.1 Prevalence of cohabitation

Marriage is clearly the preferred partnership type: between 82.34 and 95.26 percent chose marriage as first partnership type (Table 6.3). The prevalence of cohabitation does not differ according to gender (contradicting [H1](#)) or ethnicity (contradicting [H2](#)) but differs with respect to migration generation: cohabitation is 2 to 3 times higher among first-generation minority members (contradicting [H3](#)). This generational difference is found in Turkish and Moroccan minorities (higher in the former) and among men and women.

Figure 6.1 shows the trend in the prevalence of cohabitation between 2005 and 2015. As there is no difference according to ethnicity, the trends are combined in a single graph. In 2005, the prevalence of cohabitation is equally low for both migration generations. However, between 2005 and 2015, the prevalence doubles among second-generation members and triples among first-generation members. Besides a small difference between first-generation men and women in 2012 and 2013, the (trend in) prevalence of cohabitation does not differ according to gender.

Table 6.4 describes the prevalence of cohabitation according to partner type. We differentiate only with regard to migration generation because of the absence of differences according to gender and ethnicity. Among co-ethnic partnerships,

cohabitation is rare: 1.99 percent of all co-ethnic partnerships of second-generation members and 8.24 percent of all co-ethnic partnerships of the first generation are a cohabitation. However, more than 25 percent of all first partnerships with a mixed partner are a cohabitation. This confirms H4.

Figures 6.2 and 6.3 display the trends in the prevalence of cohabitation by partner type for the first and second generation. The figures show no evolution in the prevalence of cohabitation among co-ethnic partnerships, especially among the second generation. Among first-generation members, the prevalence increases from 1 to 10 percent between 2005 and 2015. Again, the opposite is true among mixed partnerships. For second-generation members, the prevalence increases from around 17 to 26 percent of all first mixed partnerships. For first-generation minority members, the increase is larger: from around 13 to 39 percent.

Table 6.3 Distribution of partnership type

		Marriage	Cohabitation	<i>N</i>
Turkish	1 st gen.	82.34%	17.66%	3,284 (100%)
men	2 nd gen.	93.41%	6.59%	8,215 (100%)
Turkish	1 st gen.	84.30%	15.70%	2,044 (100%)
women	2 nd gen.	95.26%	4.74%	8,793 (100%)
Moroccan	1 st gen.	88.71%	11.29%	8,097 (100%)
men	2 nd gen.	94.27%	5.73%	15,317 (100%)
Moroccan	1 st gen.	86.67%	13.33%	4,447 (100%)
women	2 nd gen.	94.12%	5.88%	15,608 (100%)
<i>N</i>				65,805

Table 6.4 Prevalence of legally registered cohabitation according to partner type

	First generation		Second generation	
	Co-ethnic partnerships	Mixed Partnerships	Co-ethnic Partnerships	Mixed Partnerships
Marriage	91.76%	69.96%	98.01%	74.96%
Cohabitation	8.24%	30.04%	1.99%	25.04%
<i>N</i>	13,584 (100%)	4,288 (100%)	40,128 (100%)	7,805 (100%)

Figure 6.1 Percentage of all partnerships formed between 2005 and 2015 that are cohabitations

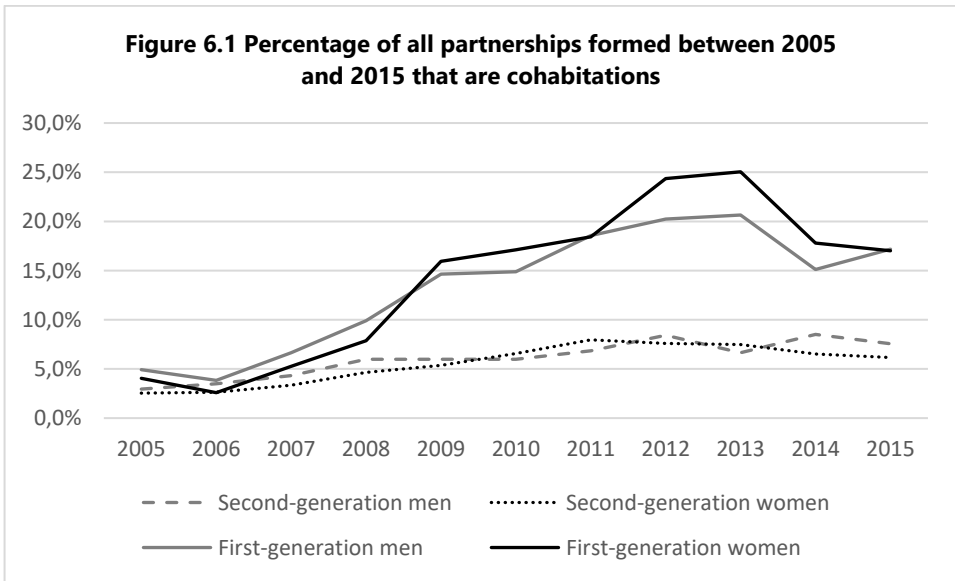


Figure 6.2 Percentage of all second generation's partnerships that are cohabitation, by partner type

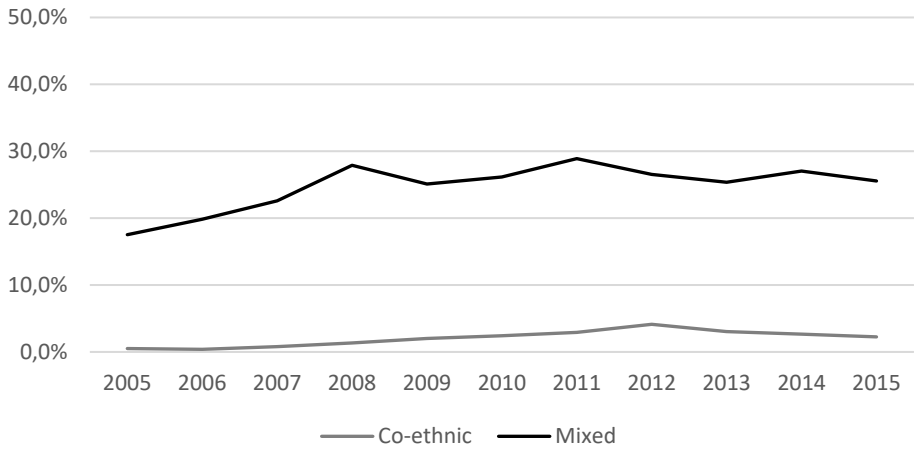
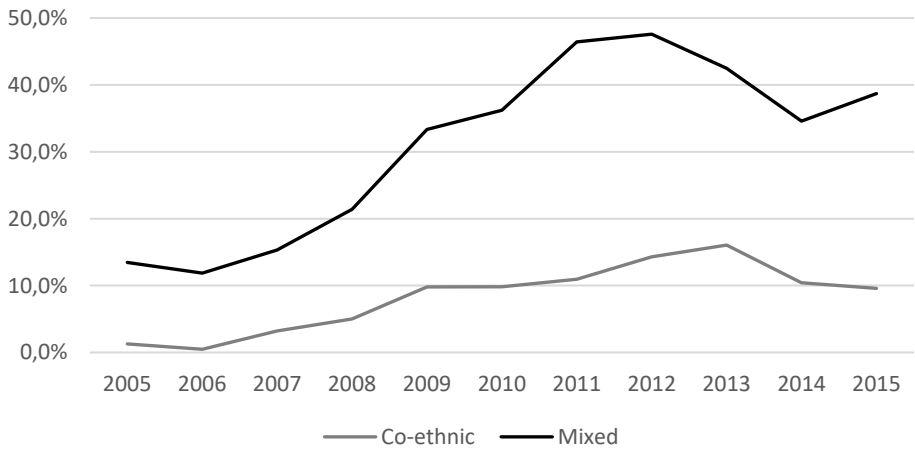


Figure 6.3 Percentage of all first generation's partnerships that are cohabitations, by partner type



6.4.2 Dynamics underlying the choice for cohabitation

In our multivariate analyses, we include the odds of cohabiting instead of marrying as the dependent variable. The binomial logistic regression models are built separately for each subpopulation (M1s, upper part Table 6.5) to compare the effects according to gender, migration generation and ethnicity more easily. Year of partnership formation is included to account for the increasing prevalence of cohabitation over time. Because preliminary results indicated that the effect of having a child before partnership formation can differ between partner types, an interaction effect between these two variables is added in a second model (M2s, lower part Table 6.5).

First, minority members in a mixed partnership have higher odds of cohabiting instead of marrying than minority members in co-ethnic partnerships (confirming H4). The effect of a mixed partnership is larger for second- compared to first-generation members and for men compared to women (See M1s, upper part Table 6.5). Being in a mixed partnership is, as expected, one of the most important predictors of the choice to cohabit.

Furthermore, the expected positive effect of age at partnership formation is confirmed (H5): minority members forming a partnership at a younger age are less likely to choose cohabitation. The opposite is true for minority members forming a partnership at an older age.

Regarding Hypothesis 6, having a child before the official registration of a first partnership is an important predictor of the choice to cohabit among all subpopulations (confirming H6). The odds of cohabitating are 5 to 16 times higher when a child is born prior to the partnership registration. The effect is larger for second- compared to first-generation members (except among Moroccan men) and for women compared to men (except among first-generation Moroccan minorities).

The second model shows that the effect of having a child before partnership registration on the likelihood to cohabit differs according to partner type (M2s, lower part Table 6.5). The effect is positive for both minority members in a mixed and a co-ethnic partnership but is much larger for the latter. Especially, minority members of the second generation with a child born prior to the registration of a co-ethnic partnership have higher odds of cohabiting instead of marrying.

Table 6.5 Odds ratios for cohabiting versus being married by ethnicity, gender and migration generation

		Turkish men		Turkish women		Moroccan men		Moroccan women	
		1 st gen. N = 3,284	2 nd gen. N = 8,215	1 st gen. N = 2,044	2 nd gen. N = 8,793	1 st gen. N = 8,097	2 nd gen. N = 15,317	1 st gen. N = 4,447	2 nd gen. N = 15,608
M1	Intercept	0.02***	0.01***	0.03***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.02***	0.01***
	Year of partnership formation	1.19***	1.05**	1.17***	1.09***	1.18***	1.05***	1.17***	1.05***
	Mixed partnership	4.87***	10.51***	3.77***	6.67***	7.97***	16.90***	3.25***	5.49***
	Age at partnership formation								
	Younger	0.53**	0.72	0.44**	0.83	0.77	0.73*	0.24***	0.44***
	Older	2.40***	3.53***	2.13***	4.17***	2.70***	2.50***	2.77***	3.53***
	Child(ren) born before partnership	5.88***	8.28***	8.09***	16.50***	7.79***	5.39***	6.50***	12.70***
-2Loglikelihood	2,193.92	2,308.95	1,286.82	2,094.75	4,117.81	4,222.45	2,479.48	4,368.18	
M2	Intercept	0.02***	0.01***	0.03***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.02***	0.01***
	Year of partnership formation	1.18***	1.04*	1.17***	1.09***	1.18***	1.04***	1.17***	1.05***
	Mixed partnership	6.16***	24.37***	4.50***	11.78***	12.81***	33.69***	4.36***	10.02***
	Age at partnership formation								
	Younger	0.54**	0.75	0.45*	0.85	0.71*	0.76	0.26***	0.47**
	Older	2.37***	3.42***	2.05***	3.75***	2.71***	2.44***	2.78***	3.24***
	Child(ren) born before partnership	7.79***	38.74***	9.47***	36.38***	17.38***	22.12***	9.38***	30.41***
Mixed*Child(ren) born before partnership	0.48**	0.11***	0.50	0.15***	0.19***	0.16***	0.39***	0.19***	
-2Loglikelihood	2,184.60	2,235.09	1,283.48	2,045.62	4,040.23	4,133.56	2,462.72	4,278.23	

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

6.5 Discussion

The present study describes the prevalence of legally registered cohabitations among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium. It also identifies which minority members are more likely to choose cohabitation over marriage. The results show that in 2005 the percentage of all first partnerships that are cohabitations was small. However, between 2005 and 2015, the prevalence doubled among second-generation minority members and tripled among the first generation. In 2015, 6.88 and 17.12 percent of the partnerships of second- and first-generation members, respectively, are legally registered cohabitations. Nevertheless, the observed prevalence remains lower compared to that of the entire Belgian population. In 2010, for example, 46 percent of all newly registered partnerships in Belgium were cohabitations (Corijn, 2012). Hence, marriage maintains its prominent role in the family system of Turkish and Moroccan minorities. However, cohabitation has the potential to become an important first partnership choice, as there is a strong upward trend in its prevalence in the past decade. Especially among mixed partnerships, cohabitation is becoming an acceptable partnership type. In 2015, between 26 and 39 percent of all first partnerships (depending on the migration generation) with a mixed partner are cohabitations. Hence, focusing on marriage alone when studying partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities—as previous studies have done—will not provide an accurate and complete picture anymore, especially when studying mixed partnerships—confirming Hartung et al. (2011). Moreover, it also indicates that among Turkish and Moroccan minorities, family formation patterns change in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations.

In the second part of the analyses, we studied whether cohabiting minority members deviate from traditional family norms because of assimilation towards a family system characterized by the Second Demographic Transition, or if other dynamics are present as well.

First, our multivariate results confirm that minority members forming a partnership at an older age or with a mixed partner are more likely to cohabit. Cohabitation is thus more prevalent among those who deviate more from social norms, possibly making the choice for cohabitation a choice for an alternative lifestyle that is closer to the family system of the majority population.

Second, regarding the positive effect of being in a mixed partnership, we proposed an additional explanation in which cohabitation is seen as a more acceptable option than marriage because of strong traditional family norms, reinforced by third parties. We stated that minority members in a mixed partnership may choose cohabitation to minimize social resistance to mixed partnerships. If this were true, the effect could be higher for women, for example, as they generally experience more social control, and norms regarding homogamy are stricter for them (Hooghiemstra, 2003; Timmerman, 2006). However, we found the opposite. This finding supports the assumption that cohabitation and mixed partnerships might be part of a choice to deviate from social norms regarding family formation and follow an alternative lifestyle.

Third, we proposed the prevalence of another dynamic, one related to having children outside of marriage. We expected that minority members deviating from social and religious family norms by having a child outside of marriage may encounter adverse reactions from their social environment when entering marriage. Legally registered cohabitation, then, could be an alternative to formalize the partnership, as it allows them to avoid traditional marriage customs. We find support for this reasoning because having a child greatly increases the odds to cohabit, especially for minority members in co-ethnic partnerships. Minority members with a child who form a partnership within the ethnic community may experience more adverse reactions to their situation compared to minority members with a partner from outside the community. This effect is even stronger for second- compared to first-generation members. The former may experience higher levels of social control due to a more dense local co-ethnic network than the latter, who have often migrated alone, leaving their social or familial network behind.

From a classical assimilation perspective, the most striking result of this paper is the higher prevalence of cohabitation among first- compared to second-generation minority members. Although we were not able to thoroughly assess partner selection motives while analyzing register data, we provide some possible explanations for this unexpected result.

First, because we focus on first partnerships formed between 2005 and 2015 (and the strong concentration of first partnership formation between the ages of 23 and 40), the first generation in our study are not labor migrants who came in the 1960s and the 1970s or family reunifications who arrived in the 1970s. What

characterizes the first generation we study here is that they had only recently arrived in Belgium. From recent newcomers from Turkey and Morocco, we know they have obtained residence permits for humanitarian or educational reasons, or for other reasons (for example, because they were human trafficking victims, unaccompanied minors, refugees) besides family reunification (Eurostat, 2016). Studies show that although cohabitation is not prevalent in Turkey and Morocco, attitudes regarding family formation and gender roles are becoming more liberal in the origin countries (Adak, 2016; Buskens, 2010; Prettitore, 2015). Hence, the attitudes of first-generation members may not be as traditional as we expected based on studies including labor migrants or family reunifications arriving in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of those migrants originated from rural areas characterized by strong collectivistic family systems (Reniers, 1999). Second, first-generation minority members who came to Belgium because of socioeconomic, educational or other reasons might be a selective group, sharing similar family values and views on cohabitation prevalent in the residence country, and choosing an alternative family formation process. Moreover, as indicated earlier, first-generation members may also experience less third-party influence because of a less dense social network within the local ethnic community compared to second-generation minority members who were born in Belgium or migrated at a young age, accompanied by parents.

Third, the presence of a different dynamic, found among several majority populations, may also explain why first-generation minority members have a higher likelihood to deviate from traditional family norms. Several Anglo-Saxon studies among majority populations have shown that individuals prefer cohabitation in a high uncertainty context (Kiernan, 2004a; Seltzer, 2004; Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006; Stanley, Whitton, & Markman, 2004). Although marriage remains highly valued, economic uncertainty and insecurity about marriage because of high divorce rates can be an obstacle to marriage for some (Seltzer, 2004). Cohabitation therefore can be a way to move a relationship forward without making a strong interpersonal commitment, on the one hand, and can reduce the financial, emotional and social consequences of a break-up, on the other (Smock, Huang, Manning, & Bergstrom, 2006; Stanley et al., 2004). Individuals that have less certainty about the future may pursue partnership types that allow more flexibility, like cohabitation (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Cherlin, 2004; Huston & Melz, 2004; Kiernan, 2004b). We discuss uncertainty regarding first-generation minority members in two contexts: economic uncertainty and

uncertainty regarding place of residence. First, several studies on different populations have shown higher rates of cohabitation among individuals with fewer economic resources or lower educational attainment (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Cherlin, 2004; Huston & Melz, 2004; Kiernan, 2004b). Hence, we could expect first-generation minority members to have higher odds of cohabiting instead of marrying than the second generation because they have a harder time obtaining financial security and stability. The Flemish Migration and Integration Monitor shows, for example, that the employment rate of Turkish and Moroccan⁴⁴ ethnic minorities in 2009 was more than 14 percentage points lower among the first generation than among minority members born in Belgium (Noppe et al., 2018). Second, first-generation minority members might also experience more uncertainty about the future than the second generation in terms of place of residence. First-generation minority members may not have a permanent residence permit or may have plans to return to the origin country after some time. In these situations, a partnership that offers more flexibility, such as cohabitation, may be preferred.

As mentioned before, this study aims at providing a first comprehensive insight into the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation and describes which minority members would be more likely to choose this partnership type. Register data is well suited to meet these objectives. However, on the one hand, future research might be able to provide more insight into the motives of minority members deviating from traditional family norms. A life course perspective, on the other hand, could give a better overview of minority members' family formation behavior and determine whether cohabitation is seen as a trial marriage or as an acceptable alternative to marriage. Previous studies among majority populations have developed several typologies based on the timing of childbirth, for example (Heuveline & Timberlake, 2004; Kiernan, 2001). If cohabitation is followed by marriage and childbirth, cohabitation can be considered a trial marriage. However, the characteristics of our data sample are not fit to follow the life course of a birth cohort and evaluate this assumption properly.

This study is not without limitations. First, we have no information on cohabitations that are not legally registered. In 2004, Corijn and Lodewijkcs

⁴⁴ The Migration Monitor does not make a distinction between minority members originating from Morocco or other Maghreb countries (Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania). The majority of the minority members originating from Maghreb countries are, however, of Moroccan descent.

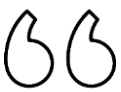
(2009) estimated the prevalence of informal cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium, based on the size of their household. However, although the number of non-married cohabiting couples among Turkish minorities remains relatively small, among Moroccan minority members, especially those in mixed partnerships or those belonging to the second generation, the number continues to increase. Hence, by including only legally registered cohabitation, we may have underestimated the prevalence of cohabitation. Second, we are unable to control for characteristics other than sociodemographic ones by analyzing register data. Studies such as Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (2018), for example, have indicated the importance of the religiosity and social integration of the parents, as well as the social integration of the partners themselves, when assessing values about marriage and sexuality. Third, we have no information on the partner formation history of first-generation members in the origin country. The first generation in our study are relatively recent newcomers with a rather short duration of stay. This means that they could have been married and divorced in the origin country, migrated to Belgium, and then formed a second (instead of a first) partnership, which has a higher likelihood of being a cohabitation (Wu & Schimmele, 2005).

Although marriage maintains its prominent role, our study shows that the phenomenon of cohabitation is becoming an increasingly acceptable alternative to marriage for Turkish and Moroccan minority members. This upward trend in the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation is unprecedented and is significant because it means that the foundation of the traditional family system for Turkish and Moroccan minority members could be changing. Religious and social norms regarding family formation may become less strict, and attitudes regarding family formation may become more liberal. This could mean that family systems in long-established migrant communities change in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations. These changes could be due to assimilation towards the prevailing family system, despite migration and integration theories that consider family formation behavior to be one of the most rigid dimensions with regard to assimilation (Dumon, 1989). Nevertheless, our results show that the prevalence of cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minorities is not a simple matter of assimilation towards the prevailing family system in the majority population, as assumed by previous studies (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Hartung et al., 2011; Lievens, 1999b). For many, when marriage is not an acceptable option because, for example, of the presence of children born

outside of marriage or uncertainty about the future, legally registered cohabitation may be a way to form an official partnership.

Chapter 7.

Partner type attitudes of parents and adolescents: understanding the decline in transnational partnerships among Turkish migrants in Flanders



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This article describes an unprecedented decline in transnational partnerships among Turkish migrants in Flanders, using population data on all marriages between 2001 and 2008. Studying parental references regarding partner selection, we examine attitudinal mechanisms behind this decline. Based on a representative survey, our first result is that (direct) parental involvement in partner selection is lower among the more recent marriage cohorts. Second, parents and adolescents have moved away from a focus on the origin country in partner selection, while ethnic homogamy remains preferred. Third, openness toward mixed partnerships is found among a small but salient proportion of parents and associated with the religious attendance of male parents. We conclude that an attitudinal shift has occurred from a focus on the origin country to an orientation toward the local (ethnic) community. This decline in transnational partnerships is more a product of intense attitudinal change than a reflection of a policy change in the direction of discouraging partner migration and has implications for the integration and demographic characteristics of Turkish ethnic minorities in Flemish society. Additionally, international migration patterns are affected as the character of long-lasting migration from Turkey to Europe is changing and partner migration, one of the most accessible channels to enter Europe, is rapidly decreasing.

⁴⁵ Some small stylistic adjustments are made to increase the consistency of this dissertation.

7.1 Introduction

Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern part of Belgium, is characterized by a large Turkish ethnic minority, which, as is the case in Wallonia (the southern part of Belgium), the Netherlands, and Germany, originated in the context of labor migration in the 1960s (Atalik & Beeley, 1993). Despite a moratorium on labor migration in 1974, immigration from Turkey to Flanders continued, driven by family reunification and, more importantly, partner migration (Lievens, 2000). A preference for country-of-origin partners over local co-ethnic partners has been observed among first- and second-generation Turkish migrants for several decades. In his analysis of population data, for example, Lievens (1999a) described the high percentage (around 70%) of transnational marriages among Turkish migrants in 1991. Similar results have been reported more recently in 2004, with approximately 60 percent of second generation migrants choosing a transnational partner (Yalcin et al., 2006), as has been found in several other Western European countries as well Hooghiemstra (2003) for the Netherlands, Baykara-Krumme and Fuß (2009) for Germany, Milewski and Hamel (2010) for France).

More recent studies, however, have shown that the prevalence of transnational partnerships among Turkish migrants in Belgium has been declining, making local co-ethnic partnerships the most preferred (Lievens, Van de Putte, Van der Bracht, & Caestecker, 2013). This trend echoes a similar decline in the Netherlands (Loozen et al., 2012), Sweden (Carol et al., 2014), and Germany (Aybek et al., 2015), although the predominance of transnational partnerships in Germany has been lower than in other countries (Carol et al., 2014). Recent policy changes implemented throughout Europe to reduce immigration, especially partner migration, may partially explain this decline. Although migration policies hindering transnational partnerships can have a clear influence on partner type preferences (Carol et al., 2014; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011), we cannot ignore the possibility that attitudinal changes may also contribute to this decline. This may be especially true in Belgium (and Flanders), where the decline in transnational partnerships began in 2006 and, thus, predates the emergence of stricter migration policies in 2011 (Lievens et al., 2013).

Although national register data are necessary to determine these particular partner selection trends, the data do not provide the in-depth information needed to discover possible attitudinal mechanisms behind these changes. Van Kerckem

et al.'s (2013) qualitative research, however, provides a first insight into the attitudinal mechanisms behind the recent decline in transnational partnerships, suggesting three possible mechanisms. First, adolescent migrants tend to prefer local co-ethnic partners because they recognize the risks and downsides of transnational partnerships and evaluate the dependence of newly immigrated partners negatively. Second, the fact that premarital relationships are more often allowed may also enable the increase in local (co-ethnic) partnerships. Third, lower levels of parental involvement among the more recent marriage cohorts could also contribute to the decline in transnational partnerships, as parents are believed to be more traditional and to prefer transnational partnerships for their children.

The current study aims to further clarify the attitudinal dynamics behind recent trends in partner selections made by Turkish migrants⁴⁶ in Flanders. The qualitative sociological literature suggests that transnational partnerships may be declining partially because migrant parents are taking less initiative when selecting partners for their children (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Parents are supposed to have a stronger preference for transnational partnerships than their children do. Hence, when parental involvement decreases, partnerships that are romantic matches increase and are more likely to occur in the local ethnic community instead of the origin country. However, three observations should be made when considering parental influence. First, parental influence remains relevant, despite increasing autonomy, because the partner selection process of Turkish migrants has evolved from being initiated by parents and family to being initiated by partners with parental consent (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Parental approval, thus, is still important and a well-accepted condition for getting married (Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Second, the literature attributing the decline in transnational partnerships among Turkish migrants to changes in parental involvement discusses the extent of their influence but overlooks preferences concerning specific partner types. The assumption is made that migrant parents prefer transnational partnerships for their children without researching specific parental preferences (e.g., Huschek et al., 2012; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). Third, less parental involvement does not necessarily lead to fewer transnational partnerships, as the prevalence of this partner type could also be a

⁴⁶ Due to the small sample size, we are not able to discern different religious streams and ethnic minorities among Turkish migrants (e.g., Kurds and Alevis). These could have different patterns of and attitudes concerning partner selection.

result of a match between the interests and objectives of all parties involved — parents and adolescents (Reniers & Lievens, 1997). Therefore, the question arises whether the decline in transnational partnerships could be associated with a change in attitudes and preferences of adolescents and parents in addition to policy changes. To what extent do Turkish migrants consider transnational partnerships the ideal partner type, and to what extent are they more likely to prefer local co-ethnic or possibly even ethnically mixed partnerships?

To address these questions, we start by discussing several mechanisms behind Turkish migrants' transnational partnerships, with a focus on parental involvement and preferences. A first dataset is used to describe the recent trends in partner selection of Turkish migrants in Flanders. Next, a second dataset is used to unravel the mechanisms behind these recent trends and to determine whether parental involvement is actually lower in the most recent marriage cohorts. Then, we compare the distinct preferences migrant parents have concerning ideal partner types for daughters versus sons, especially regarding transnational partnerships. Furthermore, in view of possible attitudinal changes, we consider ethnicity's central role in partner selection and determine which parents show more openness to mixed partnerships. Finally, we discuss adolescents' preferences concerning their own future partners. We conclude by outlining the implications of our findings.

7.2 Mechanisms behind transnational partnerships

Several factors influence the complex process of partner selection: the preferences of individuals, the influence of third parties, and the constraints of the marriage market in which one searches for a partner (Kalmijn, 1991). The mechanisms behind transnational partnerships can therefore be considered on three different levels: micro, macro, and meso. The micro-level includes individual preferences concerning ideal partners. On the one hand, several studies note traditional motives among Turkish migrants for choosing transnational partnerships (Lievens, 1999a; Timmerman et al., 2009), which are associated with higher levels of religiosity, maintaining and strengthening ethnic identity, and stronger ties with the origin country (Carol et al., 2014). On the other hand, migrant adolescents looking for a partner report a scarcity of eligible partners in the local marriage market (Hooghiemstra, 2003).

Two factors at the core of this reported scarcity are the negative view men and women have of each other and the minority group's increasing diversification. First, migrants often have a negative view of potential local co-ethnic partners and an idealized image of potential partners from the origin country (Hooghiemstra, 2003; Sterckx & Bouw, 2005; Straßburger, 2005). Second, the Turkish ethnic minority in Flanders is rather homogeneous in terms of a lower educational level. Hence, because of increasing diversification, highly educated migrants may have a harder time finding an equally educated partner in the local ethnic community, motivating them to seek an eligible partner in Turkey (Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, & Crul, 2003). This practice is more common among more highly educated women than men (Autant, 1995; Lievens, 1999a; Liversage, 2012; Timmerman et al., 2009). Lievens (1999a) concludes that by choosing a transnational partner, migrant women may be able to gain more autonomy and "power" within the relationship because they are not subject to the generally strong influence of their in-laws and because their partner is new to the resident country. Hence, women may choose this partner type to satisfy modern goals, whereas men search within the origin country for more traditional spouses. Evidence for this hypothesis has been found mainly in qualitative studies (Autant, 1995; Liversage, 2012; Timmerman et al., 2009). In quantitative studies, González-Ferrer (2006) and Milewski and Hamel (2010) found no support for this interaction of gender and educational attainment of Turkish migrants. Carol, Ersanilli, and Wagner (2014) did find support for this interaction but questioned educational attainment as a proxy for traditional orientation, as the interaction remained significant while controlling for religiosity. Hence, the choice for a transnational partnership could also be the result of a lack of appropriate partners in the country of residence (Straßburger, 2003). While highly educated women may need to turn to their origin country to find co-ethnic partners with similar levels of education, this is less true for highly educated men, who are more likely to marry women with lower education.

The macro-level includes structural factors such as transnational networks, socioeconomic conditions in the origin country, and migration policies. Turkish migrants from the same Turkish region often find themselves living in the same communities in Flanders (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996). These networks preserve social and cultural structures from the region of origin and enable transnational partnerships, as migrants' marriage market transcends national borders (Timmerman, 2006). Furthermore, the literature discusses the importance of socio-economic conditions as push factors for migration (Timmerman et al., 2009).

Interviews conducted in 2005 with partner migrants still living in Turkey reveal that motives for immigrating are often related to socio-economic factors rather than to the partnership itself. Socio-economics combined with European policies restricting migration opportunities from outside Europe make marriage one of most accessible channels of migration to Europe. This situation generates a large pool of possible partners in Turkey and increases pressure on Turkish migrants to marry a partner from the origin country. Migrants in turn become more attractive marriage partners, potentially giving them a better chance of finding a suitable partner in the origin country than in the local ethnic community (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). However, the recent implementation of stricter requirements for migration throughout Europe has created barriers to choosing a transnational partnership, even for nationals (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007). The policy changes, which establish a minimum age and include income, language, and housing requirements, have been implemented throughout Western Europe in an attempt to reduce immigration in general and transnational partnerships in particular, as studies in the Netherlands and Sweden illustrate (Carol et al., 2014; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). They are also partially a result of policymakers' concerns about ethnic minorities' level of integration in the face of a constant influx of immigrants (Schmidt, 2011). Perhaps most importantly for our study, these policies create socioeconomic and gender inequalities in the freedom to choose a partner (Aybek, 2015; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Only those with a higher socio-economic status can freely choose a partner (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011), and women may have more trouble meeting the (income) requirements to marry a partner living in Turkey (Kraler, 2010). These policies also make transnational partnerships more stressful because the migrating partner's dependency is very high, and traditional gender roles may shift when the partner migrant is a man. Under them, transnational partnerships become riskier because the level of uncertainty about whether the union can be formed is higher (Aybek, 2015; Aybek et al., 2015). When it is not possible, consequences may be either divorce or relocation to Turkey. Hence, these policies may lead to cancellation or postponement of the partnership until the requirements can be met. It is also possible that the restrictions will foster a change in attitudes toward transnational partnerships themselves (Carol et al., 2014). In all these ways, then, whereas in the past, migration policies made marriage one of the most accessible channels of migration to Europe, today, the recently reformed policies may have the opposite effect.

The meso-level includes third parties such as peers, the local ethnic community, parents, and extended family members. Partner selection is seldom an entirely individual choice, as people strive to gain social approval and adhere to group norms (Ajzen, 1985). For ethnic minorities, strict norms of endogamy, for example, can be important as they pursue group identity (Kalmijn, 1998). Third parties are important in the partner selection process as they transmit values and norms during socialization and act as role models (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Because Turkish family culture has a strong influence on the partner selection process and because parental preferences are the focus of this article, we assess the role of family and parents in particular.

In Turkish culture, marriage is seen as a bond between families and individuals (Timmerman, 2006), and the reputation of potential partners is essential in the preservation of family honor. Young adults' behavior is determined by an honor and shame system accompanied by a virginity norm and a strong preference for ethnic homogamy⁴⁷ (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). The social network of migrant adolescents uses these norms to regulate the partner selection process and exerts a high level of social control, especially on daughters. Because adhering to these social norms leads to certain levels of ethnic and gender segregation and, thus, limits opportunities to meet potential partners, parents and close relatives can play active roles in the selection process. We discuss migrant parents' involvement in the partner selection process and the link with transnational partnerships more thoroughly in the next section.

7.2.1 Parental Involvement

As indicated above, parental involvement in partner selection of Turkish migrants is motivated by the central role marriage plays in the preservation of family honor (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Finding a suitable partner is essential, and parents are generally trusted to have reliable insight and to offer the best guidance in the partner selection process. Parental involvement is especially high in transnational partnerships (Huschek et al., 2012), as partner compatibility can be evaluated beforehand, which is important given the greater uncertainties and risks of this partner type (Aybek et al., 2015). Parents and family members often serve as matchmakers between two partners living in different countries; however,

⁴⁷ We use the term ethnic homogamy to indicate partnerships between two persons of Turkish descent, defined here as having at least one parent with Turkish nationality at birth.

parental involvement is also present in the formation of local partnerships (Hense & Schorch, 2013). Adolescents often accept parental and family involvement in response to possible family pressure, as well as their own desire for family cohesion and solidarity (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007). Therefore, the practice of arranged partnerships is frequently accepted because it is based on a supportive network and on the compatibility of the partners rather than on emotions alone (Aybek, 2015).

Nevertheless, there is variation in the degree of parental involvement, as described by two models of family values: the traditional model of interdependence and the model of psychological interdependence (Kâğıtçıbaşı, 1996). The former is characterized by a collective focus and by children's dependence on parents. Thus, arranged partnerships are more frequent (Hortaçsu & Oral, 1994; Kâğıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005). Parents who have lower levels of educational attainment, traditional attitudes regarding gender roles, religious commitment, and rural origins are more likely to subscribe to these family values. The psychological interdependence model, by contrast, is characterized by a strong conformity to parental preferences and expectations; however, children have more autonomy in life-course decisions, thus making couple-initiated romantic partnerships more common (Hortaçsu & Oral, 1994). This model⁴⁸ prevails among parents with higher educational attainment, fewer children, and less religious commitment (Kâğıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005). Kâğıtçıbaşı and Ataca (2005) describe an evolution in family values, facilitated by socio-economic development, from the traditional model to the model of psychological interdependence between generations. Nevertheless, this evolution does not mean that adolescents become completely autonomous in their partner selection. The psychological interdependence model differs from the Western independence model in that the former assumes emotional dependence between parents and child instead of emotional separation. Even when parents do not propose a specific partner, they still may influence their children's partner selection process in other ways (Hooghiemstra, 2003; Sterckx & Bouw, 2005). For example, parents can create opportunities for their children to meet potential partners during holidays in Turkey while restricting social contacts in the resident country. Additionally, they might explain how a transnational marriage would please them or encourage other family members to influence their child's choice.

⁴⁸ Research illustrates that these models of family values also exist among Turkish migrants in Europe (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Huschek et al., 2012).

7.2.2 Parental preferences

Qualitative and anthropological studies from the late 1980s and early 1990s indicate that parents of Turkish descent have distinct preferences for transnational partnerships (Callaerts, 1997; de Vries, 1987; Van der Hoek & Kret, 1992). Several factors explain this orientation. First, migrant parents often have strong ties to their families in Turkey through transnational networks characterized by high levels of solidarity and pressure or a sense of obligation to help kin that stayed behind (Sterckx & Bouw, 2005; Timmerman et al., 2009). Transnational partnerships can help maintain and strengthen those transnational networks. Second, parents belonging to the first generation may find themselves living in a largely unknown society and culture, which may lead to preferences for transnational partnerships, making them adhere more rigidly to their traditions, customs, and ethnic identity (Timmerman, 2006). Third, parents generally believe that partners from the origin country are more compatible (e.g., sharing norms and values and being a better cultural fit) than local co-ethnics, who often have a bad reputation (Callaerts, 1997; Sterckx & Bouw, 2005). Several studies, in fact, indicate that both parents and children have an idealized view of transnational partners and attribute to them characteristics that they do not find among local co-ethnics (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Timmerman, 2006).

However, qualitative research from the mid-2000s on does not report an explicit preference for partners from the origin country (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Yalcin et al., 2006). Turkish migrants in a transnational partnership, as well as Turks who migrated as newlyweds, are careful in recommending transnational partnerships because of the limited time partners have to get to know each other beforehand and the difficulties they themselves encountered during the partnership (Aybek et al., 2015; Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Yalcin et al., 2006). Although transnational partnerships are often idealized because partners are expected to share religion, norms, and values, as well as an ethnic-cultural identity (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Zemni et al., 2006), many parents and adolescents claim to have changed their minds about this partner type after witnessing relationship difficulties in transnational partnerships (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Zemni et al., 2006). While shared ethnicity and religion remain important, there is no report of a distinct preference for a partner from Turkey among Turkish migrants, possibly indicating an evolution in attitudes regarding transnational partnerships, as has been

hypothesized in other research (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huschek et al., 2012; Lievens, 1999a).

7.3 Recent trends in partner selection of Turkish migrants in Flanders

The trends in partner selection of Turkish migrants examined here are based on data extracted⁴⁹ from the Belgian National Register. We include all first marriages of second-generation Turkish migrants in Flanders conducted between 2001 and 2008 ($N = 7,274$) that meet the following conditions: there is at least one partner who (1) is a resident of Flanders, (2) was born with Turkish nationality, and (3) either immigrated to Belgium before age 16 or was born in Belgium. We distinguish between three different partner types: (1) a transnational partnership with a partner living in Turkey, (2) a local co-ethnic partnership, and (3) a mixed partnership with a native Belgian. Although it is increasingly important to include cohabitation when researching Turkish migrants' partner selection (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007), we choose to exclude it, as only 1.3 percent of first partnerships in our analyses were cohabitations. Among the Turkish population, living together without being married is (still) frowned upon, and people who choose this partner type are usually less religious and more highly educated (Huschek et al., 2011; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2006). We analyze the number of marriages each year, regardless of their possible dissolution afterwards. Fifteen percent of Turkish migrants in a transnational marriage were divorced by 2008, compared to 17 percent of migrants in a mixed partnerships and 10 percent of migrants with a local co-ethnic partner.

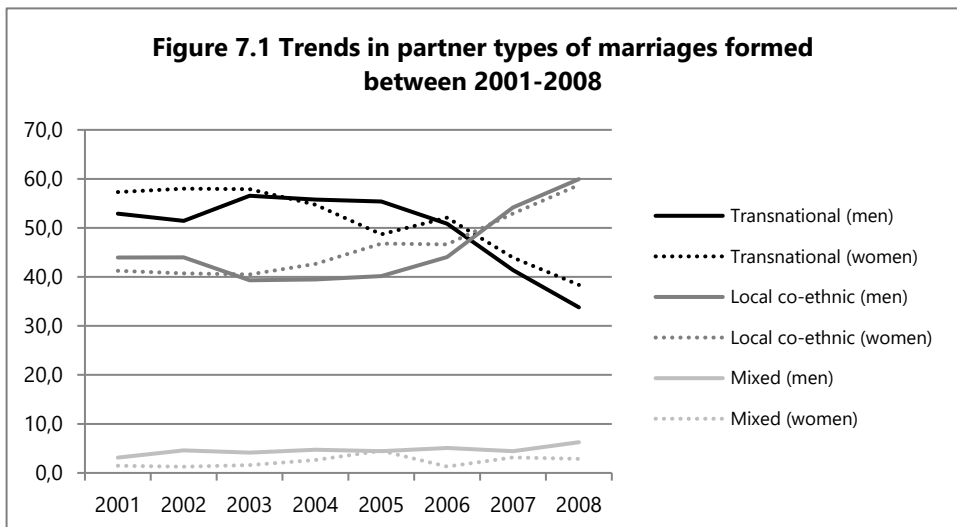
As seen in Figure 7.1, the prevalence of transnational partnerships among Turkish men declined from 52.9 percent in 2001 to 33.8 percent in 2008, making partnerships with local co-ethnics the most common choice in 2008 (an increase from 44.0% to 59.9%). Mixed partnerships remain the least common partner type, although the percentage doubled from 3.1 percent to 6.3 percent. We note similar trends for women. A distinct decline in transnational partnerships (57.3% to 38.4%)

⁴⁹ This subsample comes from a dataset comprising all marriages and legally registered cohabitations conducted between 2001 and 2008 by first- and second-generation migrants living in Belgium. All included migrants were born with a third-country nationality (i.e., a country outside the European Economic Area and Switzerland).

is mostly absorbed by partnerships with a local co-ethnic (41.2% to 58.8%), with the percentage of mixed partnerships remaining low (1.5% to 2.9%).

When comparing trends for men and women, the percentage of transnational partnerships among men was slightly lower than that among women in both 2001 (52.9% vs. 57.3%) and 2008 (33.8% vs. 38.4%). However, the decline in the prevalence of this partner type amounts to 19 percentage points for both sexes. The trend in local co-ethnic marriages within this time frame is similar for men and women (approximately 40% in 2001 and 60% in 2008). In contrast, mixed partnerships are more common among men than among women (approximately 6.3% and 2.9%, respectively). A preference for ethnically homogamous partnerships seems to be more pronounced for women than for men (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2001).

To conclude, we observe a steep decline in transnational partnerships, making local co-ethnic partnerships the most popular partner type in 2008, while mixed partnerships remained the least preferred. In the following sections, we try to better understand this change in partner selection by Turkish migrants by analyzing distinct preferences among both parents and adolescents concerning ideal partner types.



7.4 Understanding recent trends in the partner selection of Turkish migrants: Research questions and hypotheses

This article focuses on the possibility that attitudinal changes contribute to the decline in transnational partnerships among Turkish migrants in Flanders. We state that the influence of parental involvement's decline on the prevalence of transnational partnerships is re-enforced by attitudinal changes regarding partner types, namely, transnational partnerships being less idealized by parents and partners.

Our first research question (**Q1**) is, To what extent does parental influence differ in partner selection across marriage cohorts? Among both Turks in Turkey (Kâğıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005) and Turkish migrants in Belgium (Loobuyck, 2005; Yalcin et al., 2006), an evolution toward more individualization in partner selection is visible. Hence, we hypothesize that parental involvement will be lower among more recent marriage cohorts (H1). Our second research question (**Q2**) addresses our main focus: Which partner types do migrant parents prefer for their children, and is there a difference for daughters versus sons? After evaluating qualitative research from recent decades (Callaerts, 1997; de Vries, 1987; Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Van der Hoek & Kret, 1992; Yalcin et al., 2006), we hypothesize that parental attitudes toward ideal partner types have, in fact, changed and that the distinct preference for a partner from the origin country may have diminished over time (H2).

In its place, partnerships with local co-ethnics are becoming predominant, perhaps because ethnic homogamy is still preferred (H3). Social groups often enforce homogamy norms to protect group cohesion and maintain group values and traditions (Clark-Ibáñez & Felmlee, 2004) and because mixed partnerships can be seen as a threat to group identity and solidarity (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Hagendoorn, 2007). Additionally, within Turkish culture, ethnic homogamy has a religious dimension. Islam does not consider children of a Muslim woman and non-Muslim man to be Muslim, although this norm is less severe for children of Muslim men in mixed marriages (de Vries, 1987). Other gender dynamics may be relevant as well. For example, while gender equality in Turkish society is increasing, family honor is still largely dependent on women's sexuality, which results in

stricter social control of women's behavior and a certain gender hierarchy (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Hence, a preference for ethnically homogeneous partnerships may be more pronounced for daughters than for sons (H4).

Furthermore, in view of possible attitudinal changes, our third research question (**Q3**) is, What characterizes migrant parents who are more open to mixed partnerships with native Belgians? We suspect that openness to mixed partnerships may increase over successive generations (Lieberson & Waters, 1988) (H5). As an ethnic minority group's duration of stay and size increase, transnational networks between relatives may decrease in intensity, especially for second-generation migrants, potentially reducing the strength of emotional ties and sensitivity to kin obligations (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huschek et al., 2012). The resident country's culture could also influence the ethnic identity of second-generation parents and possibly result in less emphasis on ethnic homogamy. Furthermore, we suspect that more highly educated parents will be more open to mixed partnerships (H6), since highly educated migrants are known to hold less traditional norms and values concerning partner selection (Huschek et al., 2012). Moreover, highly educated migrants are extensively exposed to the resident country's values system during their education and have more opportunities to meet non-migrant peers (Baykara-Krumme & Fuß, 2009; Kalmijn, 1998). Higher educational attainment is also believed to weaken attachments to the origin community and to reduce cultural barriers to ethnically heterogeneous partnerships (Hwang et al., 1997). Furthermore, we expect individuals who only occasionally attend religious services to be more open to mixed partnerships (H7), since they may attribute less significance to religious norms that prescribe ethnic and religious homogamy when selecting a partner (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Kalmijn, 1998). Additionally, some scholars find less ethnic distance and more openness to mixed partnerships among less religious people (Scheepers et al., 2002).

Our final research question (**Q4**) is, What are adolescents' preferences about the ethnicity of their future partners? Including adolescents' attitudes is essential to obtaining a comprehensive view of recent partner selection dynamics of Turkish migrants, since their role in the process may become more important over time (Van Zantvliet et al., 2014; Yalcin et al., 2006). The inclusion of their preferences, thus, may provide additional insight into future trends in Turkish migrants' partner selection. We hypothesize that parents' attitudinal changes concerning ideal

partner types may also be present among adolescents, thereby resulting in a shared preference for local co-ethnic partnerships (H8).

7.5 Methods — Data sample

For the following analyses, we use a second dataset — a subsample of the Sexpert survey, which consists of detailed and extensive data on the sexual health of Turkish migrants in Flanders and on its biomedical, psychological, and sociocultural correlates. Data collection took place between 2012 and 2013 through face-to-face interviews conducted by interviewers belonging to the Turkish ethnic minority, using a combination of CAPI (computer-assisted personal interviewing) and CASI (computer-assisted self-interview). Data were gathered in two stages to construct a population-based probability sample. The first stage included the selection of primary sampling units, that is, Flemish municipalities. By ordering and systematic sampling, a municipality's chance of being selected was proportional to the number of inhabitants meeting eligibility criteria (14–59 years old, Belgian nationality, and at least one parent born with Turkish nationality). In the second stage, respondents were selected randomly from the Belgian National Register. The final sample contains 430 respondents (response rate of 57%). Data were weighted by gender and age to make the sample representative of the population of Flemish residents of Turkish descent aged 14 to 59. Respondents could choose between a Dutch and Turkish questionnaire; 36.4 percent answered in Turkish.

7.6 Results

7.6.1 Parental involvement

Our first analysis discusses the extent to which parents influence their children's partner selection across marriage cohorts (**Q1**). To answer this first question, we selected all respondents from the Sexpert survey who were in a partnership ($N = 263$). Parental involvement in the formation of their partnerships was captured by asking, "To what extent did your parents influence the formation of your current partnership?" The degree of freedom in choosing their current partner was captured by asking, "Were you able to choose your partner freely?" Both were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (absolutely not) to 5

(completely) and recoded into three categories for ease of interpretation: 1 and 2 into little to none, 3 into some, and 4 and 5 into high.

The first part of Table 7.1 describes parental involvement across marriage cohorts. The percentage of respondents whose partner choice was only slightly influenced by their parents has clearly increased in more recent marriage cohorts — from 15.1 percent of all partnerships formed before 1992 to 53.6 percent of all partnerships formed after 2006. Likewise, 77.4 percent of all partner choices made before 1992 were highly influenced by parents, compared to 32.1 percent of all partnerships formed after 2006. Hence, we can observe an evolution toward individualization and individual-initiated partnerships among more recent marriage cohorts, confirming H1. Nevertheless, 32.1 percent of respondents in the most recent cohort stated that their parents had a high degree of influence on the formation of their partnerships. However, this does not mean they felt they had no freedom of choice. Table 7.1's second part shows that parental influence did not prevent feeling free to choose a partner. Of respondents who entered into a union after 2006, 85.0 percent felt they had a lot of freedom in choosing their current partner, although parents still had a strong influence on the formation of 32.1 percent of partnerships in this cohort.

Parental involvement in Turkish migrants' partner selection is known to differ according to their children's gender⁵⁰ (Baykara-Krumme, 2015). Hence, Table 7.1's lower part distinguishes between men and women. As expected, parents influence men's partner choice less than they influence women's choice (40.2% vs. 58.3%, respectively). The degree of freedom in choosing a partner also differs according to gender: 73.9 percent of men felt they had a lot of freedom in choosing their partner, compared to 61.5 percent of women. Similarly, more women felt very little freedom of choice: 25.2 percent versus 10 percent of male respondents.

⁵⁰ Multinomial logistic regression models with parental involvement as the dependent variable show that the gender difference in parental involvement is explained by the generally lower educational attainment of women in the dataset (e.g., Baykara-Krumme 2015). Additionally, the odds of experiencing more parental involvement in choosing a partner are higher for respondents who married at a younger age and were in a transnational (vs. local) partnership. These results are available upon request.

Table 7.1. Parental involvement and degree of freedom in partner selection, by marriage cohort and by sex

		Parental involvement (N = 174)				Degree of freedom in partner selection (N = 255)			
		Little to none	Some	High	TOTAL	Little to none	Some	High	TOTAL
Marriage cohorts	2007-2012	53.6	14.3	31.1	100%	5.0	10.0	85.0	100%
	2001-2006	42.5	12.5	45.0	100%	16.7	11.7	71.7	100%
	1992-2000	34.0	11.3	54.7	100%	14.8	15.9	69.3	100%
	Before 1992	15.1	7.5	77.4	100%	29.9	25.4	44.8	100%
		Parental involvement (N = 210)				Degree of freedom in partner selection (N = 296)			
		Little to none	Some	High	TOTAL	Little to none	Some	High	TOTAL
Sex	Man	46.7	13.1	40.2	100%	10.5	15.7	73.9	100%
	Woman	33.0	8.7	58.3	100%	25.2	13.3	61.5	100%

7.6.2 Attitudes concerning ideal partner types

7.6.2.1 Parental preferences

Our second question assesses parents' distinct preferences concerning ideal partner types for their children and whether parental preferences differ between daughters and sons (**Q2**). All Sexpert respondents who were asked about their preferences concerning their children's future partner were either older than 25 (regardless of their relationship status) or younger and already married ($N = 305$). If respondents were childless ($N = 173$), they were asked to imagine which partner type they would want for their children if they had any.⁵¹

Six variables are used as indicators of parental preferences concerning child(ren)'s partner type. All are measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important). The variables were obtained from the

⁵¹ We find no differences between the preferences of respondents with children and those talking about hypothetical children. For those who already had children, we have no knowledge of the relationship status of their children or the type of their children's partnership.

following question, asked separately for male and female children: "How important is it to you that the future marriage partner of your child is (1) of Turkish descent and currently lives in Turkey, (2) of Turkish descent and currently living in Belgium, or (3) of Belgian descent?" These six variables were recoded from five categories into three: unimportant (1-2), in-between (3), important (4-5).

We analyze parental preferences, using three-way cross-tabs that enable us to tease out the distinct preferences concerning different partner types (Tables 7.2 and 7.3). We identify four different partner types that are the most pronounced and show them in the shaded cells: a transnational partnership, a mixed partnership with a native Belgian, a partnership with a local co-ethnic, and an ethnically homogeneous partnership without a preference regarding the potential partner's place of residence. Specific partner type preferences are not found in the shaded cells only; however, we believe that they identify the most pronounced preferences.

Table 7.2. Parental preferences for future partner types for daughters (N = 255, 100%)

Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Local co-ethnic		
		Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	22 (8.63%)	2 (0.78%)	50 (19.61%)
	In-between	1 (0.39%)	27 (10.59%)	15 (5.88%)
	Important	2 (0.78%)	1 (0.39%)	46 (18.04%)
In-between	Unimportant	6 (2.35%)	3 (1.18%)	14 (5.49%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	15 (5.88%)	6 (2.35%)
	Important	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	10 (3.92%)
Important	Unimportant	4 (1.57%)	0 (0.00%)	6 (2.35%)
	In-between	2 (0.78%)	1 (0.39%)	5 (1.96%)
	Important	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.39%)	16 (6.27%)

Most pronounced preferences can be found in the shaded cells:

Transnational	Mixed	Local co-ethnic	Ethnic homogeneous
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Table 7.3. Parental preferences for the future partner type of sons (N = 251, 100%)

Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Local co-ethnic		
		Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	17 (6.77%)	3 (1.20%)	32 (12.75%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	18 (7.17%)	11 (4.38%)
	Important	5 (1.99%)	1 (0.40%)	30 (11.95%)
In-between	Unimportant	1 (0.40%)	1 (0.40%)	16 (6.37%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	21 (8.37%)	9 (3.59%)
	Important	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	16 (6.37%)
Important	Unimportant	3 (1.20%)	0 (0.00%)	14 (5.58%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	4 (1.59%)	10 (3.98%)
	Important	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	39 (15.54%)

The shaded cells identify the most pronounced partner type preferences.

Transnational	Mixed	Local co-ethnic	Ethnic homogeneous
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We conclude that the number of parents that prefer transnational partnerships (who consider a native Belgian or local co-ethnic partner unimportant, but a partner living in Turkey important) is small. Only 0.78 percent of parents preferred this partner type for daughters, 1.99 percent for sons, confirming H2. Our findings concerning a preference for mixed partnerships (a partner who is local and co-

ethnic or living in Turkey seen as unimportant, a native Belgian as important) are similar: 1.57 percent of parents preferred this partner type for daughters, 1.2 percent for sons. The majority of respondents preferred a partnership with either a local co-ethnic (a partner who is a native Belgian or living in Turkey is considered unimportant, a local co-ethnic important) or a co-ethnic regardless of the place of residence (a native Belgian is considered unimportant; a partner living in Turkey or a local co-ethnic important), confirming H3. We find this perspective to be the case for daughters especially, since 19.61 percent of parents prefer a local co-ethnic, and 18.04 percent prefer a co-ethnic regardless of place of residence. Concerning the ideal partner type for sons, 12.75 percent preferred a local co-ethnic and 11.95 percent a co-ethnic regardless of place of residence. As these numbers show, the preference for ethnic homogamy is more pronounced for daughters than for sons, confirming H4. Finally, there are a significant number of respondents who did not view any of these choices as important (8.63% concerning daughters and 6.77% concerning sons) or found all three equally important (6.27% concerning daughters and 15.54% concerning sons). We categorize these respondents as having no distinct preference for a particular partner type since they find either none or all of the ethnic characteristics important. These respondents may have moved away from ethnicity's central role in the partner selection process and be more open to mixed partnerships. In the following analysis, we determine which factors differentiate parents with a distinct preference concerning ethnicity from those without.

7.6.2.2 Parents considering ethnicity unimportant

We compare parents with no distinct preference for partners of Turkish descent, who consider ethnicity unimportant in their children's partner choice, to parents who found the ethnicity of potential partners important (**Q3**) by constructing two dichotomous variables (one concerning daughters' partners; one concerning sons' partners) from the six variables used earlier. Table 7.4 describes the specific categorization of these variables. The same selection of respondents from the previous descriptive section is used.

Table 7.4. Operationalization of “considering ethnicity unimportant”: 1 = Not Important, 0 = Important

Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Local co-ethnic		
		Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	1	0	0
	In-between	0	0	0
	Important	0	0	0
In-between	Unimportant	1	0	0
	In-between	0	0	0
	Important	0	0	0
Important	Unimportant	1	1	1
	In-between	1	1	1
	Important	1	1	1

Independent variables. Three variables are included to explain differences in the importance parents attribute to ethnicity as a characteristic of their children’s future marriage partner: migration generation, educational attainment, and religious attendance. We operationalize *migration generation* based on the socialization stage at which one migrates, which plays an important role in the development of attitudes and values (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). A distinction is made between first-generation migrants, who were almost exclusively socialized in a Turkish context (migrated at age 15 or older); and second-generation migrants, who are mostly socialized in a Belgian context (migrated before 15 or born in Belgium). Additionally, it is important to note that only 4.9 percent of the first generation in this dataset migrated within the context of labor migration. Due to the age selection criterion (14–59 years old), most respondents belonging to the first generation migrated through family reunification (29.6%) or as partner migrants (54.2%).

Educational attainment is measured according to three categories: primary school and lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary education based on the highest diploma obtained (regardless of where it was obtained). *Religious attendance* is measured by the item, “In the past 6 months, how often did you attend religious gatherings or services?” Possible responses on a 6-point scale are never, only on special occasions, monthly, more than once a month, weekly, and

more than once a week. The six categories are recoded into three for ease of interpretation: never or on special occasions, at least once a month, and at least weekly.

The first part of Table 7.5 presents the univariate distributions of the variables described above. The predictors' effect is estimated in binomial logistic regression models. The aim is to distinguish between parents who show more openness to mixed partnerships and parents who consider ethnicity important in this matter. In a first step, the control variables (sex and age) were included, with the remaining predictors added successively to build explanatory models. Only complete models are reported in Table 7.5's second part, as there were no cases of suppression or redundancy while building the model. We do, however, include interaction terms between gender and religious attendance as a last step, since bivariate analyses show a large difference in religious attendance according to gender (58.8% of female parents never attended religious services, compared to 38.1% of male parents). This is not surprising as the religious practices of men and women are substantially different. For example, Islam compels men to go to the mosque each Friday, while this is not compulsory for women (Breuilly, O'Brien, & Palmer, 1997). We analyze attitudes about partner choices for daughters and sons separately. In the results, the effects are recalculated to odds ratios for ease of interpretation.

With regard to the ethnicity of daughters' partners, the effect of religious attendance indicates that the odds of considering ethnicity unimportant are 2.75 and 2.61 times lower for parents who attend religious services at least monthly or weekly, respectively, compared to parents who never attend religious services ($1/[\exp(-1.01)] = 2.75$; $1/[\exp(-0.96)] = 2.61$), confirming H7. The interaction terms added in a subsequent step are not statistically significant. However, the main effects remain significant, indicating that the effect of religious attendance is only significant for men: the odds of considering ethnicity unimportant are respectively 5.36 and 3.49 times lower for men who attended religious services at least monthly or weekly than for men who never attended religious services ($1/[\exp(-1.68)] = 5.36$; $1/[\exp(-1.25)] = 3.49$). Contrary to H7, H5 and H6 cannot be confirmed as no other significant effects are found. Similarly, regarding the ethnicity of sons' partners, none of the predictors explained the differences in finding ethnicity unimportant.

Table 7.5 Univariate distributions of (in)dependent variables and binomial logistic regressions considering ethnicity unimportant

		Univariate distribution		Binomial regression models			
		Total sample		Considering ethnicity unimportant (partner of daughters)		Considering ethnicity unimportant (partner of sons)	
		<i>N</i>	%	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
Considering ethnicity unimportant (partner of daughters)	Not important	64	25.3				
	Important	189	74.7				
Considering ethnicity unimportant (partner of sons)	Not important	88	35.7				
	Important	163	64.3				
Intercept				-0.39 (0.86)	-0.06 (0.89)	0.33 (0.76)	0.56 (0.80)
Age				-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Sex							
	Woman	216	50.3	-0.46 (0.33)	-0.77 (0.40)	-0.23 (0.30)	-0.50 (0.41)
	Man	214	49.7				
Migration generation							
	First	142	33.0				
	Second	288	67.0	0.24 (0.34)	0.22 (0.34)	-0.45 (0.30)	-0.48 (0.31)
Educational attainment							
	Primary and lower secondary	176	41.3	0.31 (0.37)	0.24 (0.37)	-0.35 (0.33)	-0.40 (0.33)
	Higher secondary	202	47.4				
	Tertiary	48	11.2	0.70 (0.45)	0.67 (0.45)	-0.13 (0.43)	-0.16 (0.44)
Religious attendance							
	Never, or on special occasions	202	47.2				
	At least monthly	97	22.7	-1.01 (0.46)*	-1.68 (0.80)*	-0.61 (0.39)	-0.91 (0.62)
	At least weekly	129	30.1	-0.96 (0.38)**	-1.25 (0.47)**	-0.01 (0.33)	-0.27 (0.43)
Gender * religious attendance							
	Woman * at least monthly				1.09 (0.97)		0.47 (0.80)
	Woman * at least weekly				0.77 (0.79)		0.62 (0.66)
-2 Loglikelihood				263.57	261.74	315.64	314.69

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

7.6.2.3 Adolescent preferences

Our final research question concerns adolescents' preferences regarding their future partnerships (Q4). Sexpert respondents who are younger than 26 and unmarried were asked the same questions as "adult" respondents, with the understanding that the questions referred to their future partners ($N = 123$). The same approach was used to obtain six variables based on the following questions, asked separately of girls and boys: "How important is it to you that your future marriage partner is of Turkish descent and currently living in Turkey, of Turkish descent and currently living in Belgium, or of Belgian descent?" As with our analysis of parent preferences, we analyze adolescents' attitudes in three-way cross-tabs (see Table 7.6).

We conclude that only a small number of adolescents prefer a transnational partnership (considering native Belgian and local co-ethnic partners unimportant, a partner living in Turkey important), with only one girl preferring this partner type (1.64%). Similarly, we find no distinct preference for a mixed partnership (considering a partner living in Turkey and a local co-ethnic partner unimportant, a native Belgian important), with only one girl (1.64%) and one boy (1.64%) specifically preferring a native Belgian for a future partner. The only distinct preference observed was for a local co-ethnic partnership (considering a native Belgian partner and a partner living in Turkey unimportant, a local co-ethnic important). This confirms our hypothesis that attitudinal changes similar to those of parents are visible in adolescents, thus resulting in distinct preferences for local co-ethnics (H8). This preference is more pronounced among girls (42.62%) than among boys (16.13%), which was to be expected because the preference for ethnically homogeneous partnerships is more pronounced for girls than for boys, as indicated earlier.

Contrary to the previous multivariate analyses considering parental attitudes, we do not build multivariate models to assess which adolescents show more openness toward mixed partnerships, due to the small sample sizes. Exploratory analyses, however, show similar results to the analyses of parental attitudes — namely, the importance of religious attendance.

Table 7.6 Preferred future partner type of adolescents

Preferred future partner type of girls (N = 61, 100%)				
		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	3 (4.92%)	1 (1.64%)	26 (42.62%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	3 (4.92%)	5 (8.20%)
	Important	1 (1.64%)	0 (0.00%)	6 (9.84%)
In-between	Unimportant	0 (0.00%)	2 (3.28%)	5 (8.20%)
	In-between	1 (1.64%)	1 (1.64%)	1 (1.64%)
	Important	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Important	Unimportant	1 (1.64%)	1 (1.64%)	2 (3.28%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
	Important	1 (1.64%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.64%)

Preferred future partner type of boys (N = 62, 100%)				
		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	2 (3.23%)	1 (1.61%)	10 (16.13%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	2 (3.23%)	2 (3.23%)
	Important	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	7 (11.29%)
In-between	Unimportant	1 (1.61%)	3 (4.84%)	8 (12.90%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	4 (6.45%)	4 (6.45%)
	Important	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Important	Unimportant	1 (1.61%)	1 (1.61%)	7 (11.29%)
	In-between	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.61%)
	Important	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	8 (12.9%)

The shaded cells identify the most pronounced partner type preferences.

Transnational	Mixed	Local co-ethnic	Ethnic homogeneous
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7.7 Discussion

Turkish migrants' partner choices are changing rapidly in several European countries, after having been consistent for decades. Recent studies describe a decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships of Turkish migrants in the Netherlands (CBS, 2015; Loozen et al., 2012), Sweden (Carol et al., 2014), and Belgium (Lievens et al., 2013). This decline has been partially ascribed to recent policy changes implemented throughout Europe to discourage partner migration (Carol et al., 2014; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011) and other changes such as a higher prevalence of premarital relationships and declining parental involvement in children's partner choice (Huschek et al., 2012; Van Kerckem et al., 2013; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014; Wachter & de Valk, 2020). Authors describe the possible influence of decreasing parental involvement on the prevalence of transnational partnerships but overlook the preferences themselves for specific partner types. This article adds to the existing literature by focusing on these preferences, both of parents and of young people. Based on the recent literature, we hypothesize that parental involvement, although decreasing, is still important in the partner selection of young Turkish adolescents and that parents' attitudes are shifting away from a preference for a partner from the origin country (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Yalcin et al., 2006). This shift could also explain why a sharp decrease in the prevalence of transnational partnerships was observed in Belgium years before the implementation of stricter migration policies (Lievens et al., 2013).

Our results confirm a decline in the degree of parental involvement in partner selection over time (Milewski & Hamel, 2010; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014), as has been observed in Turkey as well (Baykara-Krumme, 2015). Nonetheless, parental involvement has not disappeared, as parents remain highly involved in the formation of a third of the partnerships in the most recent cohort, echoing earlier research (Baykara-Krumme, 2015; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Moreover, we find that high levels of parental involvement do not contradict freedom of choice. Parental involvement is inherent to the process and therefore generally well accepted and appreciated (Aybek, 2015; Loobuyck, 2005).

Furthermore, our analyses reveal that in 2013, parents' influence on the partner selection of their children favored local (co-ethnic) partners over transnational partners. This is a striking observation given that research from only two decades earlier reported a strong and pronounced preference for a partner from the origin

country (Callaerts, 1997; de Vries, 1987; Van der Hoek & Kret, 1992). This rapid attitudinal change undoubtedly is reflected in the recent decline in transnational partnerships, which is shaped by far more than a policy change in the direction of discouraging partner migration.

Several elements could be underlying this attitudinal shift. First, such a change may result from growing awareness of the possible risks associated with transnational partnerships, such as higher divorce rates and decreasing social support (Aybek et al., 2015; Eeckhaut et al., 2011; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Residents of Turkey could be motivated to marry a migrant primarily for the opportunity it provides to settle legally in a European country. Moreover, transnational partnerships formed by second-generation migrants are known to be less stable due to cultural differences (Eeckhaut et al., 2011). Since they are born and/or raised and educated in Belgium, their cultural frame of reference is a mixture of Belgian and Turkish cultures. Other reported complications and risks include poor language skills, unemployment and financial troubles, contradictory expectations, and social isolation of the marriage migrant (Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Second, transnational family networks may decrease in intensity, especially for the second generation, as the duration of stay and size of the ethnic minority group increase. This could reduce the strength of the emotional ties and sensitivity to kin obligations in Turkey (Straßburger, 2005), as well as the opportunity and ability to negotiate a transnational partnership (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huschek et al., 2012).

Besides the absence of a preference for transnational partners among parents in 2013, our analyses also show that an important proportion (25.3% for daughters and 35.7% for sons) of parents moved away from the religious norm of ethnic homogamy. These parents considered potential partners' ethnicity less important and, consequently, may show more openness to mixed partnerships. This is a remarkable observation, given the religious motivation of resistance toward mixed partnerships, especially of female Muslims (de Vries, 1987). This religious dimension, however, still is noticeable in two observations from our analyses. First, parents show more openness to mixed partnerships for sons than for daughters. Second, religious attendance is negatively associated with openness to mixed partnerships. Male migrants who never attended religious services were more likely to consider ethnicity unimportant concerning the partners of their daughters.

This study shows that the recent trends in partner selection of Turkish migrants can be understood as an attitudinal shift, which discloses much about the orientation of the Turkish ethnic minorities. Turkish migrants are becoming less oriented toward the origin country and more toward the local (ethnic) community. Furthermore, an openness to strengthening connections with the majority population — with regard to intimate relations—is found among a specific group. After being oriented toward the origin country for decades, the shift toward the local (ethnic) community is particularly relevant, as partner migration has recently been the focus of migration policies and public debates in several European countries (Jørgensen, 2013; Kraler, 2010; Schmidt, 2011; Van Kerckem et al., 2013; Wray, 2009). Marrying transnationally is believed to hinder the integration process (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Lichter et al., 2011; Surkyn & Reniers, 1996) because it is considered a sign of segregation, as migrants isolate themselves from the culture of destination and maintain their cultural praxis from the origin country (Berry, 1997; Ward et al., 2005). Otherwise, partnerships with local partners and native partners especially are seen as manifestations of integration and assimilation (Lieberson & Waters, 1988; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). A growing focus on the local community and majority population could contribute to a decrease in ethnic differences, improve social integration, and diminish cultural distance (Gordon, 1964).

With regard to the future, we assume the recent decline in transnational partnerships and increase in local co-ethnic partnerships will continue because of both parents' and adolescents' preference for (local) co-ethnic partnerships over transnational or mixed partnerships. Future research could obtain population data and analyze whether this trend continued to decline after 2008. Until now, emigration from Turkey was considered self-perpetuating, as the majority of both the first and second generations chose transnational partners. However, if the decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships continues, it could both influence the characteristics of Turkish immigration to Flanders—currently defined by family migration—and significantly alter the structure of the Turkish ethnic minority in Flanders.

Studying Turkish migrants in Flanders is the equivalent of studying one ethnic minority group in one federal state of a small country. Notwithstanding our sample's specificity, however, its relevance lies in the fact that we identify a trend in partner selection that is also present among both Turkish migrants in other

countries and Moroccan migrants in Belgium, as shown by Lievens et al. (2013). The Moroccan migrant group in Belgium is quite similar to the Turkish minority group in Flanders (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007; Carol et al., 2014; Huschek et al., 2012; Lievens et al., 2013). Our research, thus, provides greater insight into current partner selection decisions among a wide group of young adolescent migrants. Although partner selection decisions are key markers of entering adulthood and strongly related to choices in other domains of young adults' lives, relatively little is known about different aspects of these decisions among the second generation. Increasing our knowledge about partner selection choices and the factors that shape them, then, is important, as a growing proportion of young adults in Europe have a migrant background.

Of course, this study is not without limitations. First, the Sexpert dataset's sample size is rather small, limiting us to descriptive analyses and causing us to interpret the findings with caution. A larger and more representative dataset would enable us to test hypotheses in multivariate designs and reach more generalizable results. Second, we have considered possible explanations for the recent decline in transnational partnerships among Turkish migrants; however, the explanations still need verification using the appropriate analytical methods. Future research could use trend analyses to further test the various hypotheses. In spite of these limitations, our study adds to the existing literature by showing that there has been an attitudinal change among Turkish adolescents and parents regarding ideal partner types. This change is reflected in the recent decline in transnational partnerships, which is shaped by more than stricter migration policies as often described.

Chapter 8.

The experience of ethnic prejudice of Turkish ethnic minorities in Flanders: Does it affect parental preferences about partner selection?



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The aim of the present study is twofold. First, we evaluate to what extent Turkish ethnic minority members experience ethnic prejudice in the Flemish society. Experiencing ethnic prejudice could affect the orientation of minority members towards the majority group, their own (migrant) community and towards the country of origin (of their parents). Therefore, in the second part we assess the effect ethnic prejudice has on a specific type of interethnic social contact: partner selection. To what extent Turkish parents prefer a Turkish partner (living in Turkey) for their children, or do they show openness towards Belgian partners? We apply linear and multinomial logistic regression models on data retrieved from a representative survey in the Turkish ethnic minority in Flanders (n= 430). First, we find that ethnic prejudice is very common in the lives of Turkish minorities in Flanders. Men, respondents with a lower socioeconomic status, and partner migrants are especially at risk of experiencing prejudice. Second, we conclude that although the majority of the parents prefers ethnically homogeneous partnerships, openness towards mixed is found among more than 25 percent of the parents. Experiencing ethnic prejudice and having a lower educational attainment lowers that likelihood of being open towards mixed partnerships with Belgian partners.

⁵² Some small stylistic adjustments are made to increase the consistency of this dissertation

8.1 Introduction

Research confirms the presence of strong social divisions between the Flemish majority population and Turkish ethnic minorities based on education attainment, and socioeconomic and occupational status (Phalet & Gijssberts, 2007; Phalet & Heath, 2011; Timmerman et al., 2003). These divisions, which are often to the disadvantage of minority groups, can be caused by discrimination and unequal distribution of opportunities. Discrimination has frequently been studied by focusing on the majority perspective (see, for example: (Billiet, Carton, & Huys, 1990; Coenders, Lubbers, Scheepers, & Verkuyten, 2008; Zagefka, Brown, Broquard, & Martin, 2007). However, while understanding who discriminates against whom, and why, is important, it is also critical to assess how minorities experience interethnic social contact with the majority group. Therefore, in this article we focus on the perspective of a specific minority group. We consider how Turkish ethnic minorities experience social interaction with the Flemish majority population by focusing on their experience of ethnic prejudice. Most research views the Turkish minority as a homogenous group (Alanya, Swyngedouw, Vandezande, & Phalet, 2017). Therefore, we also add to existing research by differentiating that minority group according to age, sex, duration of stay, educational attainment, and income.

When considering a specific minority group, assessing experiences of ethnic prejudice can be valuable. Moreover, it can be useful in understanding social interactions between minority and majority groups. The extent to which interethnic contact exists and the context in which it originates are determined by intergroup attitudes, in which individuals' experiences of ethnic prejudice could play an important role. Additionally, experiencing ethnic prejudice could affect the extent to which minority members are orientated toward their own (migrant) community or toward the country of origin (of their parents).

Parental preferences about the selection of a partner for their children are a type of social interaction we associate with ethnic prejudice. Do parents have a distinct preference for a co-ethnic partnership, and if so, do they prefer a co-ethnic partner living in Turkey or in Belgium? Is there openness to interethnic partnerships? And to what extent are these preferences affected by experiences of ethnic prejudice? These questions are answered in the second part of this article.

8.2 Three waves of Turkish immigration to Belgium

Turkish immigration to Belgium and Flanders started in the early 1960s because of a booming economy and the consequent shortage of laborers. In 1962, the first bilateral agreements arranged for the immigration of predominately male guest workers to Belgium (Atalik & Beeley, 1993). This first wave of labor immigration ended in 1974 when European governments initiated a moratorium as economies underwent a post-industrial transition, and additional low-skill laborers became unnecessary (Khojinian, 2006). Although it was initially assumed that Turkish guest workers' stay would be temporary, the labor migration evolved into a permanent settlement and became the foundation of the second wave of immigration through family reunification. Male laborers, 75 percent of whom were already married (Reniers, 1999), continued to reunite with their families during the 1970s. European governments expected that migration would then dwindle quickly, since the number of family members staying behind would eventually diminish. However, immigration has continued unabated since the early 1980s. This third wave consists mainly of people arriving from Turkey as newlywed partners of Turkish migrants living in Belgium (Lievens, 1999a).

8.3 Ethnic prejudice

To understand how ethnic prejudice directed at ethnic minorities may begin among majority groups—and vice versa—we focus on one of the main mechanisms of intergroup contact: social categorization. Social categorization explains how people cognitively categorize others and process group differences. This classification implies a distinction between in- and out-groups. Research conducted by Tajfel and Turner (1986) shows that individuals distinguish themselves from others by looking for group differences. Because people need to create and maintain a positive self-image, which is partially based on group memberships, they tend to evaluate the in-group as positively as possible. Viewing the in-group favorably could be a strategy for maintaining their own positive perception of their group. How strong the association between viewing the in-group favorably and evaluating out-groups negatively is depends on the extent to which individuals identify themselves with their in-group and on the competition between different groups.

In this article, we discuss ethnic prejudice from the perspective of the minority group, and verify to what extent they experience ethnic prejudice in their daily lives. Literature considering this minority point of view is scarce. A recent study that was conducted in two Belgian cities (Antwerp and Brussels) concludes that almost 30 percent of the respondents of Turkish descent experience personal discrimination sometimes or often (Alanya et al., 2017). More than 30 percent of these respondents claim the discrimination was based on their ethnicity. Additionally, more than 60 percent stated that people of Turkish descent are frequently treated unfairly or with hostility because of their ethnic origin. In the following section, we discuss which group is more at risk of experiencing ethnic prejudice.

8.4 Experiencing ethnic prejudice: Correlates

First, we expect that men experience more ethnic prejudice than women (H1) (Alanya et al., 2017). The risk of experiencing prejudice is less for women as they mainly interact with their own ethnic community and participate less in society (Jacobs, Phalet, & Swyngedouw, 2004). Minority members with a higher socioeconomic status also report more ethnic prejudice (De Vroome, Martinovic, & Verkuyten, 2014; van Doorn, Scheepers, & Dagevos, 2013). This integration paradox indicates that minority members with a higher socioeconomic status feel less accepted by the majority group, even though they may experience better structural integration. Two factors explain this paradox: increased exposure and increased awareness. Regarding increased exposure, Van Doorn et al. (2013) note that minority members with a higher socioeconomic status could experience more ethnic prejudice because they generally have more interethnic contact with the majority group. Based on the reference group theory (R. Merton, 1968), the integration paradox can also be explained by an increased awareness of discrimination (Salentin, 2007). This increased awareness exists because minority members with a higher socioeconomic status consider the majority group as their reference group instead of their own ethnic group. The fact that better (structural) integration does not necessarily lead to equal treatment by the majority group can cause feelings of relative deprivation and discrimination (Buijs, Demant, & Hamdy, 2006; Entzinger, 2008). Hence, we expect ethnic minority members with higher education (H2) or higher income (H3) to experience more ethnic prejudice than members with lower education or lower income.

Furthermore, we expect that ethnic minority members with a shorter duration of stay experience more ethnic prejudice than members with a longer stay or than those born in Belgium (H4). For example, a longer socialization period in Belgian society could potentially reduce cultural distance from the majority group (Scheepers et al., 2002) as ethnic identity decreases and language proficiency increases. Less cultural distance between different ethnic groups could have a positive effect on the prevalence of discrimination and ethnic prejudice (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Additionally, religious practices and affiliation could be important factors in understanding experiences of ethnic prejudice.⁵³ However, religious affiliation is not included in our study because of its limited variance (94.4% of this group is Muslim). Furthermore, Islam holds gender-specific expectations concerning religious practice (Van Tubergen & Maas, 2007) that can only be modelled correctly by including interaction terms between gender and religious practice. This is not possible because of small sample sizes used in this study.

8.5 Recent trends in partner selection

After analyzing population data, Lievens et al. (2013) describe a recent evolution in the partner selection of Turkish ethnic minorities in Flanders. The prevalence of transnational partnerships (in which one partner lives in Belgium and the other migrates from Turkey) decreased significantly between 2001 and 2008 (for men and women, from 52.9% and 57.3% to 33.8% and 38.4%, respectively). However, the prevalence of local co-ethnic partnerships increased for both men and women from around 40 percent in 2001 to approximately 60 percent in 2008. Hence, for the first time, this partner type is the most popular partner choice among Turkish minorities in Flanders. The number of interethnic partnerships also increased—although this partner type remains the least preferred—from 1.5 percent to 2.9 percent for women and from 3.1 percent to 6.3 percent for men.

Despite a similar trend in Germany and the Netherlands (Carol et al., 2014; Huschek et al., 2012), knowledge about the underlying mechanisms is still sparse. It has partially been ascribed to the implementation of recent policy changes establishing a minimum age, and age, income, language and housing

⁵³ Generally, religious people have a strong ethnic identity that increases the cultural distance from other ethnic groups, especially when these groups have other religious beliefs (Scheepers et al., 2002; Verkuyten, 2008). Next to ethnicity, ethnic affiliation is one of the most important differences between Turkish ethnic minorities and the majority population (Alba, 2005).

requirements for partner migration. They have been implemented throughout Western Europe in an attempt to reduce immigration in general and transnational partnerships in particular. Migration policies hindering transnational partnerships clearly influence the prevalence of this partner type (Carol et al., 2014; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011); however, we cannot dismiss the possibility that attitudinal and behavioral changes could contribute to this decline as well. This could be especially relevant in Belgium (and Flanders), because almost a decade after this decline, Belgian migration policies have become stricter (Lievens et al., 2013). Van Kerckem et al.'s (2013) research provides clarification through a qualitative analysis of Turkish Belgians' attitudes concerning partner selection. They suggest that adolescents tend to prefer local co-ethnic partners because they recognize the risks and downsides of transnational partnerships, and evaluate the dependence of newly immigrated partners negatively. The possibility of premarital relationships and lower levels of parental involvement could also contribute to the decline in transnational partnerships.

In this article we assess parental attitudes on the partner selection of their children. Literature states that transnational partnerships could be declining partially because today parents are less involved in the partner selection of their children. Parents often have a stronger preference for transnational partnerships than their children do. Hence, when parental involvement decreases, partnerships that are romantic matches increase and have a higher chance of occurring in the local ethnic community instead of in the country of origin. However, parental influence remains relevant despite this increasing autonomy because the partner selection process has evolved from being initiated by parents and family to being initiated by the partners with parental consent (Hooghiemstra, 2003). Parental approval continues to be an important and widely accepted condition to getting married. Furthermore, literature attributing the decline in transnational partnerships to changes in parental involvement discusses the extent of the influence but omits specific partner type preferences (for example, see (Huschek et al., 2012; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). Finally, decreased parental involvement does not necessarily lead to fewer transnational partnerships, as the prevalence of this partner type is the result of a match between the interests and objectives of all parties involved, parents as well as the future partners (Reniers & Lievens, 1997) .

8.6 Parental preferences about partner selection

Qualitative and anthropological studies from the late 1980s and early 1990s illustrate distinct preferences for transnational partnerships among parents of Turkish descent (Callaerts, 1997; de Vries, 1987; Holzhaus, 1991). This orientation toward the country of origin can be explained by several factors. First, parents often have strong ties to their families in Turkey through transnational networks. These ties are characterized by high levels of solidarity and by pressure or a sense of obligation to help family members who have stayed behind (Sterckx & Bouw, 2005; Timmerman et al., 2009). Choosing a transnational partnership can also provide a way to maintain and strengthen these transnational networks. Second, parents who belong to the first migration generation find themselves living in an unfamiliar society and culture, which can lead to a stronger preference for transnational partnerships as they strive to hold on to their traditions, customs, and ethnic identity (Timmerman, 2006). Third, parents generally believe partners from their home country are more eligible—that they have the same norms and values and are a better cultural fit—in comparison to local co-ethnics who may have a bad reputation and may not be considered appropriate partners (Callaerts, 1997; Sterckx & Bouw, 2005). Notably, several studies indicate that parents, as well as their children, have an idealized image of partners from their home country and attribute characteristics to them that they miss among local co-ethnics (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Timmerman, 2006).

However, qualitative research from the mid-2000s did not report any explicit preference for partners from the country of origin. Both minority members in a transnational partnership and individuals who have migrated as newlyweds are cautious about recommending transnational partnerships because of the brief amount of time partners have to get to know each other beforehand and the difficulties encountered during the partnership (Descheemaeker et al., 2009; Yalcin et al., 2006). Transnational partnerships have often been idealized because the partners have the same religion, values, as well as having similar ethnic-cultural identities (Descheemaeker et al., 2009). However, parents and adolescents sometimes change their minds about this partner type after witnessing relationship difficulties in transnational partnerships. Additionally, while the importance of partners having the same religion and ethnicity is apparent, no distinct preference for a partner from Turkey is reported. This may signify an

evolution in the attitudes of minority members regarding transnational partnerships (Huschek et al., 2012).

There are several possible explanations for an attitudinal change regarding ideal partner types. First, it may indicate a growing awareness of the potential risks associated with certain partner types. For example, a higher divorce rate associated with transnational partnerships could result in decreased social support for this partner type (Eeckhaut et al., 2011; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Moreover, some residents of Turkey might be motivated to marry a co-ethnic living in Flanders primarily for the migration opportunity and the possibility of settling legally in the host country. Furthermore, transnational partnerships involving second-generation minority members are known to be less stable because of cultural differences. Since they are born and/or raised and educated in Belgium, their cultural frame of reference is a mixture of both Belgian and Turkish cultural elements. Additional examples of reported complications and risks are language skills, unemployment and financial troubles, contradictory expectations, and social isolation. Second, transnational family networks may decrease in intensity, especially for second-generation migrants, as the duration of stay and the ethnic minority group size increases. This could reduce the strength of emotional ties and sensitivity to kin obligations as well as the opportunity and ability to negotiate a transnational partnership (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huschek et al., 2012). More openness to partnerships with local partners could also be a result of the upward educational and occupational mobility of minority members, as better socioeconomic integration is associated with more exposure to Western partner selection dynamics (Martinović, 2013). Therefore, autonomy in partner choice (Huschek et al., 2012) and achieved, rather than ascribed, characteristics may become more important in partner selection. For example, this shift could lead to homogamy based on education rather than ethnicity.

8.7 Does experiencing ethnic prejudice affect preferences about partner selection?

Psychological literature shows that the intergroup attitudes of ethnic minorities are strongly influenced by ethnic prejudice (Livingston et al., 2004; Monteith & Spicer, 2000). Minority members experiencing ethnic prejudice or discrimination are more likely to evaluate members of the discriminating group negatively (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Hence, we expect that minority members who experience

ethnic prejudice will more often prefer an ethnically homogeneous partnership and be less open to an interethnic partnership with a partner of Belgian descent (H5). Experiencing ethnic prejudice could affect preferences in partner selection because of the following mechanisms: the rejection identification model or the rejection dis-identification model. The rejection identification model, developed by Branscome and colleagues (1999), states that experiencing ethnic prejudice creates the perception of a threat to the in-group, leading to greater identification with the in-group and to negative attitudes toward the discriminating out-group, which can reinforce ethnic boundaries (Dion, 2000). Additionally, unfair treatment based on ethnic or religious characteristics can strengthen ethnic and/or religious identity (Connor, 2010) and may result in stronger adherence to prevailing religious norms that advocate a pattern of ethnic homogamy in the partner selection of Turkish minorities (Hooghiemstra, 2001).

The rejection dis-identification model states that experiencing discrimination on the grounds of group differences not so much leads to a strong identification with the in-group, as suggested by the rejection identification model, as it leads to a stronger dis-identification with the discriminating out-group (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009). Dissociating from the discriminating outgroup can reinforce group boundaries and be a coping mechanism to deal with the negative consequences of discrimination, such as low self-esteem (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009).

8.8 Methods

8.8.1 Data

A subsample of the Sexpert survey was used as the data source. The survey consists of detailed, extensive data on the sexual health of Turkish ethnic minority members in Flanders and on the bio-medical, psychological, and sociocultural correlates. Between February 2012 and February 2013, bilingual Dutch-Turkish interviewers belonging to the Turkish ethnic community conducted face-to-face interviews using a combination of CAPI (Computer-assisted personal interviewing) and CASI (Computer-assisted self-interviewing). Detailed study design and recruitment information have been previously described (Buysse et al., 2013). Data were gathered in a population-based probability sample established in two stages. The first stage included the selection of primary sampling units, or the Flemish municipalities ($N = 18$). By ordering and systematic sampling, the chance of a

municipality being selected was proportional to the number of inhabitants meeting the eligibility criteria (14–59 years of age, of Belgian nationality, and with at least one parent born with Turkish nationality). In the second stage, respondents were selected randomly from the Belgian National Register. The final data sample consists of 430 respondents (response rate of 57%). Data were weighted by gender and age to make them representative of the population of Flemish residents of Turkish descent, aged 14–59. Finally, respondents were asked to choose between a Dutch and a Turkish questionnaire (translated by independent translators); 36.4 percent answered in Turkish.

8.8.2 Operationalization

8.8.2.1 Dependent variables

The extent to which Turkish minorities experience ethnic prejudice was measured by 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (completely). Different dimensions within the experience of ethnic prejudice were discovered using a factor analysis with oblimin rotation (Table 8.1). Two items were excluded from the factor analysis because their loadings did not discriminate between factors. The final model shows two factors: one concerning “the experience of ethnic prejudice,” explaining 26.85 percent of the variance; and one assessing “the influence of ethnic prejudice,” explaining 21.44 percent of the variance. Items with a higher (> 0.45) loading on one of the factors are indicated in bold and are included in the construction of two sum scales, both rescaled from 1 to 5. A high score on the scale that measures the experience of ethnic prejudice indicates more frequent exposure to prejudice. The items on the scale assessing the influence of ethnic prejudice were rescaled so that a higher score indicates a larger degree of influence. Furthermore, both scales have a medium internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.60 and 0.58, respectively.

**Table 8.1. Structure matrix “experiencing ethnic prejudice”
Results of a principle factor analysis with oblimin rotation**

	Factor 1 Experiencing ethnic prejudice	Factor 2 Influence of ethnic prejudice
Ethnic prejudice concerning people of Turkish descent does not affect me personally	0.054	0.507
I never worry that my behavior could be interpreted as typical of someone of Turkish descent	0.137	0.576
When I interact with natives, I feel like my behavior is interpreted as typical for someone of Turkish descent	0.478	0.100
My ethnicity does not affect my interaction with natives	0.083	0.560
When I interact with natives, I almost never think about the fact that I'm of Turkish descent	0.075	0.526
My ethnicity affects how people treat me	0.478	0.259
Most natives experience more fear and aversion toward people of Turkish descent than they admit	0.675	0.132
Most natives have trouble considering people of Turkish descent as equals	0.599	-0.073
Explained variance	26.85%	21.44%

Six variables were used as indicators of parental preferences concerning their child(ren)'s future partner type, and all were measured on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important). The variables were obtained using the following questions, asked separately for male and female children: "How important is it to you that the future marriage partner of your child is either (a) of Turkish descent and currently living in Turkey, (b) of Turkish descent and currently living in Belgium, or (c) of Belgian descent?" All respondents older than 25, or younger and already married, were asked these questions ($N = 305$) because they were assumed able to answer questions concerning their children. If respondents were childless ($N = 173$), they were asked to imagine which partner

type they would want for their children if they had any⁵⁴. These six variables have been recoded from the 5-point scale into three categories: 1 (unimportant), 2 (in between), and 3 (important).

We chose to analyze these parental preferences in three-way crosstabs, as this enabled us to better differentiate distinct preferences concerning different partner types (Table 8.2). We discerned three different partner types: a transnational partnership, an interethnic partnership with a native Belgian, and a partnership with a local co-ethnic. These different partner types are indicated in the shaded cells. Although they are not found exclusively in the shaded cells, we believe that they are the most pronounced here. The crosstabs indicate that only a small percentage of the respondents have a distinct preference for one of the three partner types. For example, less than 2 percent of the parents prefer a transnational partner (preference of parents concerning a daughter's partner and a son's partner was 0.78% and 1.99%, respectively). Similar numbers were found for interethnic partnerships.

Additionally, this table shows that parents find ethnicity an important element in the partner selection of their children, whether or not they show openness to interethnic partnerships. We created⁵⁵ two trichotomic variables based on this three-way crosstab: one concerning the partner of daughters and one concerning the partner of sons. We made a distinction between parents who have a specific preference for an ethnically homogeneous partnership (regardless of the country of residence of the partner) but are less open to interethnic partnerships (1), and parents who show openness to a partner of Belgian descent without excluding a homogeneous partnership (2). The third category consisted of parents who cannot be classified in the previous categories because their preferences are not clear-cut (3).

Table 8.2 shows the operationalization of these trichotomic variables. A "1" indicates parents with a distinct preference for ethnically homogeneous partnerships and less openness to interethnic partnerships. They find a partner of Turkish descent (living in Turkey and/or living in Belgium) to be important, and a

⁵⁴ We find no differences between the preferences of respondents with children and of those talking about hypothetical children.

⁵⁵ The robustness of this operationalization was controlled by a latent class analysis in Latent Gold. This analysis showed similar results and is available upon request.

partner of Belgian descent unimportant or in between. A "2" indicates parents that do show openness to interethnic partnerships without excluding a homogeneous partnership. These respondents find a partner of Belgian descent important, regardless of their answers on the other two items concerning a partner of Turkish descent. Additionally, respondents who find the choice of a Belgian partner to be of in-between importance and a partner of Turkish descent (item 1 and 2) to be unimportant are included in this category, together with respondents who do not consider ethnicity of any importance regarding the partner selection of their children (they answered unimportant on all three items). In this third category, a "3" indicates parents that have no distinct preference regarding the ethnicity (Turkish or Belgian) of the future partner of their child.

Table 8.2 Univariate distribution parental attitudes regarding three partner types, and the operationalization of dependent variable:

“Parental attitudes regarding the ethnicity of future marriage partners of daughters and sons”

		Turkish decent, living in Belgium		
Belgian descent	Turkish descent, living in Turkey	Unimportant	In between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	8.63%	0.78%	19.61%
		6.77%	1.20%	12.75%
		2	3	1
Unimportant	In between	0.39%	10.59%	5.88%
		0.00%	7.17%	4.38%
		3	3	1
Unimportant	Important	0.7%	0.39%	18.04%
		1.99%	0.40%	11.95%
		1	1	1
In between	Unimportant	2.35%	1.18%	5.49%
		0.40%	0.40%	6.37%
		2	3	1
In between	In between	0.00%	5.88%	2.35%
		0.00%	8.37%	3.59%
		3	3	1
In between	Important	0.00%	0.00%	3.92%
		0.00%	0.00%	6.37%
		1	1	1
Important	Unimportant	1.57%	0.00%	2.35%
		1.20%	0.00%	5.58%
		2	2	2
Important	In between	0.78%	0.39%	1.96%
		0.00%	1.59%	3.98%
		2	2	2
Important	Important	0.00%	0.39%	6.27%
		0.00%	0.00%	15.54%
		2	2	2

Per cell in order of appearance:

- Preference of parents concerning partner choice of daughters
- Preference of parents concerning partner choice of sons
- Operationalization of the dependent variable “parental attitudes”

Strongest preferences shown in shaded cells:

Local co-ethnic partnership Transnational partnership Interethnic partnership

NOTE: 1 = ethnic homogamy is important, regardless of residence, 2 = openness to interethnic partnerships; 3 = no distinct preference

8.8.2.2 Predictors

Sex and having children were operationalized as dummy variables (male/female and no/yes). Age was based on the year of birth and separated into five categories: –18, 18–29, 30–39, 40–49 and 50–59.

Because the socialization process has an important influence on the development of attitudes and values, we chose to operationalize duration of stay based on the socialization process stage at the time of migration. A distinction was made between first-generation minority members who are almost exclusively socialized in a Turkish context (migrated at age 15 or older) and second-generation respondents who are mostly socialized in a Belgian context (migrated before 15 or born in Belgium). Within the first generation, we made an additional distinction between respondents who migrated in a partner migration context (54.20%) or for other reasons. The most important motives to emigrate besides partner migration were family reunion (32.39%), work (4.93%), and education (3.52%).

Based on the highest diploma obtained (regardless of where it was obtained), educational attainment was measured according to three categories: primary school and lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary education. Income was operationalized based on a subjective evaluation of the extent to which respondents felt they were able to maintain financial stability (easy, normal, or difficult).

8.8.3 Analyses

First, we assessed the extent to which ethnic minority members encounter ethnic prejudice using bivariate (ANOVA) and multivariate (linear regression) techniques. Second, we assessed whether experiencing ethnic prejudice influences parental preferences regarding the ethnicity of the future marriage partner of their children. After bivariate analyses, the net effect of ethnic prejudice was tested in multinomial logistic regression models that included the first category (finding ethnic homogamy important and being less open to interethnic partnerships) as the reference category.

8.9 Results

8.9.1 Ethnic prejudice

The first part of Table 8.3 shows the univariate distribution of the predictors. Regarding the two dependent variables, we note a high average score on the scale concerning the experience of ethnic prejudice: 3.43 (0.81) out of 5. The mean of the second scale indicates that respondents are less influenced by ethnic prejudice, although the difference is small: 2.90 (0.76) out of 5.

The bivariate analyses shown in the second part of Table 8.3 indicate which respondents encounter ethnic prejudice more frequently than others do. Men experience more ethnic prejudice than women do; similarly, respondents who have difficulty maintaining financial stability experience more prejudice compared to respondents with a normal or a high income. In the multinomial logistic regression model (see Table 8.3, Model 1), both effects remain significant: women experience less ethnic prejudice than men ($b = -0.29$; $p = 0.000$) (H1 confirmed), and respondents who have difficulty maintaining financial stability experience more ethnic prejudice than respondents with a normal income ($b = 0.30$; $p = 0.001$) (contrary to H3).

When considering the second scale, we find a similar association with income: respondents who have difficulty maintaining financial stability are more influenced by ethnic prejudice. An additional association is found concerning the duration of stay: partner migrants are generally more influenced by ethnic prejudice than minority members of the second generation are. Only the latter association remains in the multivariate model ($b = 0.29$; $p = 0.017$) (H4 confirmed). Finally, the effect of educational attainment is not significant in either of the two models, making it impossible to confirm the second hypothesis (H2).

	Difficult	163	38.1	3.66 (0.83)#^	0.30 (0.09)***	3.00 (0.73)^	0.04 (0.09)
	Normal	182	42.5	3.34 (0.79)#		2.91 (0.73)	
	Easy	83	19.5	3.19 (0.71)^	-0.20 (0.11)	2.74 (0.85)^	-0.15 (0.10)
Sex				Mean (SD)	T (df)	Mean (SD)	T (df)
					3.72 (402)***		1.00 (389)
	Female	216	50.3	3.28 (0.06)	-0.29 (0.08)***	2.94 (0.76)	0.04 (0.08)
	Male	214	49.7	3.58 (0.05)		2.87 (0.76)	
R²					0.10		0.06

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

^ significant difference ($p \leq 0.05$: Bonferroni post hoc test)

8.9.2 Parental preferences regarding partner selection

The second part of this article assesses parental preferences to provide further insight into the recent trends in the partner selections Turkish ethnic minority members make. The univariate distribution (Table 8.4) indicates that the majority of parents prefers an ethnically homogeneous partnership (regardless of the country of residence of the partner) and shows little openness to interethnic partnerships: 56.7 percent regarding partner choice of daughters, 48.2 percent regarding the partner choice of sons. Nevertheless, more than 25 percent of the respondents are open to partners of Belgian descent: 25.4 percent are open regarding daughters' partners and 36.2 percent are open regarding sons' partners. Finally, a small percentage of parents—17.9 percent regarding daughters' partners and 15.6 percent regarding sons' partners—do not demonstrate any distinct preference regarding the ethnicity of future marriage partners.

Table 8.4 Univariate distribution of parental preferences according to the ethnicity of future marriage partners of daughters and sons

	Preferences regarding ethnicity of daughters' partners		Preferences regarding ethnicity of sons' partners	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Openness to interethnic partnerships	64	25.4	91	36.2
No distinct preference	45	17.9	39	15.6
Ethnic homogamy important, regardless of residence	142	56.7	121	48.2
Total	251	100	251	100

In Table 8.5, the multivariate models assess the effect of ethnic prejudice on parental preferences regarding ethnicity. As there is no bivariate association between parental preferences and the scale concerning the experience of ethnic prejudice (see the first part of Table 8.5), only the second scale that considers the influence of ethnic prejudice is included in the multivariate model. Besides the effect of ethnic prejudice, we control for the effects of sex, age, duration of stay, educational attainment, and having children. This model (see the second part of Table 8.5) is built twice: once to consider daughters' choice of partners and again to consider sons' choice of partners. The dependent variables have three

categories; therefore, we use multinomial logistic regression and choose the first category (a preference for ethnic homogamy and less openness to interethnic partnerships) as the reference category.

We first discuss the model concerning the partner of daughters, which compares parents who are open to interethnic partnerships to parents who prefer ethnic homogamy. Compared to minority members in the 18–29 age group ($b = 1.35$; $p = 0.014$), respondents in the oldest age group (50–59) are less likely to be open to interethnic partnerships. Furthermore, compared to minority members with a higher secondary degree ($b = 1.61$; $p = 0.003$), parents with a higher level of education are more likely to be open to interethnic partnerships. Finally, parents who are more likely to have been influenced by ethnic prejudice are less likely to be open to interethnic partnerships ($b = -0.74$; $p = 0.002$) (H5 confirmed).

Second, we compare parents with no distinct preference regarding ethnicity to parents preferring ethnic homogamy. Compared to parents with a higher secondary degree, parents with a higher level of education are more likely to have no distinct preference concerning the ethnicity of the future marriage partner of a daughter ($b = 1.32$; $p = 0.017$).

Similar analyses are performed concerning the partners of sons, yet only one significant effect can be reported: parents who are more influenced by ethnic prejudice are less likely to be open to interethnic partnerships ($b = 0.56$; $p = 0.011$) (H5 confirmed).

Table 8.5 Bivariate (χ^2 and F Tests) and multivariate (multinomial logistic regression) association with parental preferences according to the ethnicity of future marriage partners of daughters and sons

	Parental preferences concerning the partners of daughters			Parental preferences concerning the partners of sons		
	Bivariate analysis	Multinomial regression b (SE)		Bivariate analysis	Multinomial regression b (SE)	
	χ^2	Openness to interethnic partnerships	No distinct preference	χ^2	Openness to interethnic partnerships	No distinct preference
Intercept		1.45 (0.80)	-1.05 (1.00)		1.44 (0.78)	-0.27 (1.05)
Sex	0.44			2.35		
Female		0.02 (0.35)	0.16 (0.41)		-0.21 (0.32)	0.35 (0.45)
Male						
Duration of stay	2.97			1.91		
First generation-partner migrant		-0.41 (0.47)	-0.06 (0.51)		0.16 (0.40)	0.01 (0.54)
First generation		-0.32 (0.47)	0.32 (0.52)		0.47 (0.42)	0.19 (0.63)
Second generation						
Educational attainment	12.24*			7.96		
Primary education-lower secondary		0.45 (0.40)	-0.57 (0.49)		-0.12 (0.36)	-0.79 (0.52)
Higher secondary						
Higher education		1.61 (0.54)**	1.32 (0.55)*	9.92	0.60 (0.52)	1.00 (0.59)
Age	12.25					
18-29						
30-39		-0.89 (0.65)	-0.39 (0.79)		-0.68 (0.60)	-1.23 (1.02)
40-49		-0.65 (0.45)	-0.45 (0.55)		-0.12 (0.44)	-0.61 (0.58)
50-59		-1.35 (0.55)**	-0.40 (0.61)		-0.76 (0.52)	0.02 (0.61)
Having children	4.38			4.58		
Yes						
No		0.68 (0.37)	-0.48 (0.42)		0.38 (0.34)	-0.56 (0.46)

	F (df)			F (df)		
Influence of ethnic prejudice	4.88 (2)**	-0.74 (0.24)**	0.11 (0.27)	3.28 (2)*	-0.56 (0.22)**	-0.14 (0.29)
	Mean (SD)			Mean (SD)		
Openness	2.73 (0.80)^			2.84 (0.74)^		
No distinct preference	3.08 (0.73)			2.98 (0.75)		
Ethnic homogeneity	3.08 (0.72)^			3.11 (0.72)^		
Experiencing ethnic prejudice	0.44 (2.00)			1.23 (2.00)		
Nagelkerke R²		0.19			0.15	

Reference category multinomial logistic regression: importance of ethnic homogeneity, regardless of residence

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

^ significant difference ($p \leq 0.05$: Bonferroni post hoc test)

8.10 Discussion

This article assesses interethnic social contact between the native Flemish population and Turkish minorities, with a focus on the latter's perspective. First, we evaluate the extent to which minority members experience ethnic prejudice, and study the effect of sociodemographic characteristics. Second, we focus on attitudes concerning a specific type of interethnic social contact: partner selection. We assess what effect experiencing ethnic prejudice has on parental preferences about the ethnicity of their children's future partners.

The first part show a strong presence and influence of ethnic prejudice in the daily lives of Turkish ethnic minority members. Especially, men, migrants with lower socio-economic attainment and partner migrants are more likely to report ethnic prejudice. This confirms the results of earlier research showing that men of Turkish descent are more stigmatized than women (Alanya et al., 2017). Partner migrants could be at risk of experiencing ethnic prejudice because they are (mainly) socialized and educated in Turkey, possibly resulting in a lower level of language proficiency, a more homogeneous social network, and a stronger orientation toward country of origin (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Hence, the cultural and social distances from the majority group they experience could be greater than that of second-generation migrants (Scheepers et al., 2002). Additionally, partner

migrants could also feel more influenced by ethnic prejudice because of the stigma that is attached to this partner type, both in public opinion (Van Kerckem et al., 2013) and among policy makers (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). Second, the existence of an integration paradox is not confirmed, as respondents who have more difficulty in maintaining financial stability report more experiences of ethnic prejudice. Tajfel and Turner (1986) note that social stratification affects social interaction between groups. Compared to minority members whose socioeconomic status is similar to the majority group, minority members that have lower socioeconomic status can experience more ethnic prejudice. Hence, social mobility can partially protect minorities from experiencing ethnic prejudice. This does not, however, mean that higher status minority members are spared from experiencing discrimination and ethnic prejudice (Voas & Fleischmann, 2012).

To conclude the first part, the Flemish society is characterized by strong symbolic boundaries between ethnic groups, even after more than 50 years of Turkish immigration. Hence, research into both experiencing ethnic prejudice and understanding differences in experiences remains relevant. Especially as the adverse consequences of experiencing ethnic prejudice are irrefutable, and our results show that the more vulnerable minority members are also more at risk. First of all, experiencing ethnic prejudice can be a major setback to the integration of the minority members because it plays an important role in their adaptation to the receiving society and makes the rejection of interaction with the majority population more likely (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Additionally, Groenewold and De Valk (2017) show that perceived discrimination among Turkish migrants in several countries, is correlated with higher migration intentions and more transnational behavior. Secondly, research also notes adverse consequences for health and mental well-being (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Experiencing ethnic prejudice can reduce the personal self-esteem, the sense of autonomy and self-acceptance. Feelings of not belonging may lead to social exclusion or even radicalization (Maxwell, 2014). These adverse consequences are highly relevant to policy makers and scientific researchers, as migration and integration (of Muslim minorities) are high on the political agenda and popular in the public debate.

When discussing the results of cross-sectional data, we need to consider the complex correlation patterns between different concepts. For example, having a lower socioeconomic status could lead to experiencing ethnic prejudice more

frequently. However, experiencing ethnic prejudice could also lead to a lower socioeconomic status because social mobility opportunities are fewer (Heath & Li, 2007). The use of structural equation modelling or longitudinal data in future research could give more insight into the complex correlation patterns. Our results primarily show who is more at risk of experiencing ethnic prejudice without clarifying the causal relationships between the concepts. In addition, future research could focus on the intersection between several sociodemographic characteristics (for example gender and socio-economic attainment) in their influence on experiencing ethnic prejudice, and by doing so, identify possible buffering effects to the adverse consequences of ethnic prejudice.

The second part of this article focuses on parental attitudes toward a specific form of interethnic social contact: partner selection. The results confirm an absence of parental preferences for transnational partnerships, as has been described in earlier research (Descheemaeker et al., 2009). Primarily, we see that although the majority of the parents prefers ethnically homogenous partnerships, openness towards mixed is found among more than 25 percent of the parents. When assessing the differences between parents with and without openness to interethnic partnerships, the parents' educational attainment and ethnic prejudice appear to be important predictors.

First, educational attainment clearly affects parental preferences concerning daughters' partnerships: higher educated minority members are more likely to be open to their daughters forming interethnic partnerships. Higher educated persons are less likely to view partner selection according to traditional norms and values (Huschek et al., 2012), and higher educational attainment is also believed to weaken attachments to the community of origin and to also diminish cultural barriers against ethnic heterogeneous partnerships (Hwang et al., 1997). An absence of this educational effect, or any other effect, when analyzing parental preferences concerning partner types for sons could be the consequence of specific gender dynamics in the partner selection process of Turkish minorities. Parents' preference for ethnically homogenous partnerships is stronger regarding daughters than it is regarding sons, as ethnic homogamy is more important in the former's partnerships. From a religious point of view, Islam does not consider the children of a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man to be Muslims; this is less the norm regarding children of Muslim men in mixed marriages (de Vries, 1987). Other gender dynamics may be relevant as well. For example, while gender equality in

the Turkish society is increasing, family honor, to a great extent, still depends on women's sexuality, resulting in stricter social control of women's behavior and a certain gender hierarchy (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Second, besides educational attainment, experiencing ethnic prejudice clearly affects parental preferences regarding the partner type of both daughters and sons. Parents that are more influenced by ethnic prejudice are more likely to show less openness to interethnic partnerships.

Our results indicate that the attitudes of Turkish minorities concerning partner selection are not formed in a social vacuum, but are affected by the multicultural character of society. The extent to which minorities feel accepted proves to be an important factor in their (parental) attitudes and preferences concerning partner selection. Hence, their intergroup attitudes may be influenced by experiences of ethnic prejudice, making minority members more resistant towards mixed partnerships and orientating them towards their own ethnic community and their country of origin. Consequently, the link between partner selection attitudes and the influence of ethnic prejudice shows that experiencing ethnic prejudice can consolidate and perpetuate the ethnic boundaries in society. We therefore confirm that the prevalence of interethnic partnerships could be seen as an indicator of ethnic boundaries (Blau & Schwartz, 1984; Gordon, 1964), as an interethnic partnership unites individuals as well as social networks (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010). The prevalence of interethnic partnerships is determined by several factors—for example, sex ratio, community size, and language (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010). However, the frequency of interethnic social contact and levels of mutual acceptance and respect are also important factors. Therefore, interethnic partnerships could also contribute to a decrease ethnic differences, improve social integration, and diminish cultural distance (Gordon, 1964). This bridging effect, as Rodríguez-García (2015) shows, should not, however, be overestimated, especially when discussing minorities that are severely stigmatized, as is the case with Muslim communities in Europe (Van Acker, 2012). When discussing these results we need to consider that the relationship between ethnic prejudice and openness to interethnic partnerships could be symmetric instead of asymmetric. Minority members could also perceive more prejudice because they show less openness to the majority group. However, research concerning discrimination of African American minorities shows that minority members who experience ethnic prejudice frequently have negative expectations regarding future interethnic social contact and try to avoid unnecessary interethnic contact

(Tropp, 2003, 2007), and that negative intergroup attitudes of minorities are primarily based on past experiences of ethnic prejudice (Monteith & Spicer, 2000). We therefore conclude that the experience of ethnic prejudice affects interethnic social contact, (parental) attitudes regarding (interethnic) partner choice, and the extent to which minority members are orientated toward their own ethnic community, rather than the other way around. Hence, experiences of ethnic prejudice have real consequences for the intergroup relations in a society, the orientation of ethnic minorities towards the society they live in, and their integration in this society (Alanya et al., 2017).

Chapter 9. Conclusion & discussion

9.1 Introduction

This dissertation studies partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium. From a sociological standpoint, there are two ways in which studying partner selection patterns of minority members can provide a clearer understanding of how ethnic minority members fit into (the receiving) society over time. First, the level of interaction between different ethnic groups can be an indicator of integration processes (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010; Lichter et al., 2011; Lieberman & Waters, 1988; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Song, 2010; Waters & Jiménez, 2005; Wildsmith et al., 2003). Marriage is seen as the most intimate form of social contact, and the prevalence of mixed marriages in a society is therefore often considered to be an indicator of ethnic boundaries in a society. Second, studying partner selection dynamics can offer greater insight into the way minority members become accustomed to the situation in the receiving country. It makes it possible to describe processes of adaptation prevalent within minority groups. Note that I use the term adaptation to refer to these processes of change, without implying a direction of change. How do family systems in minority communities develop over time in Belgian society, which is characterized by the Second Demographic Transition? Collectivistic family systems could change due to assimilation processes towards the prevailing family system or stay the same as a way to maintain group cohesion and identity (Dumon, 1989).

This dissertation focuses on Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium for two reasons. First, the two largest minority groups in Belgium originating from third countries are from Turkey and Morocco (Schoonvaere, 2013, 2014). Second, the cultural differences between them and the majority population are extensive, which makes the possible mechanisms of adaptation substantial.

In this concluding chapter, I repeat the research outline and include the main findings of this dissertation as well as some additional analyses. I continue with a discussion of the findings and a reflection of their sociological and societal implications, and conclude by identifying the limitations of this dissertation, accompanied by suggestions for future research.

9.2 Research outline and main findings

9.2.1 Describing recent partner selection trends of Turkish and Moroccan minority members

Indications that partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minority members may be changing after remaining constant for decades, have been recent. Two Belgian studies identify a decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships between 2001 and 2008 in favor of local co-ethnic and, to a lesser extent, mixed partnerships (Dupont, Van de Putte, et al., 2017; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Dupont et al. (2019b) conclude, when researching remarriages of Turkish and Moroccan minority members, that the recent changes may be primarily present among first marriages.

The picture these studies reveal, however, is incomplete and limited to the earliest stage of change. Hence, more comprehensive analyses over a longer period are necessary to assess whether and to what degree partner selection behavior has changed over the last decade. This leads to the first research question of this dissertation:

RQ₁ What are the recent trends in partner selection of Turkish and Moroccan minority members marrying for the first time regarding different partner types? Are these trends different for minority members remarrying? And how are these trends different according to individual characteristics?

↳ To answer this question, Chapter 5 analyzes Belgian National Register data including information on all first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who married between 2005 and 2015. It discusses the distribution of three partner types and assesses the most recent trends in partner selection occurring between 2005 and 2015. It explores differences according to ethnicity, generation, gender, and marriage rank to obtain a comprehensive overview of recent partner selection behavior.

The results show that among minority members marrying for the first time, we can firmly conclude that the previously reported decline until 2008 indeed was the first phase of a structural downward trend, resulting in a gradually diminishing preference for transnational marriages up until 2015. Although transnational

marriages are the type most preferred by all minority members in 2005, by 2015, this is the case only for first-generation Moroccan men, who follow a different pattern compared to other minority members; I will discuss this later. The prevalence of transnational marriage among all subpopulations either starts to decline after 2011 (among the first generation) or sees a continuation of the existing trend towards decline (among the second generation).

An increased prevalence of local co-ethnic marriages, which become the most preferred partner type by 2015, mostly compensates for the structural decline in transnational marriages. The prevalence of mixed marriages also increases—to a lesser extent, however—among all minority members, except first-generation Turkish women. Moreover, when the second generation marries, mixed marriages are not the least preferred partner type; transnational marriages are.

The trends among remarriages are very similar to those among first marriages, with three exceptions. First, the prevalence of transnational marriages is higher in 2005 among all minority members who remarry. This partner type also remains the most preferred in 2015 among first-generation minority members who remarry, especially among men. Third, among second-generation minority members, the prevalence of mixed marriages is significantly higher among remarriages compared to first marriages.

Regarding individual differences, the partner selection trends of Turkish and Moroccan minority members do not strongly differ according to gender and ethnicity. The most important differences are between migration generations. The decline in transnational marriages among second-generation minority members starts several years prior to the one among the first generation. The prevalence of local co-ethnic and mixed marriages is higher among the second compared to the first generation.

Previous studies on partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities have assessed married couples, as marriage is the prevailing norm of partnership formation among these minorities (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Recently, however, there have been indications from qualitative studies that the preference of young Turkish and Moroccan minority members for cohabitation as a step towards marriage, or even as a full alternative to marriage, is increasing (de Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Huschek et al., 2011; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018). An increasing trend in the prevalence of

cohabitation could indicate family systems of Turkish and Moroccan minority members change in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations.

This leads to the second research question of this dissertation:

RQ₂ What are the recent trends in the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minority members? And which minority members are more likely to choose cohabitation over marriage?

↳ Chapter 6 first describes the prevalence of legally registered cohabitations of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium, as well as the trend in prevalence between 2005 and 2015. The second part studies which minority members are more likely to choose cohabitation over marriage. For the analyses, we use Belgian National Register data on all first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members registering their first partnership between 2005 and 2015.

The results show that in 2005 the percentage of first partnerships of Turkish and Moroccan minority members that are legally registered cohabitations is very low (less than 5%). However, between 2005 and 2015, the frequency doubles among second-generation minority members and tripled among first-generation members. Among mixed partnerships, especially, cohabitation is becoming an acceptable partnership type. In 2015, 26 and 39 percent of all first partnerships of, respectively, the second and first generation with a non-co-ethnic partner are cohabitations instead of marriages.

Besides members of the first generation or those in mixed partnerships, minority members who form their first union at an older age or who have children born before the registration of the partnership also have a higher likelihood to choose to cohabit instead of marrying. One of the most important predictors, next to being in a mixed partnership, is having a child (born prior to the partnership registration): the odds of cohabitating are 5 to 16 times higher. This effect is larger for second- compared to first-generation members, for women compared to men, and for members in homogamous instead of mixed partnerships.

9.2.2 Partner selection attitudes of Turkish and Moroccan minority members: Recent trends studied in-depth

In this section, partner selection attitudes receive more attention to better understand partner selection patterns and possible changes within the partner selection process. Several authors have assumed that lower levels of parental involvement among the more recent marriage cohorts could contribute to the decline in transnational partners, as parents are believed to be more traditional and to prefer transnational partnerships for their children (Huschek et al., 2012; Van Kerckem et al., 2013; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). When parental involvement declines, the prevalence individual-initiated partnerships increases which are more likely to occur in the local community instead of in the origin country.

However, I make three observations. First, the partner selection process has evolved from being initiated by parents and family to being initiated by partners with parental consent. Parental approval, thus, is still important and broadly accepted as a condition for getting married (Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). Second, the literature attributing the decline in transnational partnerships to changes in parental involvement discusses the extent of their influence but overlooks preferences concerning specific partner types. The assumption that parents prefer transnational partnerships for their children is made without researching specific parental preferences (Huschek et al., 2012; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). Third, less parental involvement does not necessarily result in fewer transnational partnerships, as the prevalence of this partner type could also be a result of a match between the interests and objectives of all parties involved – parents and adolescents (Reniers & Lievens, 1997). Therefore, the question that arises is whether the decline in transnational partnerships could be associated with a change in attitudes and preferences of adolescents and parents. This leads to the third and fourth research questions:

RQ₃ To what extent does parental influence in the partner selection process decline over time and how could it influence the prevalence of transnational partnerships and, potentially, mixed partnerships in the future?

↳ We answer Research Question 3 by analyzing population as well as survey data. In Chapter 5 we build multinomial regression models on Belgian National Register data including all second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who married between 2005 and 2015. These models analyze whether the effect of age at marriage on partner choice becomes smaller over time, which would be in line with the assumption that parental involvement in the partner selection process is decreasing.

In Chapter 5, the positive effect of marrying at a younger age on the odds to marry transnationally disappears by 2015. Furthermore, all differences related to age in the odds to choose a mixed marriage for men disappear by 2015: both the positive effect of marrying at an older (versus average) age and the negative effect of marrying at a younger (versus average) age. Among women, we find the same results, except for the positive effect of marrying at an older age, which decreases but does not disappear by 2015. These results support the assumption that autonomy in partner selection process is increasing among second-generation minority members, if we consider marriage age as a proxy for the degree of maturity and influence a person has on the partner selection process.

↳ In Chapter 7, analyses of the Sexpert survey data describe whether respondents belonging to more recent marriage cohorts report lower levels of parental influence in the formation of their partnership and to what extent parental influence interferes with freedom of choice.

The results indicate that the percentage of respondents whose partner choice parents only slightly influenced has clearly increased in more recent marriage cohorts—from 15.09 percent of respondents married before 1992 to 53.57 percent of respondents married after 2006. Likewise, 77.36 percent of the partner choices made before 1992 were highly influenced by parents, compared to 32.14 percent of the partnerships formed after 2006. Hence, we can observe an evolution towards individualization and individual-initiated partnerships among more recent marriage cohorts. Nevertheless, a third of respondents in the most recent cohort stated that their parents had a high degree of influence on the formation of their partnerships. However, this does not mean they felt they had no freedom of choice. Of respondents entering into a union after 2006, 85 percent felt they had a great deal of freedom in choosing their current partners.

RQ₄ To what extent is there an attitudinal change in the partner selection attitudes of Turkish and Moroccan minority members regarding transnational partnerships? In view of possible changes, to what extent do minority members show openness towards mixed partnerships?

↳ We answer Research Question 4 also in two different ways. In Chapter 5 we build multinomial regression models on Belgian National Register data including all second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who married between 2005 and 2015. These models analyze whether the effect of age at marriage and of educational attainment on the odds to choose a mixed (vs. local co-ethnic) marriage changes over time. If these effects become smaller, this could indicate a decline in the social resistance towards mixed marriages.

In Chapter 5, the positive effect of marriage age on the odds to choose a mixed marriage becomes smaller over time or even disappears among some minority members. This suggests a decline in parental influence, as discussed above, as well as in social resistance to mixed partnerships as they are no longer formed exclusively by older, more mature and independent minority members.

Regarding educational attainment, the results show a positive but declining effect of being higher (vs. lower) educated on the odds to choose a mixed marriage among all minority members. Furthermore, among men and Turkish women, increasing odds of the lower (vs. higher) educated to choose a mixed marriage. Among Moroccan women, the positive effect of being higher educated remains consistent over time. These changing educational differences in the odds to choose a mixed marriage indicate that mixed marriages are not primarily formed by highly educated minority members anymore. Social resistance to mixed marriages and ethnic distance between members of different ethnic groups may be slowly declining among lower educated individuals as well.

↳ In Chapter 7, we analyze Sexpert survey data to study which partner types parents prefer for their children and whether there is a difference for daughters versus sons. In view of possible attitudinal changes, we also address what characterizes parents who are more open to mixed partnerships with Belgian partners. Finally, adolescents' preferences about the ethnicity of their future partners is discussed as well.

Based on these analyses, we conclude that the number of parents with a distinct preference for transnational or mixed marriages for their children is small. Most respondents prefer a partnership with either a local co-ethnic partner or a co-ethnic partner regardless of the place of residence. The preference for ethnic homogamy is more pronounced for daughters than for sons.

Nevertheless, more than a fourth of the respondents have no distinct preference for a particular partner type for their children, as they find either none or all of the ethnic characteristics important. These respondents may have moved away from ethnicity's central role in the partner selection process and be more open to mixed partnerships. Regarding the ethnicity of daughters' partners, the binomial logistic regressions describe the significant effect of one predictor: Turkish men are more likely to show openness to mixed partnerships for their daughters if they attend religious services less frequently. Contrary to our expectations, we found no other significant effects (regarding sex, age, migration generation or educational attainment). Similarly, regarding the ethnicity of sons' partners, none of the predictors explained the differences in finding ethnicity unimportant.

Finally, like parents, adolescent minority members show no distinct preference for transnational or mixed partnerships. The only distinct preference observed was for a local co-ethnic partner or a co-ethnic partner regardless of the place of residence. The preference for ethnic homogamy is stronger among girls than among boys.

Ethnic homogamy as a predominant trend occurs for a variety of normative and structural reasons in addition to individual preferences. An example of a structural factor influencing the prevalence of ethnic homogamy may be the strength of ethnic boundaries in a society. The last research question of this dissertation questions whether and to what extent symbolic boundaries, manifesting as ethnic prejudice, may shape partner choice preferences.

RQ₅ To what extent is the preference for ethnic homogamy reinforced by the perception of ethnic boundaries in Belgian society?

↳ This question is answered by analyzing survey data. Chapter 8 describes the extent to which Turkish minority members experience ethnic prejudice in their social contact with Flemish majority members, and whether perceived ethnic boundaries affects partner selection attitudes of minority parents, particularly their openness towards mixed partnerships for their children.

The results show a strong presence of ethnic prejudice in the daily lives of Turkish minority members. In particular, men, minority members with lower socioeconomic attainment, and partner migrants are more likely to report ethnic prejudice. When assessing the differences between parents with and parents without openness to mixed marriages for their children, the parents' experiences of ethnic prejudice and educational attainment appear to be important predictors. First, ethnic prejudice clearly affects parental preferences regarding the partner type of both daughters and sons. Parents who are more influenced by ethnic prejudice are less likely to show openness to mixed marriage. Second, educational attainment affects parental preferences concerning daughters' partnerships: higher educated minority members are more likely to be open to their daughters forming a mixed marriage.

9.2.3 Additional analyses: Partner selection trends for all partnerships

Before I elaborate on the discussion of the main findings and their implications, I consider some additional analyses, namely, analyses of partner selection trends for all partnerships combined. Differentiating based on partnership type (cohabitation/marriage) and partnership rank (first or higher-order) has been useful because partner selection dynamics differ significantly according to these characteristics (See Chapters 5 and 6). However, to analyze the impact of the stricter immigration policies implemented in 2011 and to determine the overall prevalence of mixed partnerships, which has implications with regard to ethnic boundaries in Belgian society, a combination of all partnerships is insightful as well. Hence, in the following paragraphs, I analyze the partner selection trends of all partnerships based on the combined dataset BNR 2005-2015 ($N = 97,629$) discussed in section 4.1.3.8. Similar to partner selection trends in Chapter 5, I differentiate between eight subpopulations (according to migration generation, sex, and ethnicity).

Slight differences aside, the trends are similar regarding gender and ethnicity (See Figures 9.1–9.8). Because generational differences are the most pronounced, I discuss the trends of first- and second-generation members separately.

Among first-generation members (See Figures 9.1-9.4), the prevalence of transnational partnerships declines from around 60 percent in 2005 to less than 40 percent in 2015 (except for 53.5% for Moroccan men). The decline starts around 2011 and is largely compensated for by an increase in the prevalence of local co-

ethnic partnerships from around 20 percent to around 40 percent. The prevalence of this partner type is higher (50.2%) among Turkish women; among Moroccan men, it is lower (29.7%). The prevalence of mixed partnerships increases among Turkish men and Moroccan women from 13 percent to more than 20 percent. Among Turkish women, the prevalence remains consistent around 15 percent and among Moroccan men it declines from 19.9 percent to 16.8 percent.

Among second-generation minority members (See Figures 9.5-9.8), the prevalence of transnational partnerships declines from around 50 percent in 2005 to less than 20 percent in 2015. This decline is present at the beginning of our timeframe and is again largely compensated for by an increase in the prevalence of local co-ethnic partnerships from around 40 percent to around 60 percent. Regarding mixed partnerships, the prevalence increases from around 12 percent to more than 20 percent, except among Turkish women, where it increases from 8.7 percent to 16.8 percent.

To conclude, we can describe a structural decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships present at the beginning of our timeframe for the second generation and present around 2011 for the first generation. This decline is largely balanced out by an increase in local co-ethnic partnerships, making it the most preferred partner type by 2015 among all minority members, except first-generation Moroccan men. Trends among Moroccan men are less aberrant when assessing all partnerships than when assessing only marriages. Compared to other first-generation members, a slight decline in the prevalence of mixed partnerships and a higher prevalence of transnational partnerships are the main differences. In section 9.3.3.1, I discuss this in more detail.

Despite a general preference for homogamous partnerships, the prevalence of mixed partnerships increases among all minority members (except for first-generation Moroccan men and first-generation Turkish women). From 2005 to 2015, it increases by a factor of 1.5 among Moroccan minority members and by a factor of 1.9 among Turkish minority members. In general, around 20 percent of all partnerships registered in 2015 are mixed.

The trends in partner selection described here do not strongly differ from the trends among marriages, described in Chapter 5. This is not surprising as marriage is the most preferred partnership type and therefore has the largest influence on these trends. However, when I discuss societal and social implications in the next

section, considering these trends as well is necessary to obtain a comprehensive overview of Turkish and Moroccan minority members' partner selection behavior.

Figure 9.1. All partnerships of Turkish men, first generation (N = 6,477)

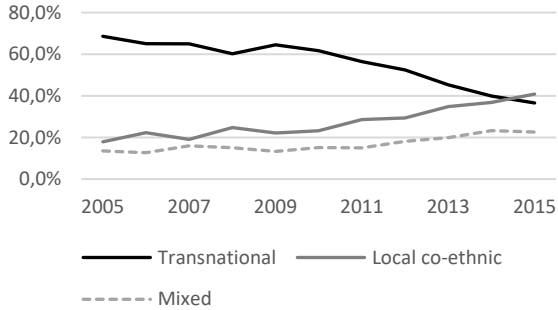


Figure 9.5. All partnerships of Turkish men, second generation (N = 9,526)

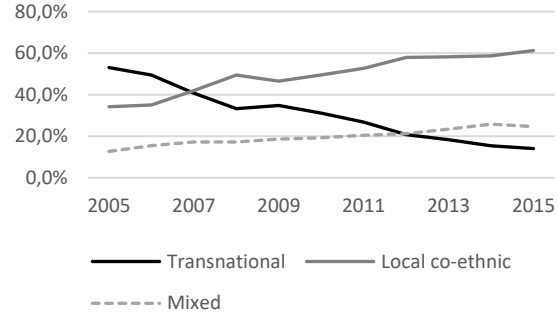


Figure 9.3. All partnerships of Moroccan men, first generation (N = 20,003)

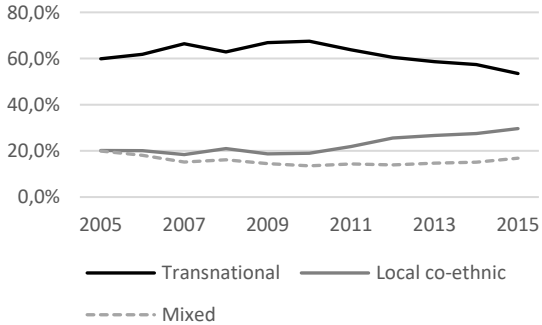


Figure 9.2. All partnerships of Turkish women, first generation (N = 3,265)

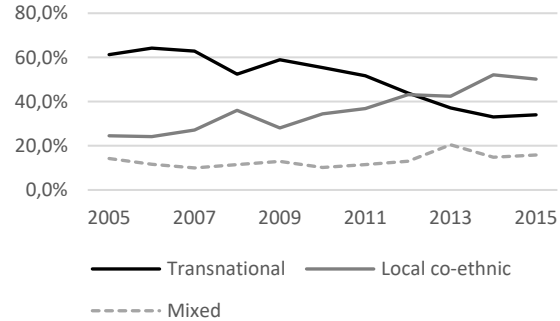


Figure 9.6. All partnerships of Turkish women, second generation (N = 10,259)

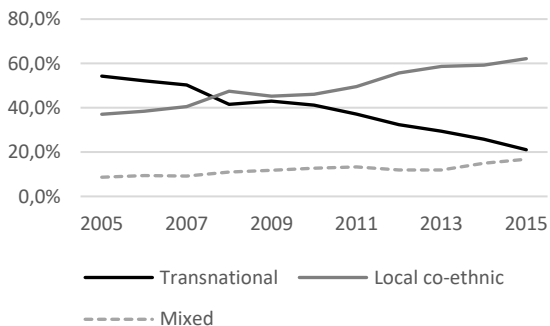


Figure 9.7. All partnerships of Moroccan men, second generation (N = 18,335)

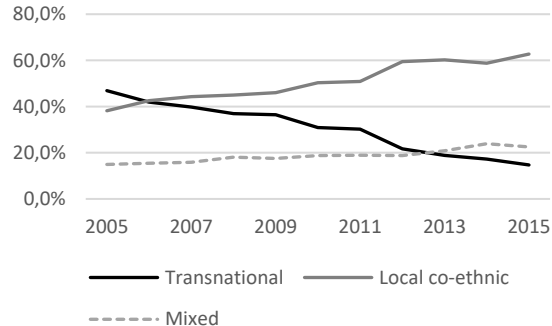


Figure 9.4. All partnerships of Moroccan women, first generation (N = 10,361)

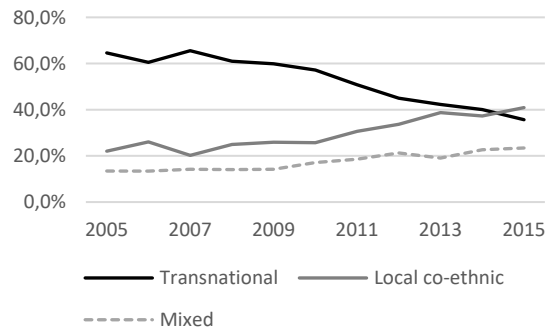
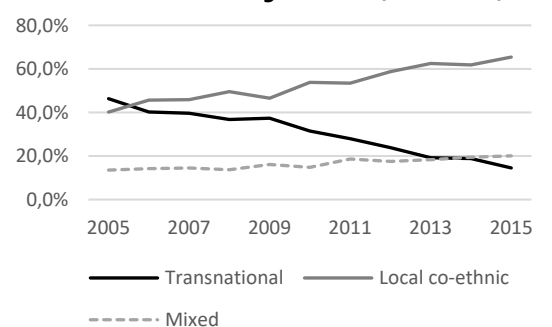


Figure 9.8. All partnerships of Moroccan women, second generation (N = 19,403)



9.3 Discussion

In this section, I reflect on the main findings of this dissertation and consider some of their sociological and societal implications. The results are sociologically relevant because they make it possible to describe processes of adaptation prevalent within minority groups, and give us more insight into the presence of ethnic boundaries in Belgian society. The results are also socially relevant as partner selection dynamics of minority members, and of Turkish and Moroccan minorities especially, are currently high on European political agendas. Therefore, I end this section with a discussion of how the results of this dissertation are relevant with regard to Belgian immigration legislation.

9.3.1 Processes of adaptation within Turkish and Moroccan minorities

Studying partner selection patterns of minority members makes it possible to describe processes of adaptation prevalent within minority groups. At the beginning of this dissertation, I discuss how the specific circumstances under which Turkish and Moroccan immigration to Belgium began and continues have generated a selective group of minority members originating from areas with low levels of urbanization and educational attainment. In these areas, collectivistic family systems are strong and could remain prevalent among minority members in Belgium due to strong transnational networks and transplanted communities. However, the family systems in the origin countries are also subject to change. These changes, especially regarding divorce rates, parental influence, or fertility rates, for example, move the collectivistic family system towards a system more in line with family systems characterized by the Second Demographic Transition (Desrues & Nieto, 2009; Kâğıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005; Koelet et al., 2008; Yüceşahin & Özgür, 2008). Hence, the partner selection behavior of minority members residing in Belgium might change towards the Belgian system due to the combination of exposure to the residence country's family system and changes in the origin countries. However, minority members may preserve the origin country's system because they are generally in a disadvantaged position in Belgian society, which is characterized by strong ethnic boundaries. Maintaining norms, values, and customs can be a coping strategy and a way to maintain ethnic identity (Dumon, 1989; Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990; Kâğıtçıbaşı, 1978).

Several studies suggest that the demographic transitions occurring in European countries also influence the lives of minority members in Europe. For example, research shows a significant change between first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members (de Valk, 2006; González-Ferrer, 2006). The level of education and employment is increasing among second-generation women (Crul et al., 2012). Structural changes specified in the Second Demographic Transition might explain increasing female employment. Moreover, de Valk (2006) observed that young second-generation minority members in the Netherlands had a low level of attachment to cultural traditions regarding living arrangements; similarly, adolescents easily adapted to egalitarian gender roles. This could indicate changes in the family system in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations. Previous research has reported such changes over time and over successive migration generations regarding, for example, increasing age at marriage and divorce rates, and decreasing parental influence and fertility rates (Dupont et al., 2019a; Lodewijckx et al., 1997; Reniers & Lievens, 1997; Schoenmaeckers et al., 1999). Nevertheless, family formation and partner selection behaviors seem to be embedded in core values, as they remain consistent among both first- and second-generation minority members. Researchers describe a high prevalence of transnational marriages, and a low prevalence of mixed marriages. Marriage is also the sole partnership type suitable for starting a family (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Hartung et al., 2011; Yalcin et al., 2006).

However, the results of this dissertation show this is no longer be true as the partner selection behavior changes significantly over generations and over time. Specifically, a shift in orientation from the transnational to the local marriage market and an increase in the prevalence of cohabitation are noteworthy. I discuss both below.

Chapter 5 describes a structural, unprecedented decline in the prevalence of transnational marriages, mostly compensated for by an increase in the prevalence of local co-ethnic marriages and, to a lesser extent, of mixed marriages. These trends are observed among all minority members observed, regardless of migration generation, ethnicity or gender.

Among the second generation, we observe a strong decline in the prevalence of transnational marriages. In 2015, the prevalence of transnational partnerships was lower than 20 percent; even the prevalence of mixed marriages was higher. This

decline started prior to our timeframe—around 2004 (Dupont, Van de Putte, et al., 2017; Van Kerckem et al., 2013)—and continues at an even rate.

Several authors assumed that transnational partnerships would decline partially because parents may be taking less initiative in selecting partners for their children (Huschek et al., 2012; Van Kerckem et al., 2013; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). The results of Chapters 5 and 7 confirm a declining parental influence over time. However, as the influence of parents remains important and well-respected, the parental attitudes regarding ideal partner types should change as well to affect partner selection behavior. Chapter 7 confirms that in addition to a decline in the levels of parental influence, the orientation of both parents and adolescents shifted from the origin country to the local marriage market, which may be the result of several collaborating factors.

Various studies report a growing awareness of the possible risks associated with transnational marriages (Eeckhaut et al., 2011; Timmerman, 2006; Van der Heyden, 2006; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). Partner migrants from Turkey or Morocco may be motivated primarily by the opportunity to migrate and the possibility it offers to settle legally in the host country. Other reported complications are, for example, a deficiency in language skills, unemployment, and financial troubles, contradictory expectations, and social isolation. These potential risks and difficulties associated with transnational marriages compared to local co-ethnic marriages are reflected in relatively high divorce rates (Dupont et al., 2019a; Eeckhaut et al., 2011). For the second generation especially, transnational marriages are known to be less stable due to cultural differences. Minority members that are born and/or raised and educated in Belgium have a cultural frame of reference that is a mixture of both Belgian and Turkish/Moroccan cultural elements. Second-generation members are looking for a partner who knows what it is like to be a minority member with two frames of reference but who also speaks the same language and has the same religion (Sterckx et al., 2014; Van Kerckem et al., 2013). The increasing size of the local co-ethnic community also increases the likelihood of finding a suitable partner locally (Blau, 1994). Furthermore, transnational (kin) networks may decrease in intensity, especially for the second and third generation, potentially reducing the strength of emotional ties and sensitivity to kin obligations (Esveldt et al., 1995; Huschek et al., 2012; Sterckx et al., 2014). Grandparents, who are central actors in the transnational family network, may have died, and the generation born and raised in the country of residence only knows about the

family in Turkey or Morocco from visits during summer holidays. Second-generation Moroccan minority members also report a decrease in knowledge about and use of Moroccan Arabic, which complicates the maintenance of transnational ties (Extra & Yagmur, 2010). In addition, a mechanism of 'diminutive causation' negatively impacts the culture of migration and migration aspirations of potential marriage migrants (Engbersen et al., 2013; Timmerman et al., 2014). Minority members report their negative experiences and their awareness of the risks associated with transnational partnerships back to family members and friends in the origin country. This migration-undermining feedback can change the migration aspirations of potential marriage migrants and can result in a decreasing migration culture in the origin countries (Engbersen et al., 2013).

At the same time, not only local co-ethnic marriages but mixed marriages are also becoming increasingly popular. Chapter 5 shows second-generation minority members are oriented more towards the local marriage market and find more connection with majority members as well, regardless of their sex, educational attainment, or age. This means that the social and religious norms regarding ethnic homogamy may be becoming less strict. This would make mixed partnerships more accessible for all minority members, and not just those who deviate more easily from partner selection norms (men, Moroccan minority members, older minority members, and the higher educated). More details on the implications of an increasing prevalence of mixed partnerships is discussed below (see section 9.3.2).

A shifting orientation from the transnational to the local marriage market is less visible among first-generation minority members. The prevalence of transnational marriages is higher in the first compared to the second generation. Considering that, for first-generation minority members, the duration of stay in Belgium is shorter and more of the socialization process is experienced in the origin country compared to second-generation minority members, the higher prevalence of transnational marriages is not surprising. Furthermore, the decline in transnational marriages starts several years later among the first compared to the second generation—after 2011, the year Belgium implemented strict immigration requirements. I discuss the implications with regard to immigration policies in detail below (see section 9.3.3), but I will first point out that some minority members postponed their transnational marriage or chose a different partner type, causing a decline in the prevalence of transnational marriages. Hence,

among the first generation, the prevalence may be declining mainly because minority members are unable to form a transnational partnership, not because of other—possibly attitudinal—mechanisms as observed among the second generation.

I conclude that the family system of – especially second-generation – Turkish and Moroccan minority members is changing in line with the Second Demographic Transition because of decreasing parental influence in the partner selection process and a shift in orientation from the transnational to the local marriage market. These changes do not indicate a complete disengagement from the values and practices of the collectivistic family system: parental consent remains important and well-respected, ethnic homogamy remains preferable, and marriage remains the prevailing partnership formation norm. The latter, however, is changing as well.

Chapter 6 shows that although marriage maintains its prominent role, cohabitation has the potential to become an important first partnership choice, as there is a strong upward trend in its prevalence in the past decade. Especially among mixed partnerships, cohabitation is becoming an acceptable partnership type. This upward trend in the frequency of legally registered cohabitation is unprecedented and is significant because it suggests that the collectivistic family system, which is centered around marriage, is changing in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations. Hence, this could indicate a trend towards a more individualistic approach to partner selection more liberal values about partner selection and a decrease in the importance of marriage as institution.

In line with a classical assimilation perspective, the results confirm that minority members forming a partnership at an older age or with a mixed partner are more likely to cohabit. Cohabitation is thus more prevalent among those who deviate more from social norms, possibly making the choice for cohabitation a choice for an alternative lifestyle that is closer to the family system of the majority population. However, contrary to this perspective, and the most striking result of Chapter 6, is the higher prevalence of cohabitation among first- compared to second-generation minority members. Although we were not able to thoroughly assess partner selection motives while analyzing register data, we provide some possible explanations for this unexpected result.

First, the presence of an uncertainty dynamic, found among several majority populations, may explain why first-generation minority members have a higher likelihood to deviate from traditional family norms. Several Anglo-Saxon studies have shown that individuals prefer cohabitation in a high uncertainty context (Kiernan, 2004a; Seltzer, 2004; Stanley et al., 2006; Stanley et al., 2004). Although marriage remains highly valued, high levels of uncertainty can be an obstacle to marriage for some. Cohabitation therefore can be a way to move a relationship forward without making a strong interpersonal commitment, on the one hand, and can reduce the financial, emotional and social consequences of a break-up, on the other hand (Smock et al., 2006; Stanley et al., 2004). Individuals who are less certain about the future may pursue partnership types that allow more flexibility, like cohabitation (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Cherlin, 2004; Huston & Melz, 2004; Kiernan, 2004b). We might expect first-generation minority members to have a harder time obtaining financial security and stability (Noppe et al., 2018) and to experience more uncertainty about the future in terms of place of residence. First-generation minority members may not have a permanent residence permit or may have plans to return to the origin country eventually. In these situations, they may prefer a partnership that offers more flexibility, such as cohabitation. Hence, when migrating to another country creates high levels of uncertainty and thus an unfavorable situation for marrying, cohabitation could be a solution. In this way, a partnership type that is highly present in the Belgian family system is introduced in the more collectivistic Turkish and Moroccan system, establishing an alternative adaptation process.

Second, the first generation in our study are not labor migrants or family reunifiers. As described in section 2.2.4, what characterizes the first generation we study here is that they had only recently arrived in Belgium. This means that they could have been married and divorced in the origin country, migrated to Belgium, and then formed a higher-order (instead of a first) partnership, which has a higher likelihood of being a cohabitation (Wu & Schimmele, 2005). However, the data extraction has no information on the partnership formation history of minority members in the origin country.

Third, although cohabitation may not be prevalent in Turkey and Morocco, attitudes regarding family formation and gender roles are becoming more liberal (Adak, 2016; Buskens, 2010; Prettitore, 2015). Hence, the attitudes of recently arrived first-generation members may not be as traditional as we had expected

based on studies that included migrants who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of those migrants originated from rural areas characterized by strong traditional family systems (Reniers, 1999).

Regarding the family systems in the origin countries, I have discussed the presence of several changes that are more in line with systems characterized by the Second Demographic Transition. Some researchers have suggested that all societies will eventually develop towards the model that prevails in Belgium and other industrialized societies (Fukuyama, 2006; Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Lesthaeghe & Moors, 2002). Others assert that some form of cultural differences will remain (Kâğıtçıbaşı, 1996; Rhee, Uleman, & Lee, 1996). Similar statements have been made regarding adaptation processes of minority members in receiving societies (see e.g. Alba & Nee, 2003; Esser, 2004; Portes & Zhou, 1993). The results of Chapter 6 show that exposure to the resident society's family system can have a significant impact on the behavior of minority members, even when they belong to the first generation.

To end this section, I reflect on previous research indicating that processes of adaptation can differ between minority members depending on ethnicity and gender.

Regarding ethnicity, Moroccan minority members have seemed to adapt more easily to the Belgian family system compared to Turkish minority members. For example, previous research has noted a higher prevalence of mixed marriages, unmarried cohabitation, and premarital relationships, as well as more egalitarian gender roles (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; de Valk, 2006; Hartung et al., 2011; Lievens, 1999a). Transnational ties and the social cohesion of local co-ethnic networks are weaker among Moroccan minorities; this generally explains these differences (Surkyn & Reniers, 1996), indicating that network characteristics may have an important role in shaping adaptation processes among minority members. However, in this dissertation, we find no structural differences among Turkish or Moroccan minority members regarding partner selection behavior. Hence, it is possible that the Turkish social network, characterized by high levels of solidarity and strong transnational ties, may be losing its strength, thus reducing the ethnic differences in partner selection behavior, and in the processes of adaptation by extension.

Regarding gender, earlier I discussed the central position women occupy within the collectivistic family system. This position generally leads to female minority members marrying at a young age, experiencing high levels of social control, moving in with the in-law family, and choosing a co-ethnic partner. Literature from the 1990s shows that a gendered adaptation process has developed in which highly educated women are more likely to engage in a transnational marriage; the opposite is true for men (Abdul-Rida & Baykara-Krumme, 2016; Autant, 1995; Lievens, 1999a; Livsage, 2012; Timmerman et al., 2009). By choosing a transnational partner, highly educated minority women may gain more autonomy and power within the relationship because they are not subject to the generally strong influence of their in-laws and because their partner is new to the residence country. Although this might have been true at the end of the previous century, in our observation window, we find no confirmation for the emancipation-hypothesis, introduced by Lievens (1999a). Marrying transnationally in the 1990s could have been an emancipatory strategy for higher educated women to gain autonomy within a patriarchal family system. However, because of decreasing parental involvement and transnational networks, and because of changing attitudes regarding transnational partnerships, higher educated women may no longer feel the need for the same strategy. Furthermore, the prevalence of mixed partnerships increases among female minority members to similar levels as among men, and we observe no gender difference in the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation. These are two additional indications that the position of women in the family system may slowly be losing importance which may give women an increasing likelihood to deviate from norms and traditions prevalent in the collectivistic family system.

While differences in adaptation processes regarding gender and ethnicity are becoming smaller, others are becoming larger. In Chapter 6, we conclude that cohabitation can be an alternative way to formalize a partnership for minority members who have children born out of wedlock, especially when they are in a homogamous partnership. When marriage is not an acceptable option because minority members deviated from social and religious norms regard family formation, legally registered cohabitation may be a way to form an official partnership. In this way, a partnership type that is highly prevalent in the Belgian family system is introduced into the more collectivistic system, establishing an alternative adaptation process.

In conclusion, studying partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minority members residing in Belgium teaches us that family systems of long-established migrant communities change in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations. This assimilation towards the Belgian family system occurs, despite migration and integration theorists considering family formation to be one of the most rigid dimensions with regard to adaptation processes. However, this does not entail a complete disengagement from values and practices of the collectivistic family system as minority members continue to face the challenge of combining two different family systems that often contradict. From a classical assimilation perspective, the expectation is that minority members—the second generation or the higher educated—who are socially and structurally better integrated will adapt more easily towards the family system of the residence country and that the opposite will be true for lower educated or first-generation minority members. However, our results show that assimilation towards the Belgian family system is not linear and does not occur solely among the second generation or the higher educated. All minority members combine values and traditions of two contradictory family systems. As a result, individualism is combined with strong family values and religious commitment in various ways, resulting in different adaptation processes depending on individual characteristics but also on, for example, changing immigration policies, the strength of transnational ties, levels of uncertainty, experiences of ethnic prejudice, and evolutions of the family systems in the origin countries.

9.3.2 Ethnic boundaries

The results of this dissertation have several implications regarding ethnic boundaries in Belgian society. First, I discuss how the results of Chapter 8 support previous research indicating that strong ethnic boundaries are present between Turkish minorities and the Belgian majority population. Furthermore, I elaborate on how ethnic prejudice may influence minority members' intergroup attitudes and their openness towards partnerships with members of the majority population. Finally, based on results from Chapters 5 and 7 and on additional analyses, I assert that the openness towards mixed partnerships is increasing on both sides of the ethnic boundary, which could indicate that social distance between ethnic groups in Belgian society is slowly decreasing.

9.3.2.1 Ethnic prejudice among Turkish minority members

The possible consequences of experiencing ethnic prejudice and discrimination are numerous, both at the individual as well as the macro level. Research notes adverse consequences for health and mental well-being (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Experiencing ethnic prejudice can reduce personal self-esteem, the sense of autonomy, and self-acceptance. Feelings of not belonging may result in social exclusion or even radicalization (Maxwell, 2014). Furthermore, it can be a major setback for the integration of minority members, because it plays an important role in their adaptation to the receiving society and makes the rejection of interaction with the majority population more likely (Berry et al., 2006), and is correlated with higher remigration intentions and more transnational behavior (Groenewold & de Valk, 2017).

The results of the first part of Chapter 8 indicate Turkish minority members are frequently exposed to ethnic prejudice and that experiencing ethnic prejudice affects them strongly. This is especially true for men, minority members with lower socioeconomic attainment, and partner migrants. These results confirm previous research showing that men of Turkish descent are more stigmatized than women (Alanya et al., 2017), which may lead to more frequent experiences of discrimination and ethnic prejudice. Furthermore, partner migrants could be at risk of experiencing ethnic prejudice because they are (mainly) socialized and educated in Turkey, and have a shorter duration of stay compared to other minority members. A longer socialization period in Belgian society is expected to decrease the social distance between minority and majority members (Scheepers et al., 2002), leading to experiencing less ethnic prejudice because of, for example, better language skills or a stronger orientation towards the residence country (Romero & Roberts, 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Additionally, partner migrants could also feel more influenced by ethnic prejudice because of the stigma attached to this partner type by both the general public (Van Kerckem et al., 2013) and policymakers (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). Finally, social mobility can partially protect minorities from experiencing ethnic prejudice, as respondents who have more difficulty in maintaining financial stability report more experiences of ethnic prejudice. This does not, however, mean that higher status minority members are spared from experiencing discrimination and ethnic prejudice (Voas & Fleischmann, 2012).

Hence, symbolic boundaries between ethnic groups still characterize Flemish society, even after more than 50 years of Turkish immigration. Turkish (and Moroccan) minority members are often considered to be at the bottom of a quasi-consensual ethnic hierarchy and seen as the most devalued minorities (Hagendoorn, 1995; Phalet & Gijssberts, 2007). Both religion and ethnic origin create bright boundaries that separate Turkish (and Moroccan) minority members from the majority population in Belgium (and Europe) (Alba, 2005). This is highly relevant, as the adverse consequences of experiencing ethnic prejudice are irrefutable, and our results show that the minority members who are more vulnerable are also more at risk.

9.3.2.2 Ethnic prejudice and partner selection attitudes

The quality of interethnic social contact has a strong impact on the intergroup attitudes of individuals. Regarding minority groups, psychological literature shows that the intergroup attitudes of ethnic minorities are strongly influenced by ethnic prejudice (Livingston et al., 2004; Monteith & Spicer, 2000). Minority members experiencing ethnic prejudice or discrimination are more likely to evaluate members of the discriminating group negatively and to try to avoid unnecessary interethnic contact in the future (Tropp, 2003, 2007). Hence, we expected minority members who experience ethnic prejudice to prefer co-ethnic partnerships and be less open to their children forming an interethnic partnership. Experiencing ethnic prejudice could affect partner selection attitudes of minority members due to one of the following mechanisms: the rejection identification model or the rejection dis-identification model. The rejection identification model states that experiencing ethnic prejudice creates the perception of a threat to the in-group, leading to greater identification with the in-group and to negative attitudes towards the discriminating out-group (Branscombe et al., 1999; Dion, 2000). The rejection dis-identification model states that experiencing discrimination on the grounds of group differences does not so much lead to a strong identification with the in-group, as suggested by the rejection identification model, as it leads to a stronger dis-identification with the discriminating out-group (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009).

In the second part of Chapter 8, we confirm that Turkish minority parents who experience ethnic prejudice are less open to their son or daughter forming a mixed marriage. We show that attitudes of Turkish minorities concerning partner selection are not formed in a social vacuum but are instead affected by the

multicultural character of society. The extent to which minorities feel accepted proves to be an important factor in their (parental) attitudes and preferences concerning partner selection. Hence, experiencing ethnic prejudice may influence their intergroup attitudes, making minority members more resistant towards mixed partnerships and orientating them towards their own ethnic community and their origin country (Livingston et al., 2004; Monteith & Spicer, 2000; Tropp, 2003, 2007). Consequently, the link between partner selection attitudes and the influence of ethnic prejudice shows that experiencing ethnic prejudice can consolidate and perpetuate ethnic boundaries, as individuals behave according to symbolic boundaries by marrying co-ethnic partners. This is confirmed by the generally low prevalence of mixed partnerships among these minorities (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Lievens, 1999a; Yalcin et al., 2006). We could not research the link between experiencing ethnic prejudice and partner selection attitudes among Moroccan minority members, but we have no reason to assume that it would be different. Mixed partnerships are more prevalent among Moroccan compared to Turkish minority members, which is generally ascribed to a greater proficiency in the French language and to Moroccan social networks characterized by lower levels of cohesion, social control, and transnationalism. Nevertheless, previous research has described high levels of personal discrimination among both Turkish and Moroccan minorities (Vandezande et al., 2009). Hence, experiencing ethnic prejudice could also work as a barrier to Moroccan minority members' openness to partnerships with members of the discriminating group.

9.3.2.3 Prevalence of mixed partnerships as indicator of ethnic boundaries

The results of Chapter 5 show that the prevalence of mixed marriages⁵⁶ increases steadily among almost all minority members. If we consider all partnerships described in section 9.2.3, we can determine that the prevalence of mixed partnerships⁵⁷ increases by a factor of 1.9 and 1.5 among, respectively, Turkish and Moroccan minority members between 2005 and 2015 to around 20 percent of the partnerships registered in 2015. Although this prevalence is not high in

⁵⁶ Around 50 percent of the partners have Belgian nationality at birth. This percentage remains consistent over time.

⁵⁷ Around 50 percent of the partners have Belgian nationality at birth. This percentage remains consistent over time.

comparison to other minority groups (e.g. more than 40% of the first marriages of Algerian minority members in Belgium registered between 2001 and 2008 are with a non-co-ethnic partner (Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017)), it is highly relevant with regard to ethnic boundaries. The prevalence of mixed partnerships can be an indicator of ethnic boundaries in a society because marriage connects individuals as well as their networks; therefore marrying outside the own ethnic group is seen as a manifestation of integration, which diminishes social boundaries and can stimulate the growth of intergroup solidarity (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2010; Lichter et al., 2011; Lieberson & Waters, 1988; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Song, 2010; Waters & Jiménez, 2005; Wildsmith et al., 2003). Rodríguez-García et al. (2016) state that this bridging effect of mixed partnerships should not be overestimated, especially when discussing minorities that are severely stigmatized, as is the case with Muslim communities in Europe (Van Acker, 2012). However, without identifying heterogamy as the main unifying force bridging ethnic differences, the increasing prevalence of mixed partnerships among all minority members could suggest that ethnic boundaries are becoming more permeable (Rodríguez-García et al., 2016).

For the prevalence of mixed partnerships to increase, the openness towards this partner type needs to increase on both sides of the ethnic boundary. I discuss the openness towards mixed partnerships among Turkish and Moroccan minority members and Belgian majority members in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Within the partner selection process of Turkish and Moroccan minority members, ethnic homogamy is strongly adhered to (Esveldt et al., 1995; Hooghiemstra, 2003). Social and religious norms regarding homogamy are internalized during childhood from parents and family members who stress group identification (Kalmijn, 1998). Third parties also exercise high levels of social control to prevent new generations from marrying outside the own group and may sanction deviating behavior. As a consequence, the prevalence of mixed marriages has been low because minority members either do not consider non-co-ethnic partners as suitable partners or do not want to deviate from family norms (Van Kerckem et al., 2014; Zemni et al., 2006). Minority members that do choose a mixed marriage are generally male, higher educated, or older when entering the marriage (Carol et al., 2014; Dupont, Van Pottelberge, et al., 2017; Huschek et al., 2012). The mechanism behind this is the assumption that these minority members

are more oriented towards the Belgian society, have more opportunities for contact with Belgians, and are subject to less stringent social control mechanisms that can complicate the formation of mixed marriages compared to those who are less educated, younger, or female. However, on the basis of four of this dissertation's results, I can conclude that an openness towards mixed partnerships is not only slowly increasing among those minority members who deviate from family norms more easily, but is increasing among all minority members forming a partnership between 2005 and 2015 regardless of marriage age, gender, or educational attainment, as well as among minority parents discussing the future partner selection of their children.

First, more than a fourth of the Turkish parents interviewed in Chapter 7 consider ethnic homogamy in their child's partner selection as unimportant, indicating an openness towards mixed marriages. This is a remarkable observation, given the religious motivation of resistance towards mixed partnerships, especially among female minority members (de Vries, 1987). This religious dimension, however, is still noticeable as openness towards mixed partnerships is common for sons, while for daughters it is observed specifically among parents with higher educational attainment or parents who never attend religious services. Several authors highlight the importance of parental attitudes towards mixed marriages for their children, despite increasing levels of individualization in the partner selection process (Carol, 2014; Huijnk & Liebroer, 2012; Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2013). Carol (2014), for example, concludes that among young second-generation Turkish minority members socialization in the receiving society alone cannot contribute to an increasing prevalence of mixed partnerships. Primary socialization is and remains crucial for the most intimate relationship between members of different ethnic groups.

Second, decreasing or even disappearing positive effects of age at marriage on the odds to marry mixed in Chapter 5 suggest a declining social resistance to mixed partnerships as they are no longer formed exclusively by older, more mature and independent minority members.

Third, also in Chapter 5, the prevalence of mixed marriages increases steadily among almost all minority members, including women and lower educated minority members. Gender has a central role within the collectivistic family system. Social and religious norms regarding virginity and homogamy based on religion and ethnicity are more strict for girls compared to boys, as female sexuality is

crucial to family honor (Timmerman, 2006). Hence, an increase in the prevalence of mixed marriages, especially among female minority members, suggests that these dynamics are changing. Young minority women are gaining more autonomy in their partner selection perhaps because partner selection norms and (women's) sexuality are slowly losing significance in the partner selection process.

Fourth, regarding educational attainment, the multivariate results of Chapter 5 show that for men and Turkish women the odds to choose a mixed marriage decrease among the higher educated and increase among the lower educated. By 2015, the odds to marry mixed of lower educated minority members surpass those of the higher educated. Hence, the largest changes to the partner selection process occur among lower educated minority members. This is contrary to the results of previous studies suggesting that minority members with higher educational levels are more likely to marry into the majority population (Qian & Lichter, 2007; Van Tubergen & Maas, 2007). Feelings of belonging to the minority group and adhering to the norm of ethnic homogamy are assumed to be less present among higher educated minority members (Hwang et al., 1997; Kalmijn, 1993; Lieberman & Waters, 1988). Furthermore, higher educated minority members are supposed to have a higher likelihood to choose a mixed partner because they have had more contact with non-co-ethnic peers compared to lower educated minority members (Hwang et al., 1997; Kalmijn, 1998). Not only do higher educated minority members by definition come into contact with Belgians for a longer period by spending more time in education, but attaining a higher education ensures that these minority members are more likely to be more similar to higher educated Belgians than to lower educated co-ethnics. However, the results of Chapter 5 suggest these mechanisms are no longer exclusive to the higher educated. I suggest three possible explanations.

It is possible that the social and religious norms regarding homogamy are becoming less strict, reducing the enabling effect of having a higher educational attainment and making mixed partnerships more accessible to all minority members. Furthermore, it is possible that the contact hypothesis, as ascribed above, may become less relevant for second-generation minority members. Do lower educated second-generation minority members have less contact with Belgian majority members because they attend school for fewer years? Second-generation members, regardless of their educational level, receive educational training in Belgium at least until they are 18 years old, resulting in substantial

interethnic contact with out-group members during their education. Lower educated minority members could, like higher educated members, meet a suitable non-co-ethnic partner during their education or establish friendship ties with non-co-ethnics, leading to more positive intergroup attitudes and a possible mixed partnership later in life (Pettigrew, 1998).

Finally, previous research has assumed that higher educated minority members are forerunners of assimilation processes, because they are more likely to deviate from social and religious family norms (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2006; Phalet & Schönflug, 2001; Van Kerckem et al., 2014). However, this does not mean that all higher educated minority members want to or are able to marry a non-co-ethnic partner. Using qualitative data, Yilmaz, Van de Putte, and Stevens (2019) consider the fact that highly educated Turkish women in Belgium may not necessarily want to marry a Belgian partner or that they may experience strong barriers to forming such a partnership, despite their higher education. The authors conclude that a different religion, high levels of parental involvement, and social norms regarding partner selection can also influence the behavior of educated minority women whose close contacts with non-co-ethnic can be seen as threatening by their families (Clark-Ibáñez & Felmler, 2004).

Hence, a combination of higher educational attainment not always providing a free pass to marry a non-co-ethnic, the contact hypothesis losing significance, and social and religious partner selections norms becoming less stringent could explain why the association between educational attainment and the likelihood to choose a mixed marriage changes over time, as reported in Chapter 5.

Although the focus of this dissertation is on minority members, the openness of the majority population is of course also important to understand evolutions in the prevalence of mixed partnerships. Although research taking this point of view regarding mixed partnerships is sparse, I discuss two data sources indicating a positive trend in the intergroup attitudes of Belgian majority members.

First, school research conducted in 2012/2013 and 2018 among adolescents in two Flemish cities (Antwerp and Ghent) and Brussels can help to understand intergroup attitudes of Belgian youth (Siongers, 2019). A comparison of the results of 2012/2013 and 2018 shows that as urban populations become more ethnically diverse, Belgian adolescents' intergroup attitudes towards Turkish and Moroccan minority peers are more positive, although in-group members are strongly

preferred for romantic relationships. Nevertheless, these results indicate that more contact opportunities generally lead to more positive intergroup attitudes (see e.g. Allport et al., 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). This shows the importance of creating a context wherein members of different groups can create friendship ties. Individuals who have intergroup friendships hold more positive out-group attitudes and experience less social distance towards out-group members (Binder et al., 2009; Swart, Hewstone, Christ, & Voci, 2011). Therefore, these individuals are more likely than those with no out-group friends to approve of more intimate intergroup relations such as romantic relationships. Moreover, intergroup contact within the personal network diminishes preferences for in-group contact.

Second, I analyze the intergroup attitudes of Belgians with regard to establishing an intimate relationship with an out-group member using 2002 and 2014 ESS data containing the question: “If you think of people who have come to live in Belgium from another country who are of a different race or ethnic group from most Belgian people, please tell me how much you would mind or not mind if someone like this married a close relative of yours.” Respondents could answer with a number ranging from 0 (*not mind at all*) to 10 (*mind a lot*). I recode the variable into three categories: no resistance (0–2), some resistance (3–7), or strong resistance (8–10) towards mixed marriages. The results in Table 9.1 show that most Belgian respondents have some or strong resistance to a close relative entering a mixed marriage. However, a slight positive trend is visible, as the percentage of respondents with a strong resistance declines from 23 percent to 14 percent between 2002 and 2014; the percentage of Belgian majority members with no resistance increases from 41.4 percent to 48.6 percent.

Table 9.1 Belgian majority members indicating the extent to which they would mind a close relative marrying an ethnic minority member

	2002	2014
No resistance	41.4% ^a	48.6% ^a
Some resistance	35.6%	37.2%
Strong resistance	23.0% ^b	14.0% ^b
<i>N</i>	1,778 (100%)	1,670 (100%)
Data sources	ESS Round 1	ESS Round 7

^{a b} difference between two percentages is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$)

Finally, the sociological relevance of the prevalence of mixed marriages is that it not only reflects the boundaries between ethnic groups but also contains the opportunity for social change: Inter-marriage is related to the notion of changing group boundaries and to a changing social structure (Kalmijn, 1991; Qian & Lichter, 2007). Mixed families contribute to the changing ethnic boundaries between minority and majority groups. In the future, the growing number of children born in interethnic families will form a new generation that can contribute to restructuring Belgian society by blurring the ethnic boundaries. Furthermore, an increasing prevalence of mixed partnerships has the potential to change the social structure. Several authors have given particular attention to the question of how inter-marriage is related to the economic integration of minority members (see e.g. Dribe & Lundh, 2008; Furtado & Song, 2015; Meng & Meurs, 2009). The findings of Elwert and Tegunimataka (2016) show that for first-generation minority members from non-western countries, better labor market integration and income growth is clearly related to the onset of a partnership with a Danish majority member. By having a positive effect on the income development of minority members, this partner type influences social structure itself; the minority members improve their position in the social structure and alter structural integration patterns. Kalmijn (2015) explores whether mixed partnerships foster integration processes of minority members by studying mixed children in several countries. He compares reading skills, social contact, religiosity, and family values of mixed children, second-generation children, and children belonging to the majority group. The findings, with regard to the Netherlands, show that the outcomes of mixed children fall between the outcomes of minority and majority children. Hence, a growing number of minority members born from mixed partnerships could, in the future, contribute to a change in the social position of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium.

9.3.3 Immigration policies

Belgian immigration legislation is complex and has changed significantly within this dissertation's timeframe. Before the implementation of the policy changes of 2006, there were no strict requirements for family formation (EMN, 2017). However, from June 2007 onwards, three requirements had to be met for third-country nationals residing in Belgium (the sponsors) to form a transnational partnership. Both partners must be 21 instead of 18 years old. The sponsor residing in Belgium must have an accommodation suitable for the size of the

family and have healthcare insurance covering all family members. However, sponsors with a Belgian (or other EU member-states), Turkish, or Moroccan nationality do not have to meet these requirements. The implementation of these policy changes had little effect therefore on the partner selection trends analyzed here.

In 2011, the requirements changed again, and changed more significantly (EMN, 2017). Three main changes were implemented on September 22, 2011 and were applied to all future as well as pending applications. First, sponsors with third-country nationality residing in Belgium must now have a sufficient, stable, and regular means of subsistence to cover the needs of all family members to avoid them becoming a burden on the social security system. The level of income is set at 120 percent of the living wage (this meant, in 2014, for example, a minimum monthly income of 1307.78 EUR, after taxes). Social benefits are not included in the assessment of sufficient resources. Sponsors must meet the requirements during the first three years, after which the residence permit of the transnational partner becomes unconditional. Second, the preferential treatment of nationals from Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and the former Yugoslavia regarding the right to family formation was terminated. Their previously held favorable position had allowed these sponsors to evoke the right to family formation without having to meet any requirements as long as they had been residing and working in Belgium for three months and had secured adequate housing. Third, from 2011 onwards, the requirements regarding age, accommodation, healthcare insurance, and income discussed above are also applicable for Belgians wanting to exercise their right to family formation or reunification.

EU citizens⁵⁸ residing in Belgium have a more favorable position because European citizens can move and reside freely within the European Union (Caestecker, 2005). The only requirement is that they must have a residence permit that allows them to reside in Belgium for more than three months.

The potential impact of the policy changes implemented in 2011 on the partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minority members would have become visible during the timeframe of this dissertation. When I look at the partner selection trends analyzed in Chapter 5, as well as at the additional trends

⁵⁸ Including nationals from Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein.

described in section 9.2.3, a negative effect of restrictive measures on the prevalence of transnational partnerships is visible. This is a limited but reinforcing effect, because the decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships precedes the implementation of restrictive measures, especially among the second generation. Even though the changed policies may have had only a limited effect on partner selection trends, they could strongly affect the characteristics of the minority members that (could) marry transnationally. Below, I discuss a possible increase in selectivity regarding income, gender, and age. I summarize previous research that evaluates foreign immigration policies implemented prior to the Belgian restrictions, then consider additional analyses that focus on differences in partner selection behavior according to income. I end this section by discussing and analyzing two other potential consequences of the implementation of restrictive measures: an increased use of the 'Europe route' and an increase in couples forced to maintain a long-distance relationship. The additional analyses are performed on the combined BNR 2005–2015 dataset and focus on the effect restrictive measures may have had on the partner selection behavior of minority members, which goes beyond the scope of any of the empirical chapters.

9.3.3.1 Income requirements and an increased selectivity

Authors evaluating the implications of foreign immigration policies implementing similar restrictions as Belgian legislation (regarding income, age, housing, health insurance, etc.) in other European countries, such as the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria, consider the income requirements to be the main stumbling block for minority members wanting to form a transnational partnership (Kraler, 2010; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011; Sterckx et al., 2014; Strik, de Hart, & Nissen, 2013). Requirements regarding both amount and sustainability of income create difficulties, especially for Turkish and Moroccan minorities, who often have a disadvantaged socioeconomic position. Hence, strict measures can create or perpetuate socioeconomic inequalities in the freedom to choose a partner (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). In many countries, moreover, it is likely that female sponsors will have a harder time meeting the income requirements, especially if they already have children (Kraler, 2010; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011; WODC & INDIAC, 2009). Income requirements can also generate a selectivity based on age because younger minority members are less likely to meet the

income requirement compared to their older peers. It takes time to acquire a stable financial situation and accumulate economic resources (Strik et al., 2013).

I evaluate the influence of the restrictive measures implemented in Belgium on the partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minorities based on additional analyses of the combined BNR 2005–2015 dataset ($N = 97,629$) that include the net taxable annual income registered in the year prior to the marriage. Before discussing this further, a few points need to be addressed.

First, the income levels in these analyses are higher than those considered by the Immigration Office because the net taxable annual income includes not only remuneration incomes but also, for example, pensions, child and unemployment benefits, alimony, and so forth; the Immigration Office, however, does not consider social benefits (EMN, 2017). Second, the number of missings on the income variable is high (32%) because information is available only for minority members who register a first marriage from 2006 onwards, which excludes minority members who cohabit, remarry, or who registered a marriage in 2005. Third, the Belgian Immigration Act foresees that, if the condition of sufficiency is not fulfilled, the administrative decision will need to describe what constitutes a sufficient means of subsistence (EMN, 2017). Therefore, the Immigration Office should examine, case by case,⁵⁹ the means of subsistence necessary to prevent family members from becoming a burden on the social security system, according to the needs of the sponsor and of his/her family. The Council of State considers 120 percent of the living wage to be a reference and not a minimum threshold.

⁵⁹ However, in practice, it is a challenge for the Immigration Office to do both an assessment of individual needs and an assessment of the financial autonomy of the family (EMN, 2017). The few negative decisions made by the Immigration Office should reveal in detail the reasoning behind a conclusion that the means of subsistence are not sufficient and identify what would be considered sufficient. The Immigration Office bases decisions on the elements available to them but indicates that it is extremely difficult to do a global evaluation of what is needed from a family case by case. Since 2016, the Immigration Office has focused first on whether the means of subsistence are stable and regular. If they are not, the Immigration Office does no sufficiency assessment or any individualized assessment aimed at analyzing whether those means of subsistence preclude the risk of burdening the public authorities. In practice, in evaluating the stability and regularity of the resources, considerable value is attached to current and former employment, and to the duration and the nature of the contracts. The Immigration Office requests that proof of income is submitted for, ideally, the twelve months preceding the date of application. Moreover, calculating professional income based on limited-time, short-term contracts are problematic.

For these reasons, I cannot determine with precision which minority members meet the income requirement, and which do not. Therefore, I classify annual income into three categories based on the quantiles: low ($\leq 4,987.395$ EUR), middle, and high ($\leq 20,320.46$ EUR). The relative partner selection trends according to income level can indicate whether the implementation of restrictive (income) requirements increases the selectivity of minority members registering a transnational marriage (See Figures 9.9–9.11).

Figures 9.9–9.11 show that in 2006, minority members with low- or middle-income levels more often choose a transnational marriage compared to minority members with a higher income (respectively, 43.6% and 43.2% compared to 29.1%). Over time, the prevalence of transnational marriages declines among all three income groups. However, the decline is largest among minority members with a low income and smallest among minority members with a high income (32.4 versus 17.4 percentage points). In addition, the marked drop in the prevalence of transnational marriages after 2011 is also larger for minority members with a lower compared to a higher income. Hence, the partner selection behavior of the latter is less influenced by the implementation of restrictive measures compared to the behavior of the former, indicating an increased selectivity in which minority members are able to form a transnational marriage. Especially minority members in the lowest income category are unable to meet the requirements to marry transnationally.

Figure 9.9 Partner selection trends of first marriages of minority members with low-come level (N = 10,878)

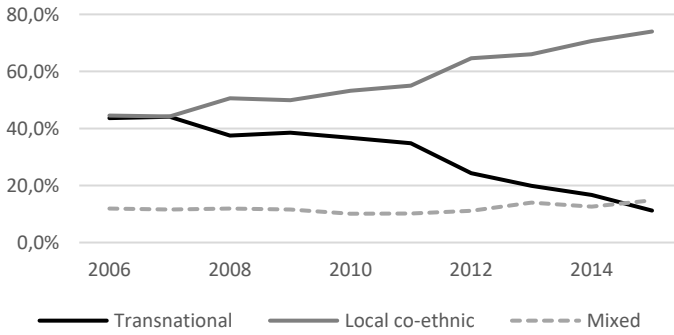


Figure 9.10 Partner selection trends of first marriages of minority members with middle-income level (N = 21,757)

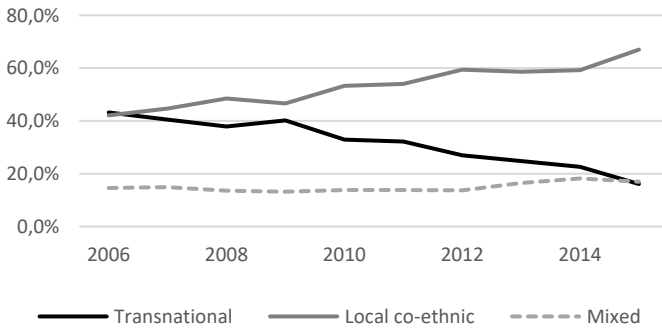
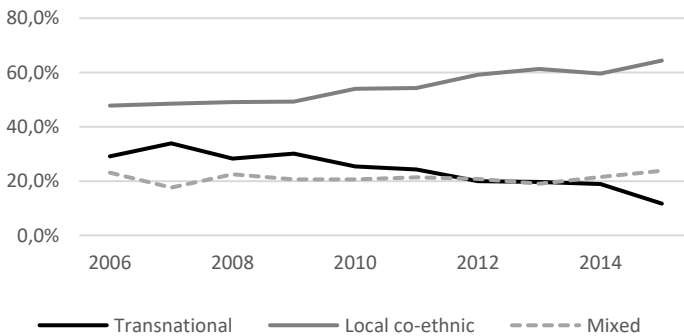


Figure 9.11 Partner selection trends of first marriages of minority members with high-income level (N = 10,878)



If minority members who are unable to form a transnational marriage postpone marriage, possibly until they can meet the requirements to marry transnationally; or until they find another (local) partner. This would mean that it is not only the relative prevalence of transnational marriages that declines over time, but also the absolute (See Figures 9.12-9.14).

Figures 9.12 and 9.13 show that among minority members with a low and middle income the number of transnational marriages declines after 2011, From respectively 394 to 82, and from 716 to 278. However, the number of local co-ethnic and mixed marriages remains consistent. This suggests that minority members, unable to form a transnational marriage, did not choose a different partner type as a reaction to the restrictive measures (within our timeframe). This suggests that minority members postpone their marriage, possibly until all requirements are met to marry transnationally, or they choose to remain single. Because the data extraction only contains 'successfully' registered marriages, I cannot determine which of these possibilities is true.

Figure 9.12 Absolute number of first marriages of minority members with low-income level (N = 10,878)

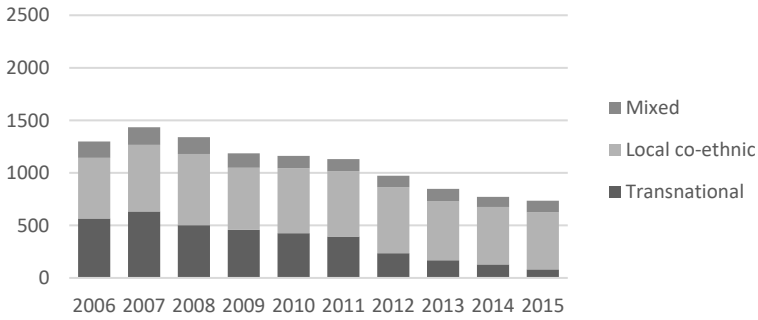


Figure 9.13 Absolute number of first marriages of minority members with middle-income level (N = 21,757)

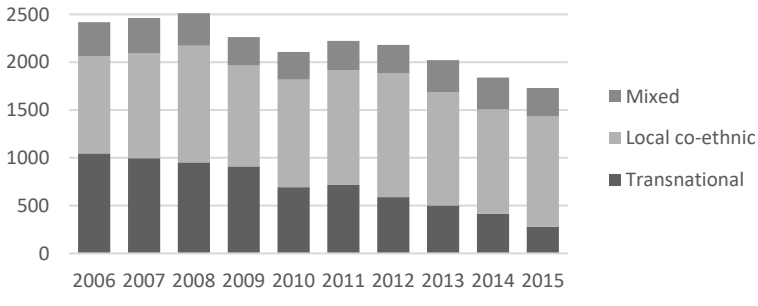
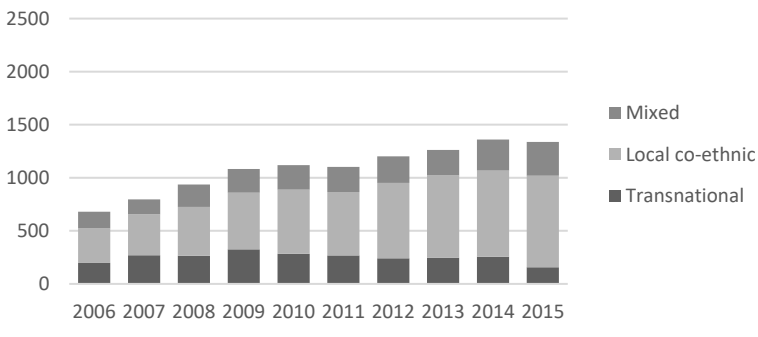


Figure 9.14 Absolute number of first marriages of minority members with high-income level (N = 10,878)



While the middle- and higher-income groups primarily consist of men (respectively, around 55% and 75%), the low-income group includes more female minority members (around 65%). Hence, women may have more trouble meeting the income requirement compared to men, as some authors expected (Kraler, 2010; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). However, future policy evaluation research could bring greater clarity to this issue.

Finally, we expect that the implementation of income requirements may create an increased selectivity based on age, as younger individuals may have more trouble meeting requirements with regard to amount and sustainability of income (Strik et al., 2013). We can confirm this expectation based on the multivariate results in Chapter 5. The positive effect of marrying at a younger (vs. average) age on the odds to marry transnationally disappears by 2015. Furthermore, marrying at an older (vs. average) age has a positive effect on the odds to choose a transnational marriage. In addition, for Moroccan minority members, this positive effect of marrying at an older age increases over time. Hence, it is possible that minority members marrying at an average, and especially older age, remain able to form a transnational marriage.

This increased selectivity based on age could also explain the different partner selection pattern observed among first-generation Moroccan men marrying for the first time. Chapter 5 observes a different pattern among first-generation Moroccan men compared to other first-generation minority members: the prevalence of both transnational and local co-ethnic marriages increases slightly, while the high prevalence of mixed marriages declines slightly. When all partnerships are combined (see section 9.2.3), Moroccan men differ less from other first-generation minority members. In particular, the decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships and the complementary increase in local co-ethnic partnerships begin later and remain limited. Hence, the implementation of restrictive measures does not much affect the ability of first-generation Moroccan men to form transnational partnerships. Additional analyses on first marriages with a transnational partner (BNR 2005-2015) show that the average marriage age of first-generation Moroccan men is 4 to 10 years higher compared to members of the first generation (See Table 9.2). This could mean that they have less trouble meeting the requirements. In addition, it is also possible that their

transnational partnership is a higher-order partnership,⁶⁰ which is more likely to be transnational compared to a first partnership, especially among first-generation minority members (Dupont et al., 2019b).

Table 9.2 Average age at partnership formation of first-generation minority members in a transnational partnership

	Mean (<i>sd</i>)	<i>N</i>
Turkish men	28.32 (7.21)	1,270
Turkish women	23.34 (5.11)	862
Moroccan men	33.18 (7.84)	3,190
Moroccan women	25.50 (7.44)	1,782

Data source BNR 2005–2015

In the preceding sections, I have suggested that the implementation of restrictive measures has a limited but reinforcing negative effect on the prevalence of transnational partnerships of Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium. Furthermore, I discussed the increased selectivity of minority members who can form a transnational partnership. The income requirement makes it harder for minority members with lower-income and middle-income levels to freely choose a partner, as we observe postponement of marriage among these groups. The income requirement could also explain why the odds to choose a transnational marriage increase for older minority members and decrease for younger minority members, as it takes time to meet all necessary requirements. In what follows, I discuss two additional behavioral reactions to the implementation of restrictive immigration policies.

9.3.3.2 Two additional consequences

The implementation of restrictive policies could also lead to an increased use of the ‘Europe route’ and to more couples having to maintain a long-distance

⁶⁰ Our data extraction BNR 2005–2015 includes the marriage history of minority members when living in Belgium. Which means first-generation minority members, especially those marrying at an older age in Belgium, could have formed previous partnerships in the origin country, making the partnership registered in Belgium a higher-order partnership.

relationship until they can meet the requirements to enable the partner migrant to migrate.

It is possible that a Europe route will become increasingly popular among transnational couples. A Europe route is a legal method to circumvent Belgian requirements regarding family reunification and formation on grounds of the free movement of persons (Kroeze, 2020). Freedom of movement is one of the cornerstones of the European Union and originally geared towards citizens of the European Union working in another member state. The expansion of mobility rights to family members of EU nationals, irrespective of their nationality, has also made these rights important for Belgian nationals wanting to benefit from mobility rights (EMN, 2017). When a Belgian national temporarily relocates to another EU country, he/she can be united with his/her transnational partner without having to meet strict⁶¹ restrictions because the family formation, in this case, is regulated by European not Belgian immigration laws. The European Directive 2004/38/EG states that EU citizens have the right to reside in another EU member state and form a family while living there. The directive grants mobile EU citizens the right to family formation. After the family formation process, the family can easily relocate to Belgium. This route is perfectly legal, provided that the stay in the EU member state has been 'genuine and effective.' It demands bureaucratic effort and time but is a viable option for Belgian sponsors unable or unwilling to meet the admission requirements. Indications of an increased use of a Europe route after the implementation of more restrictive immigration policies have been found in Denmark and Sweden (Kraler, 2010; Rytter, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2009).

To verify whether a Europe route becomes increasingly popular among transnational couples after 2011, I select all transnational partnerships in the BNR 2005–2015 dataset and determine which are registered in a neighboring⁶² country by a Turkish or Moroccan minority member with current Belgian nationality. Table

⁶¹ Belgian nationals and their partners may reside in another member state for three months without having to meet any conditions (EMN, 2017). The family must not, however, become an unreasonable burden on the social assistance system. After three months, the sponsor will have to comply with some conditions that are significantly less strict and less demanding than the requirements for third country nationals. A partner may automatically join workers and self-employed persons. Belgian nationals who are unemployed must provide evidence of sufficient resources and health insurance. Under the directive, Belgian nationals are exempt from having to fulfil any housing or integration requirements. Even a common household is not necessarily required.

⁶² The Netherlands, Germany, France, and Luxemburg

9.3 shows that the percentage of transnational partnerships that are potentially part of a Europe route varies randomly between 0.96 percent and 2.08 percent. Therefore, I find no evidence yet for an increased popularity of a Europe route after the implementation of restrictive measures in Belgium. It is, however, possible that the popularity of such a route increases after 2015 as it may take time for minority sponsors to move to another EU member state, be united with their partner and move back to Belgium.

Table 9.3 Percentage of all transnational partnerships registered in a neighboring country by a Turkish or Moroccan minority member with Belgian nationality

	Registered in neighboring countries	Total number of transnational partnerships
2005	1.19%	4,884
2006	0.96%	4,697
2007	1.37%	4,968
2008	1.39%	4,610
2009	1.40%	4,579
2010	1.63%	3,936
2011	1.62%	3,588
2012	2.08%	2,939
2013	1.48%	2,576
2014	1.61%	2,292
2015	2.06%	1,995

Data source: BNR 2005–2015

The restrictive measures do not determine whether one can register a transnational partnership but determine whether a partner migrant can migrate to Belgium and receive a residence permit. Therefore, a second consequence of the implementation of restrictive measures is that more couples might have to maintain a long-distance relationship until they meet the requirements to enable the transnational partner to migrate and legally stay in Belgium. To test this hypothesis, I select all transnational partnerships in the BNR 2005–2015 dataset and determine the length of time between registration of the partnership and arrival of the partner migrant in Belgium.

Table 9.4 shows that before 2011 most of the partner migrants arrived in Belgium within a year after registering the partnership (between 70% and 80%). Between 12 percent and 16 percent of the partner migrants arrived after two years or more, and a small percentage had not arrived in Belgium at the time of the data extraction (March 2018). From 2011 onwards, however, the percentage of partner migrants arriving within a year declines strongly to around 50 percent. Hence, the restrictive measures clearly delay the arrival of partner migrants in Belgium and force a portion of transnational couples to have a long-distance relationship over a long period of time. Qualitative research shows that this period of living apart can be emotionally and financially stressful and represent a threat to the stability of the relationship (Aybek, 2015; Aybek et al., 2015; Kraler, 2010; Sterckx et al., 2014; Straßburger & Aybek, 2013).

Table 9.4 indicates that after 2011, the percentage of partner migrants arriving within a year slowly increases again, possibly indicating a learning effect. Minority members could become more aware of the requirements that need to be met to be united with their transnational partner (Aybek, 2015; Sterckx et al., 2014). Furthermore, minority members could also wait to register their transnational partnership until they meet all requirements, reducing the risk of being rejected by the Immigration Office and avoiding the negative consequences associated with rejection.

It is possible that most of the long-distance couples eventually separate because the transnational partner could not legally reside in Belgium. However, Table 9.5 shows that although some of the transnational couples who were not united by March 2018 separated, a large share of them remained married. This could indicate that couples chose to maintain their long-distance relationship or that minority members (the sponsors) have migrated back to the origin country to live with their partner.

However, analyzing re-migration of minority members is difficult because the emigration of a Belgian resident is not automatically registered in the National Register.

Table 9.4 Partner migrants arriving in Belgium after the registration of the transnational partnership

	United after one year	United after two years	Not united by March 2018	N
2005	79.24	13.04	7.72	4,884 (100%)
2006	79.31	12.50	8.20	4,697 (100%)
2007	75.14	14.73	10.12	4,968 (100%)
2008	75.75	13.88	10.37	4,610 (100%)
2009	72.70	16.12	11.18	4,579 (100%)
2010	72.05	13.90	14.05	3,936 (100%)
2011	51.51	27.93	20.57	3,588 (100%)
2012	55.12	24.70	20.18	2,939 (100%)
2013	53.69	25.08	21.23	2,576 (100%)
2014	56.50	18.02	25.48	2,292 (100%)
2015	59.10	13.58	27.32	1,995 (100%)

Data source: BNR 2005–2015

Table 9.5 Relationship status of transnational partnerships in which the transnational partner has not arrived in Belgium by March 2018

	Separated by March 2018	N
2005	56.99%	377 (100%)
2006	57.14%	385 (100%)
2007	44.33%	503 (100%)
2008	42.03%	483 (100%)
2009	37.63%	526 (100%)
2010	32.09%	564 (100%)
2011	34.61%	760 (100%)
2012	25.47%	632 (100%)
2013	21.67%	586 (100%)
2014	14.12%	602 (100%)
2015	9.91%	555 (100%)

Data source: BNR 2005–2015

To conclude, I question the efficacy of stricter immigration policies implemented in several European countries, including Belgium, that target the prevalence of transnational partnerships for two reasons. First, the decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships predates the implementation of the restrictive legislation among the second generation. The restrictive measures merely reinforce an ongoing trend already occurring due to other, mainly attitudinal, mechanisms. Second, these restrictive measures may create or perpetuate inequalities regarding socioeconomic position, age, or gender, or a combination of these. They can indirectly target socioeconomically disadvantaged minority groups (such as Turkish and Moroccan minorities), create high levels of uncertainty among the individuals involved, and counteract processes of integration (Strik et al., 2013). Researching these possible (adverse) implications is highly relevant because, on the one hand, knowledge about the direct and indirect consequences of restrictive immigration policies is still sparse and, on the other hand, Belgian immigration legislation has become even more restrictive since 2011.⁶³

9.4 Limitations and future research opportunities

Although our analyses increase our understanding of the recent partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minority members, the processes of adaptation within these minority groups, and ethnic boundaries in Belgian society, remain certain shortcomings and uncertainties that raise new questions future research could address. I discuss limitations linked to the characteristics of the data sources analyzed in this dissertation. Next, I consider alternative approaches that could give more insight into the partner selection dynamics of Turkish and

⁶³ From March 2015 onwards, a fee of 160 euro is required to cover the administrative costs of an application for family formation when requested from abroad (EMN, 2017). In 2016, the period to fulfil the conditions for family formation was extended from three to five years after granting a temporary residence permit to the partner migrant. During this period, the Immigration Office can determine whether the conditions for family formation are still being fulfilled. If they are not, the Immigration Office can withdraw the residence permit of the partner migrant. Additionally, the maximum decision time for family formation requests granted to the Immigration Office was extended from six to nine months. In 2017, the standard fee for a partner migrant applying for a residence permit increased to 200 euro, and provable integration efforts became a new condition for maintaining a residence permit in Belgium. This law inserted a general residence condition into the Immigration Act: a foreign national needs to provide evidence of his/her willingness to integrate into society. If a person does not make a 'reasonable effort' to integrate, the Immigration Office terminate his/her permit to stay.

Moroccan minority members and, by extension, processes of adaptation within minority groups and the presence of ethnic boundaries in Belgian society.

9.4.1 Limitations related to the extraction of register data

Above, we have reviewed the implications of recently implemented restrictive immigration policies for the partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minority members residing in Belgium, although our data sources do not allow us to make a comprehensive evaluation of the changing policies. Both the possible behavioral reactions to restrictive measures and the possible creation or perpetuation of inequalities in the freedom to choose a partner need further scientific attention from policy evaluating research. I summarize the most important issues.

First, to analyze whether minority members postpone their transnational partnership until they can meet all requirements, choose a different partner (type), or remain single, information on all adult Turkish and Moroccan minority members living in Belgium, not just those members who successfully registered an official partnership, is necessary. Second, sponsors could re-migrate to the origin country to live with their partner if the latter is not allowed to migrate to Belgium. However, the emigration of Belgian residents is not automatically registered in the National Register. Third, the income requirement could be a main stumbling block for individuals wanting to form a transnational partnership and could create or perpetuate inequalities based on income, educational attainment, gender, or age that affect the freedom to choose a partner. Net remuneration incomes as well as employment status might be better indicators of whether minority members can meet the income requirement than the income measure analyzed here. Fourth, we limit our analyses to Turkish and Moroccan minorities living in Belgium. Although they are the two largest minority groups originating from third countries, evaluating the effect of changed policies among other groups, such as minority members from recently settled minority groups (e.g. Syria, Afghanistan, India), Belgians, or refugees, for example, would be very insightful. It is plausible that partner migration from other countries may be affected differently by the stricter requirements and that some minority groups' partner selection behavior may be affected to a larger extent compared to others (Strik et al., 2013).

Furthermore, regarding cohabitation, the extraction of the National Register has no information on cohabitations that are not legally registered. In 2004, Corijn and Lodewijkcks (2009) estimated the prevalence of informal cohabitation among Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium on the basis of household size registered in the National Register. However, although the number of non-married cohabiting couples among Turkish minorities remains relatively small, among Moroccan minority members, especially those in mixed partnerships or those belonging to the second generation. Hence, by including only legally registered cohabitation, we may have underestimated the prevalence of cohabitation and, by extension, of mixed partnerships as well.

A life course perspective could also provide a clearer overview of minority members' family formation behavior and help determine whether cohabitation is seen as a trial marriage or as an acceptable alternative to marriage. Previous studies among majority populations have developed several typologies based on the timing of childbirth. For example, if cohabitation is followed by marriage and childbirth, cohabitation can be considered a trial marriage (Heuveline & Timberlake, 2004; Kiernan, 2001). In addition, both qualitative and quantitative research shows that is relevant to not only include marriage and cohabitation but also dating relationships when studying partner selection of Turkish (and Moroccan) minorities (Corijn & Lodewijkcx, 2009; Van Kerckem et al., 2013; Wachter & de Valk, 2020). Dating experiences lay the foundation for more committed relationships as cohabitation and marriage. Hence, including this partnership type in a life course perspective could give more insight into partner selection dynamics of young minority members now and later in life.

A third limitation of our extraction of the National Register has to do with ethnicity. Ethnicity is a central concept in this dissertation, especially with regard to ethnic homogamy. However, as most of the analyses are based on register data, only information on nationality is available, and nationality at birth therefore defines ethnicity. This means that ethnic and religious differences within nationalities are obscured. For example, even though nationality at birth is the same for Berbers and Arabs in Morocco, and Alevi's and Kurds in Turkey, they are different ethnic groups. This means different norms, values, and traditions with regard to many aspects, including partner selection and family formation, and possibly differences regarding characteristics of the region of origin and the transnational ties with the origin region. We could, for example, expect the family formation of Arabs to be

more in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations compared to Berbers, as they are more orientated to the residence country as a consequence of different selection mechanisms at the start of Moroccan immigration to Belgium (see section 2.2.4).

An even more important consequence of defining ethnicity based on nationality at birth is that our research population does not include all individuals of Turkish or Moroccan descent living in Belgium, but only those born with a Turkish or Moroccan nationality. We exclude two groups of minority members: individuals with one Turkish or Moroccan parent and one Belgian parent, and minority members belonging to the third generation. First, children from mixed partnerships—in which one partner has Belgian nationality (either by birth or by acquisition) and one has Turkish/Moroccan nationality—are Belgian by birth and their partner choice is therefore missing from our data. Second, as explained in section 4.2.1, from 1991 onwards, individuals with foreign parents automatically acquire Belgian nationality at birth if at least one parent is born, raised, and residing in Belgium (Caestecker et al., 2016). These individuals then belong to the third generation. Given that marriages can take place from age 18 onwards and given that we are studying up to and including 2015, individuals born in Belgium between 1991 and 1997 that have at least one parent meeting the above criteria are Belgian by birth and therefore missing from our data extraction.

An alternative approach—which would include the partner choice of these two groups of minority members, and therefore give a better representation the Turkish and Moroccan minority population in Belgium—would be to analyze a data extraction of the National Register based on descent instead of nationality at birth. Obtaining such a data extraction would be highly relevant for future research because the number of individuals—born of mixed couples or born after 1991 and belonging to the third generation—who reach marriageable age is increasing (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009) and their partner selection dynamics remain unknown.

It is difficult to estimate how many partner choices we are missing in our analyses or how they might differ from the partner selection patterns observed in this dissertation. Corijn and Lodewijckx (2009) estimate, based on National Register data of 2004, that around 3000 to 4000 children of Turkish or Moroccan descent are born each year, 80 percent of them with Belgian nationality at birth. Regarding the partner selection of individuals born to mixed couples, I expect to find the prevalence of mixed partnerships to be higher because research has shown that

minority members with mixed parents are more likely to choose a mixed partnership themselves (Celikaksoy, 2012; van Zantvliet, Kalmijn, & Verbakel, 2015). Furthermore, with regard to the partner selection of third-generation members, I assume that the prevalence of transnational partnerships is low because transnational networks decrease in intensity over time and over successive generations, which reduces the strength of emotional ties, the sensitivity to kin obligations and the ability to negotiate and form a transnational partnership. Furthermore, I suspect the prevalence of local co-ethnic partnerships to be high because of the importance of ethnic homogamy in the Turkish and Moroccan family system. However, I expect the prevalence of mixed partnerships to be higher compared to first- and second-generation minority members as the likelihood to choose a mixed partnership increases over successive generations. Third-generation members may experience less third party influence and social control when choosing a partner, and therefore less adverse reactions to a possible mixed partnership, because autonomy in the partner selection increases over time and over successive generations. In addition, both third-generation members and their second-generation parents are born and/or raised in Belgium, potentially reducing social distance between minority and majority populations. Growing up together may blur ethnic distance and lead to more mixed partnerships over time. Nevertheless, considering the disadvantaged position of Turkish and Moroccan minority members and the stigmatization regarding these minority groups, it would be interesting to research whether the prevalence of mixed marriages continues to increase over time and over successive generations, as observed in this dissertation.

National Register contains population data, which makes it useful in analyzing demographic behavior and trends over time. It is less suited, however, to providing explanations of the observed behavior. We use either sociodemographic variables as proxies for attitudinal aspects or the information from a small survey on Turkish minority members in Flanders. Hence, several questions and uncertainties remain, which large-scale survey research could answer and resolve. First, why is the prevalence of legally registered cohabitation higher among first-generation minority members? We suggest this could be related to high levels of uncertainty regarding their financial situation or residence permit, or partner selections made while still living in the origin country. However, we were not able to verify these assumptions. Second, are the parental attitudes regarding partner selection, including the association with experiencing ethnic prejudice, similar among

Moroccan minority members and Turkish minorities? Third, what is the effect of educational attainment on partner selection behavior of first-generation minority members? In addition, how is educational attainment related to a choice to cohabit instead of marrying? Including the highest diploma obtained at the time of partnership formation, regardless of where it was obtained from, should eliminate the shortcomings we encountered with regard to measuring educational attainment levels of minority members. Fourth, future research on social distance between groups and intermarriage should also focus on religious homogamy besides ethnic homogamy as indicator of group boundaries (Carol, 2014; Kalmijn, 1998; Van Kerckem et al., 2014; van Zantvliet et al., 2015). Carol (2014) for example compares attitudes towards religious and ethnic homogamy among second-generation Turkish minority members and reveals that religious endogamy attitudes are stronger than ethnic endogamy attitudes, and they are more intensely transmitted from parents to children. The author suggests this shows that group boundaries exist along religious lines, and religious homogamy may even be a better indicator of group boundaries compared to ethnic homogamy. The qualitative study of Van Kerckem et al. (2014) for example concludes that Turkish minority members experience less adverse social reactions to choosing an ethnically mixed partnership when the partner has or converts to the same religion.

Finally, several questions and uncertainties remain which could be answered and resolved by qualitative research. First, what are the dynamics behind the strong effect of having children born out of wedlock on the likelihood to cohabit? Are these minority members choosing an alternative lifestyle or trying to minimize adverse social reactions to their deviant family behavior. Second, the partner selection behavior of Turkish and Moroccan minority members changed drastically the past decade, opportunities arise for qualitative research to study attitudinal mechanisms behind partner selection behavior. How do minority members handle the inability to form a transnational partnership? How do minority members negotiate their choice to form a mixed partnership? How does being in a mixed partnership affect intergroup attitudes of the partners and their family members? Does intermarriage erode ethnic boundaries and negative intergroup-attitudes? Rodríguez-García et al. (2016), for example show in Spain, that both partners in a mixed partnership suffer from social discrimination, especially from family members. The authors also note ethnic prejudice towards outgroup-members among the partners themselves.

Besides these remaining questions, I discuss three additional suggestions for future research in the following section.

9.4.2 Additional suggestions for future research

First, the increasing prevalence of mixed partnerships among Turkish and Moroccan minority members in Belgium offers researchers the opportunity to gain more insight into the underlying dynamics and the implications regarding group boundaries (in Belgian society). Elwert (2018), for example, claims the prevalence of mixed partnerships reflects only the frequency of the partner type, not its nature. The question of whether mixed partnerships reflect societal openness or a hierarchy of minority members cannot be resolved without also accounting for patterns of assortative mating within these unions. Marriage is related to status (Kalmijn, 1998); adopting the openness perspective would mean that mixed partnerships are not expected to differ from homogamous partnerships among majority members with regard to status homogamy. If mixed partnerships are related to low individual attractiveness in the marriage market or if there are systematic patterns of hypergamy and hypogamy, that is, majority members marrying up or down in characteristics such as age and education, the conclusion could be that the partners do not regard each other as social equals (R. K. Merton, 1941). Inter-marriage patterns therefore have the potential to reveal implicit hierarchies of minority members in the marriage market. Hence, researching patterns of assortative mating within mixed partnerships of Turkish and Moroccan minority members could give more insight into the implications regarding ethnic boundaries. It could also clarify the association between lower levels of educational attainment and a higher likelihood to marry mixed, which for now remains puzzling.

Furthermore, our results show that migration generation, operationalized based on the stage of socialization in which a person migrated, is an important factor. However, 'generational' dynamics in partner selection and possibly in processes of adaptation could be more complex than a simple differentiation between two, three or four generations. In a context of continuous immigrant replenishment—especially through family reunification and formation—generation might be less relevant as a proxy for one's orientation to the residence country (or the origin country for that matter) (Lieberson, 1973). The continuing influx of individuals from the origin country may refresh an individual's ethnic identity and traditional norms

and practices, as well as maintain transnational ties, beyond the first generation. Additionally, immigrant replenishment creates a situation wherein generation and cohort do not overlap: second-generation members can be the same age and grow up in the same context as third-generation members. Hence, it could prove insightful to explore this complexity by, for example, analyzing current (and future) partner selection behavior of different cohorts to establish the difference between period and generational effects more clearly.

A final potential future research area is a comparison of partner selection behavior of minority members in Europe with the prevailing behavior in Turkey and Morocco. As indicated earlier, family systems in origin countries are subject to change, most often in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations. However, how these changes affect the behavior of minority members living in Belgium currently remains unclear.

9.5 Epilogue

In this dissertation, I increase our understanding of the partner selection dynamics of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium. My work contributes to the literature on partner selection in four significant ways. First, it contains a comprehensive overview of the most recent partner selection behavior of Belgium's largest two ethnic minority populations originating from third countries. The overview, based on National Register data, shows that minority members' partner choices are rapidly changing after having been consistent for decades. From the trend of transnational marriages, this dissertation firmly concludes that the previously reported decline until 2008 indeed was the first phase of a structural downward trend, resulting in a gradually diminishing preference for transnational marriages up until 2015. This decline is mostly compensated for by an increase in the prevalence of local co-ethnic marriages, but for most minority members, it is also compensated for by an increase in the prevalence of mixed marriages. Second, my work advances the understanding of the role strict immigration requirements play in the partner selection behavior of minority members. The expected negative effect on the prevalence of transnational partnerships is confirmed, although, that effect is limited. The possibility of an increased selectivity of which minority members can successfully form a transnational partnership could be highly relevant to future policy evaluating research. Third, it highlights the role minority parents play in explaining the recently observed

changes in partner selection behavior. A combination of National Register and survey data shows, on the one hand, that direct parental influence in the partner selection process declines over time but remains highly relevant and well-respected and does not interfere with freedom of choice. On the other hand, focusing on partner selection preferences of both parents and adolescents makes it clear that the orientation of minority members shifted from the origin country to the local marriage market. Although local co-ethnic partnerships are clearly preferred, an openness towards mixed partnerships is growing. Hence, changing attitudes about parental influence and preferred partner types could help to explain the recent partner selection trends. Fourth, it shows that the phenomenon of cohabitation is an increasingly acceptable alternative to marriage for Turkish and Moroccan minorities, driven by classical assimilation but possibly also other underlying mechanisms. This makes cohabitations, and its dynamics, indispensable for future research on partner selection among these minorities.

Moreover, the contribution my work makes to the research field of minority members' integration processes and ethnic boundaries is twofold. First, it advances the understanding of the processes of adaptation among long-established migrant communities by showing that their family systems change in line with the Second Demographic Theory's expectations. This assimilation towards the prevailing family system is in contrast to the expectations of migration and integration theories that consider family formation behavior to be one of the most rigid dimensions in processes of adaptation. However, this does not mean that minority members are completely disengaged from the collectivistic family system. Furthermore, it is not only minority members with higher levels of structural and social integration who adapt more easily to the Belgian family system. The partner selection behavior of other minority members—for example, first generation members or members with low educational attainment—is also changing. All minority members combine values and practices of two contradictory systems in various ways, resulting in different adaptation processes depending on individual characteristics but also on, for example, changing immigration policies, the strength of transnational ties, experiences ethnic prejudice, levels of uncertainty, and evolutions of family systems in the origin countries. Second, my work discloses additional details about the existence of ethnic boundaries between minority and majority members in Belgian society. It shows that Turkish minority members frequently experience ethnic prejudice in their social interaction with Flemish majority members, especially minority

members with a lower socioeconomic position, men, or partner migrants. The perception of ethnic boundaries has a negative effect on minority parents' openness towards mixed partnerships for their children. Consequently, experiencing ethnic prejudice can consolidate and perpetuate ethnic boundaries, as minority members behave according to symbolic boundaries by marrying co-ethnic partners. However, the low prevalence of mixed marriages increases slowly among almost all minority members, including women and lower educated minority members. This indicates that the social resistance towards mixed marriages may be decreasing. Social and religious norms, which mainly affect women's partner selection, may be becoming less strict. An increasing prevalence of mixed partnerships could contribute to changing boundaries between ethnic groups in the future as well as to changing the social structure of society.

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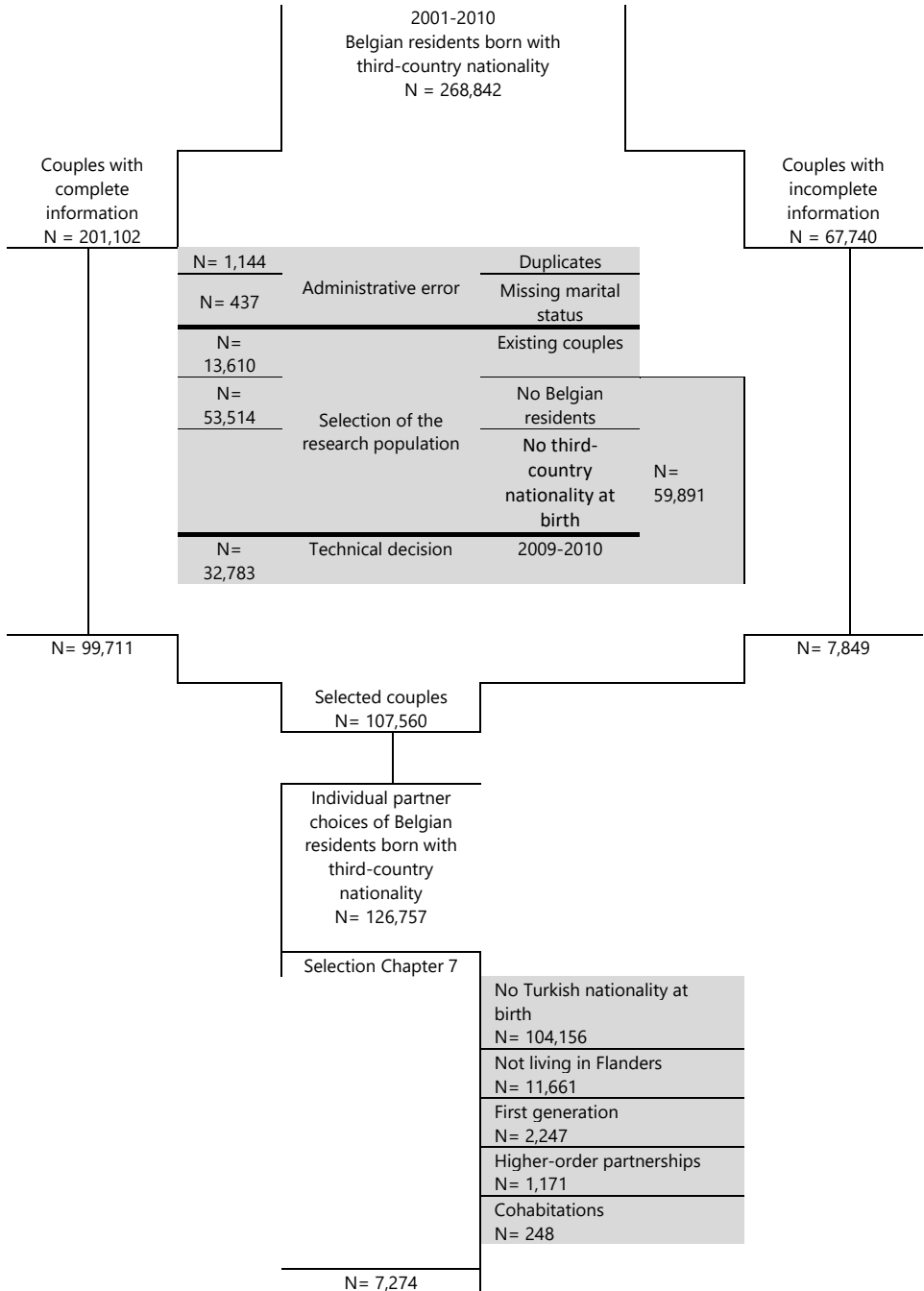
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Appendices.

Appendix 1



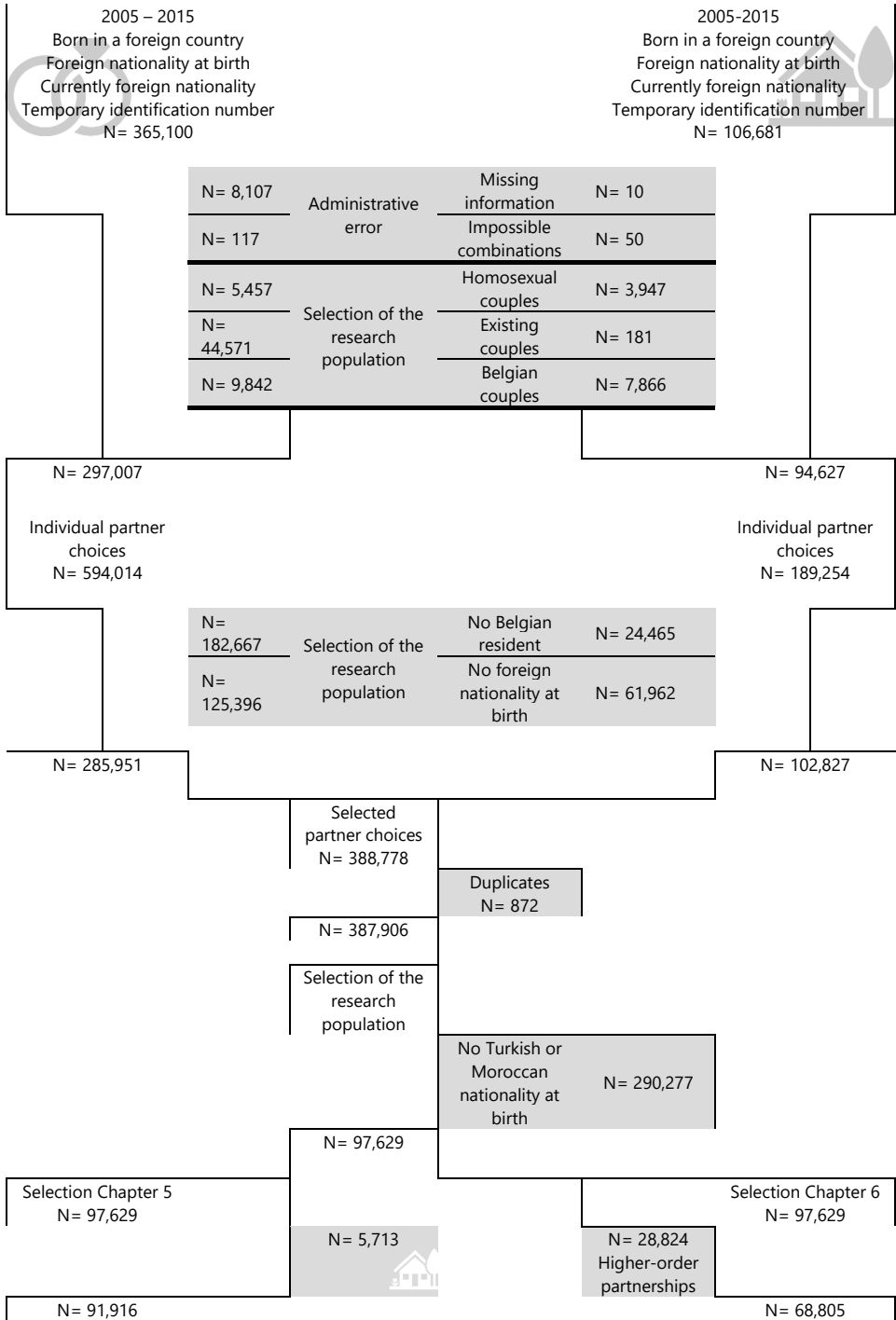
Appendix 2

Table A.1 Percentage of transnational partners of Turkish and Moroccan nationals arriving in Belgium, per marriage year (*N* = 41,991)

	Same year	1 year later	2 years later	3 years later	More than 3 years later	Not in Belgium by 2018	Total number of transnational partnerships
2005	30.5	48.8	8.7	1.9	2.4	7.7	4,886 (100%)
2006	30.7	48.6	7.8	2.1	2.6	8.2	4,697 (100%)
2007	29.1	46.1	9.7	2.5	2.5	10.1	4,970 (100%)
2008	29.5	46.3	9.1	2.4	2.3	10.4	4,637 (100%)
2009	29.4	43.5	10.3	2.4	3.2	11.2	4,680 (100%)
2010	29.5	43.0	6.5	2.8	4.2	14.0	4,049 (100%)
2011	25.2	27.5	12.4	6.4	7.9	20.3	3,746 (100%)
2012	26.9	29.6	11.8	6.4	5.2	20.1	3,143 (100%)
2013	23.1	31.9	13.8	5.9	3.9	21.4	2,741 (100%)
2014	26.1	30.7	12.3	5.5	0.3	25.2	2,395 (100%)
2015	26.9	32.7	12.6	0.7	0.0	26.9	2,047 (100%)

Data source: BNR 2005–2015

Appendix 3



Appendix 4

In this appendix, the parental preferences of respondents with children and those without concerning their children's future partners—as analyzed in Chapters 7 and 8—are compared. The latter were asked to imagine which partner type they would want for their children if they had any.

Tables A.2 and A.3 compare the parental preferences of respondents with and without children for future partner types for sons. The proportion of respondents answering in-between on all three items (indicated in grey) is larger for respondents with children than for respondents with no children (42.9% compared to 24.3%). However, the absolute numbers show that this difference actually involves only three cases. This stresses again how cautious we need to be when interpreting results of the Sexpert survey, because its sample sizes are (very) small.

Tables A.4 and A.5 compare the parental preferences of respondents with and without children for future partner types for daughters. Here, four differences can be shown, indicated in grey. In general, respondents without children are more likely find 'marrying a native Belgian' important compared to respondents with children. However, again, the differences in absolute numbers are very small, which puts the significance of these differences in perspective.

Finally, Table A.6 shows that the results as reported in Chapter 7 are not influenced by the addition of the variable 'having children' to the multivariate model. In Chapter 8, I have included this variable in the multivariate analyses at the request of anonymous reviewers, which leads to the same conclusion.

**Table A.2 Parental preferences for future partner types for sons:
Respondents without children (N = 144, 100%)**

		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	11 (18.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (29.5%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	7 (11.5%)	3 (4.9%)
	Important	5 (8.2%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (27.9%)
In-between	Unimportant	1 (2.7%)	1 (2.7%)	9 (24.3%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	9 (24.3%)	4 (10.8%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (35.1%)
Important	Unimportant	3 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (19.6%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.3%)	7 (15.2%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25 (54.3%)

Data source: Sexpert survey

**Table A.3 Parental preferences for future partner types for sons:
Respondents with children (N = 108, 100%)**

		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	6 (10.7%)	3 (5.4%)	14 (25.0%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	11 (19.6%)	8 (14.3%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	13 (23.2%)
In-between	Unimportant	1 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (25.0%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	12 (42.9%)	5 (17.9%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (10.7%)
Important	Unimportant	1 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (20.8%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	2 (8.3%)	2 (8.3%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (58.3%)

Data source: Sexpert survey

**Table A.4 Parental preferences for future partner types for daughters:
Respondents without children (N = 137, 100%)**

		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	15 (17.4%)	0 (0.0%)	29 (33.7%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	12 (14.0%)	4 (4.7%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (30.2%)
In-between	Unimportant	3 (10.3%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (31.0%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	7 (24.1%)	4 (13.8%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (20.7%)
Important	Unimportant	4 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (9.1%)
	In-between	2 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (13.6%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (50.0%)

Data source: Sexpert survey

**Table A.5 Parental preferences for future partner types for daughters:
Respondents with children (N = 119, 100%)**

		Local co-ethnic		
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey	Unimportant	In-between	Important
Unimportant	Unimportant	7 (8.8%)	2 (2.5%)	21 (26.3%)
	In-between	1 (1.3%)	15 (18.8%)	11 (13.8%)
	Important	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.3%)	20 (25.0%)
In-between	Unimportant	4 (15.4%)	3 (11.5%)	5 (19.2%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	8 (30.8%)	2 (7.7%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (15.4%)
Important	Unimportant	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (30.8%)
	In-between	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)	2 (15.4%)
	Important	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)	5 (38.5%)

Data source: Sexpert survey

Table A.6 Binomial logistic regressions considering ethnicity unimportant: also controlling for having children

	Considering ethnicity unimportant (partner of daughters)		Considering ethnicity unimportant (partner of sons)	
	Results of Chapter 7 b (SE)	Controlled for having children b (SE)	Results of Chapter 7 b (SE)	Controlled for having children b (SE)
Intercept	-0.06 (0.89)	-0.56 (0.84)	0.56 (0.80)	0.26 (0.73)
Age	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Sex				
Woman	-0.77 (0.40)	-0.65 (0.41)	-0.50 (0.41)	-0.36 (0.42)
Man				
Migration generation				
First				
Second	0.22 (0.34)	0.34 (0.35)	-0.48 (0.31)	-0.39 (0.31)
Educational attainment				
Primary and lower secondary	0.24 (0.37)	0.23 (0.37)	-0.40 (0.33)	-0.42 (0.33)
Higher secondary				
Tertiary	0.67 (0.45)	0.80 (0.46)	-0.16 (0.44)	-0.07 (0.44)
Religious attendance				
Never, or on special occasions				
At least monthly	-1.68 (0.80)*	-1.56 (0.57)*	-0.91 (0.62)	-0.43 (0.51)
At least weekly	-1.25 (0.47)**	-1.45 (0.65)*	-0.27 (0.43)	-0.35 (0.51)
Gender * religious attendance				
Woman* at least monthly	1.09 (0.97)	0.95 (0.98)	0.47 (0.80)	0.36 (0.81)
Woman * at least weekly	0.77 (0.79)	0.77 (0.80)	0.62 (0.66)	0.57 (0.66)
Having children				
Yes				
No		-0.60 (0.33)		-0.47 (0.29)

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Appendix 5

Table A.7 shows the operationalization of the trichotomous dependent variables analyzed in Chapter 8. A "1" indicates parents with a distinct preference for ethnically homogamous partnerships and less openness to interethnic partnerships. They find a partner of Turkish descent (living in Turkey and/or living in Belgium) to be important, and a partner of Belgian descent unimportant or in between. A "2" indicates parents that do show openness to interethnic partnerships without excluding a homogamous partnership. These respondents find a partner of Belgian descent important, regardless of their answers on the other two items concerning a partner of Turkish descent. Additionally, respondents who find the choice of a Belgian partner to be of in-between importance and a partner of Turkish descent to be unimportant are included in this category, together with respondents who do not consider ethnicity of any importance regarding the partner selection of their children (they answered unimportant on all three items). In this third category, a "3" indicates parents that have no distinct preference regarding the ethnicity (Turkish or Belgian) of the future partner of their child.

Table A.7 Operationalization of openness towards mixed partnerships:

"1" = less openness towards mixed partnerships, "2" = more openness towards mixed partnerships, "3" = no distinct preference regarding ethnicity

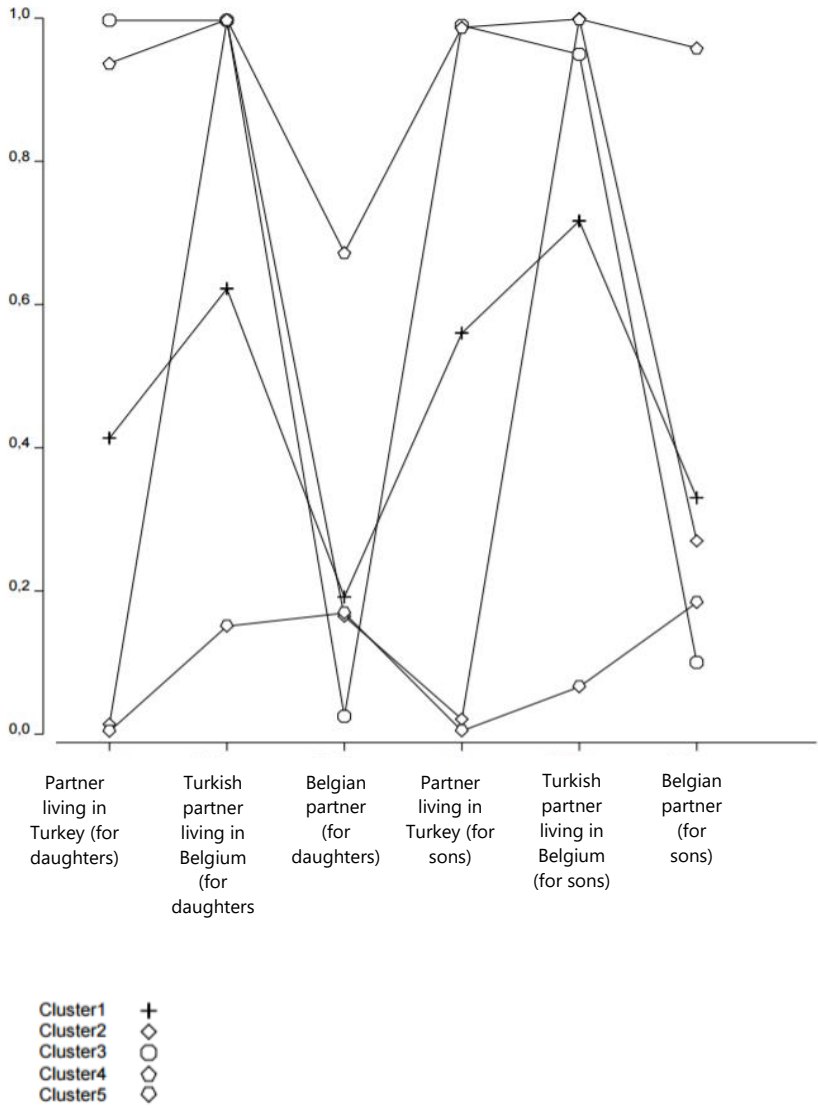
		Local co-ethnic		
		Unimportant	In-between	Important
Native Belgian	Partner living in Turkey			
	Unimportant	2	3	1
	In-between	3	3	1
	Important	1	1	1
In-between	Unimportant	2	3	1
	In-between	3	3	1
	Important	1	1	1
Important	Unimportant	2	2	2
	In-between	2	2	2
	Important	2	2	2

This conceptual classification is validated by a latent class analysis in Latent Gold on all six items used to operationalize the trichotomous variables. All are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very unimportant*) to 5 (*very important*). The variables were obtained from the following questions, asked separately for male and female children: "How important is it to you that the future marriage partner of your child is (1) of Turkish descent and currently lives in Turkey, (2) of Turkish descent and currently living in Belgium, or (3) of Belgian descent?" These six variables were recoded from five categories into three: 1 (*unimportant*), 2 (*in-between*), and 3 (*important*).

The latent class analysis shows that a model with 5 clusters has the best model fit (See Figure A.1).

- Cluster 1: parents with no distinct preferences who mainly answered in-between
- Cluster 2: parents with a distinct preference for local co-ethnic partnerships with Turkish minority members living in Belgium
- Cluster 3: parents with a preference for ethnic homogamy, regardless of the residence country of the future partner
- Cluster 4: parents indicating they find all items important
- Cluster 5: parents indicating they find all items unimportant

Figure A.1 Graphical result of latent class analysis on parental attitudes regarding ethnicity of future partner of their child(ren)



The first cluster is similar to the third category of the trichotomous variable—openness towards mixed partnerships, the so-called in-between category.

The second and third cluster, combined, are similar to the first category of the trichotomous variable—parents who find ethnic homogamy important, without showing openness towards mixed partnerships with Belgian partners.

The fourth and fifth cluster, combined, are similar to the second cluster of the trichotomous variable—parents who show openness towards mixed partnerships with Belgian partners.

The only difference between the result of the latent class analysis and the operationalization of the trichotomous variables is that parents who find a Belgian partner important are all included in the second category, regardless of their answers on the other two items regarding Turkish partners. This choice is made because my research aim is to differentiate between parents that show openness towards mixed partnerships and parents that show no openness towards this partner type.

Appendix 6

Figures A.2–A.25 display the trends in partner selection depending on sex, rank of marriage, and migration generation of minority members marrying between 2005 and 2015. These figures indicate that the trends over time are rather similar between the 1.5 and first generation of each subpopulation. The 1.5 and first generation are therefore combined into what is called ‘the first generation.’ The one exception are the trends of 1.5- and first-generation Moroccan men marrying for the first time (see Figures A.14–A.15). As discussed in Chapters 5 and 9, first-generation Moroccan men have a distinctive partner selection pattern compared to other minority members, for reasons that are currently unclear.

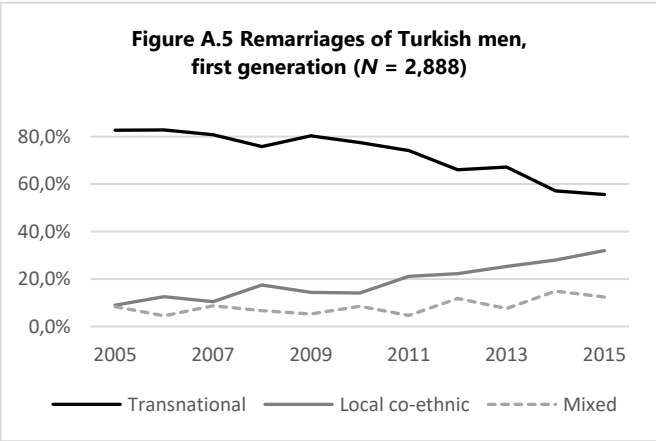
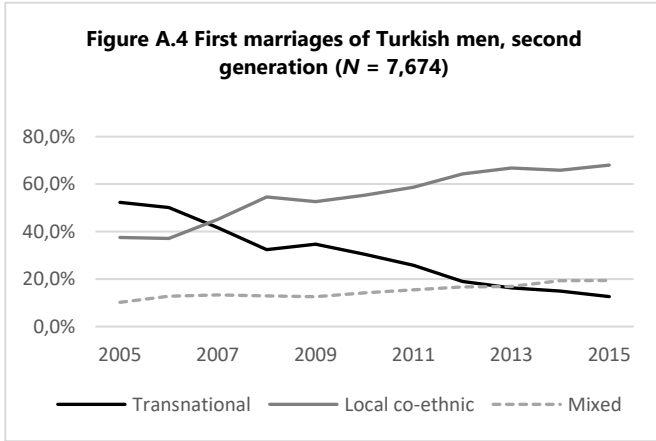
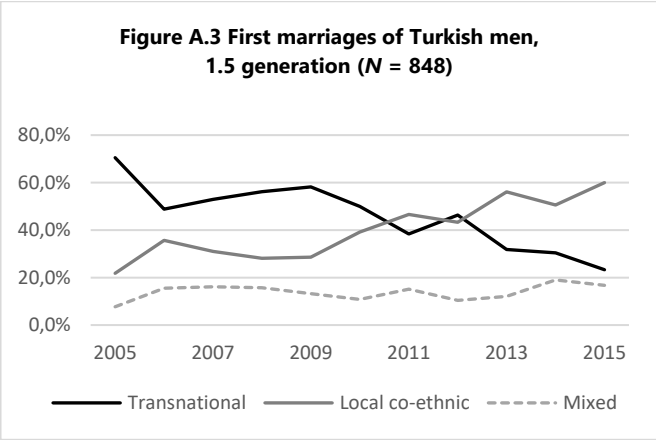
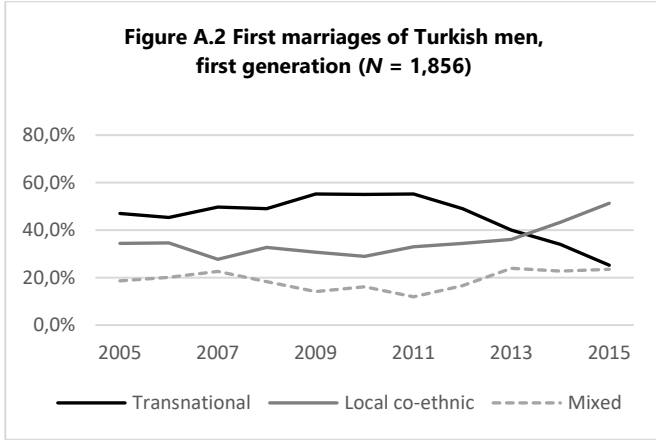


Figure A.6 Remarriages of Turkish men, 1.5 generation (N = 256)

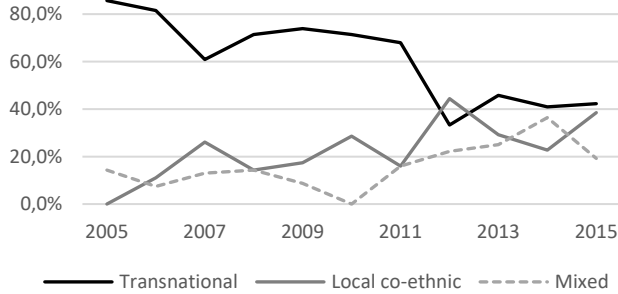


Figure A.7 Remarriages of Turkish men, second generation (N = 1,261)

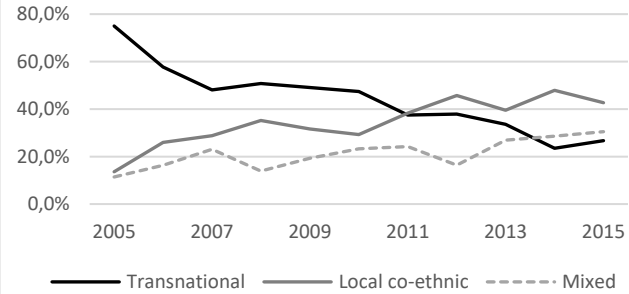


Figure A.8 First marriages of Turkish women, first generation (N = 829)

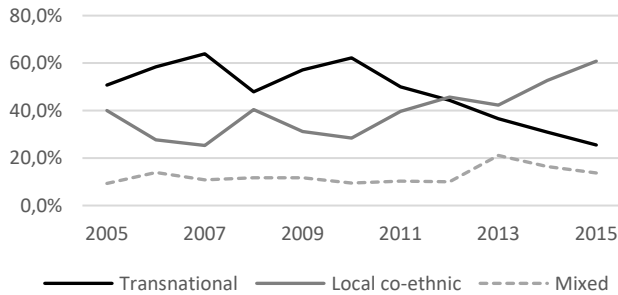


Figure A.9 First marriages of Turkish women, 1.5 generation (N = 894)

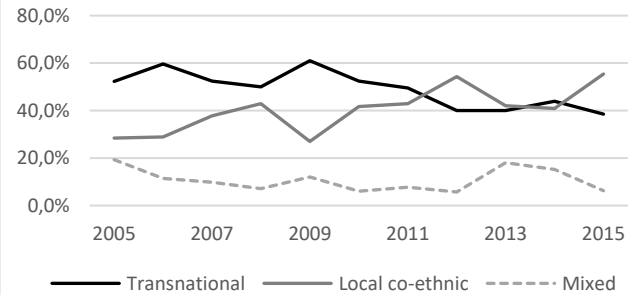


Figure A.10 First marriages of Turkish women, second generation (N = 8,376)

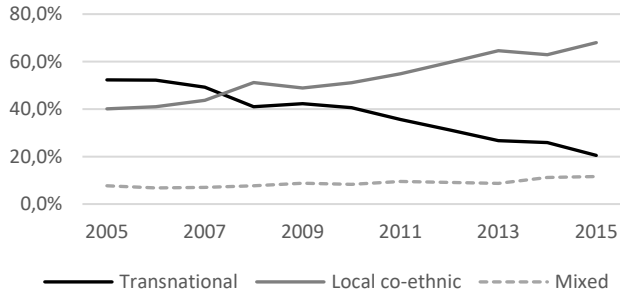


Figure A.11 Remarriages of Turkish women, first generation (N = 983)

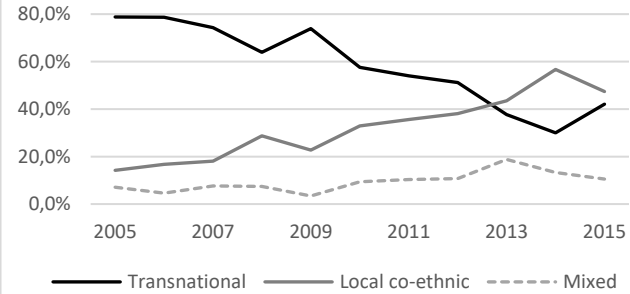


Figure A.12 Remarriages of Turkish women, 1.5 generation (N = 211)

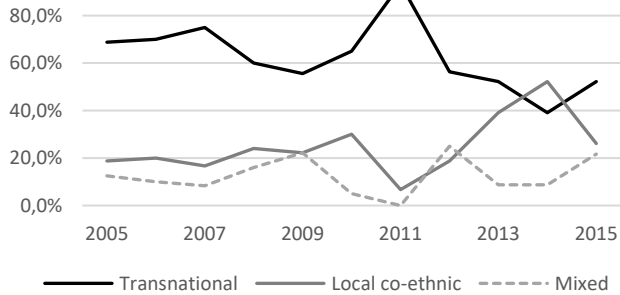


Figure A.13 Remarriages of Turkish women, second generation (N = 1,407)

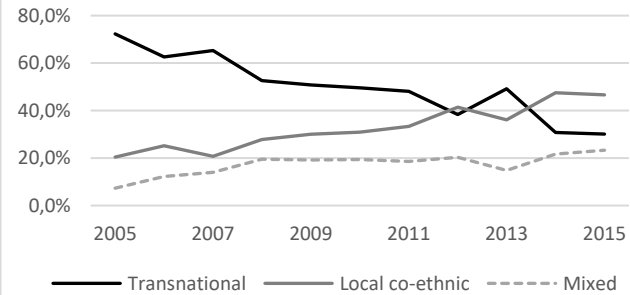


Figure A.14 First marriages of Moroccan men, first generation (N = 6,088)

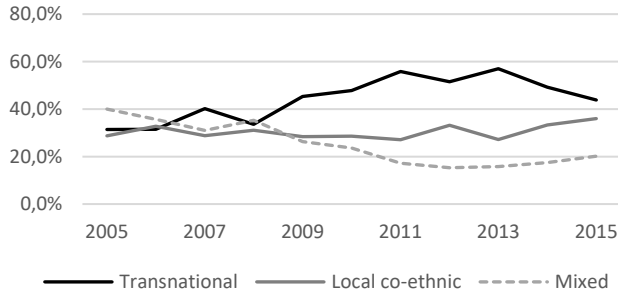


Figure A.15 First marriages of Moroccan men, 1.5 generation (N = 1,095)

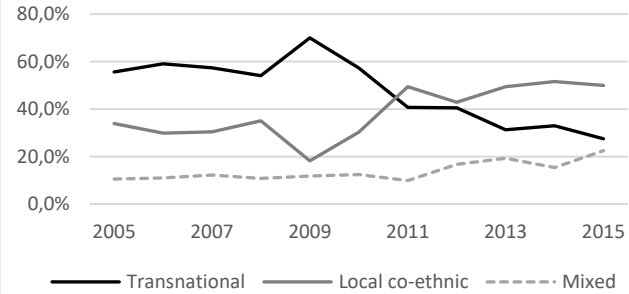


Figure A.16 First marriages of Moroccan men, second generation (N = 14,440)

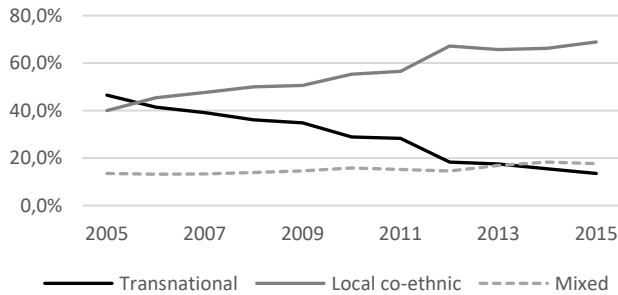


Figure A.17 Remarriages of Moroccan men, first generation (N = 11,121)

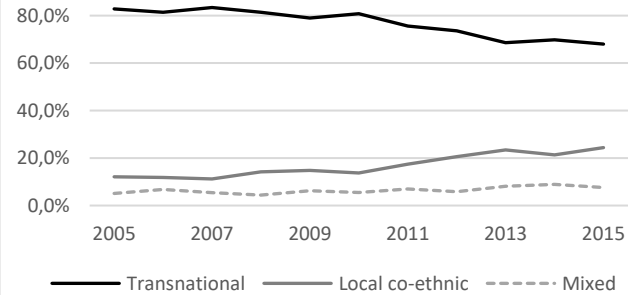


Figure A.18 Remarriages of Moroccan men, 1.5 generation (N = 678)

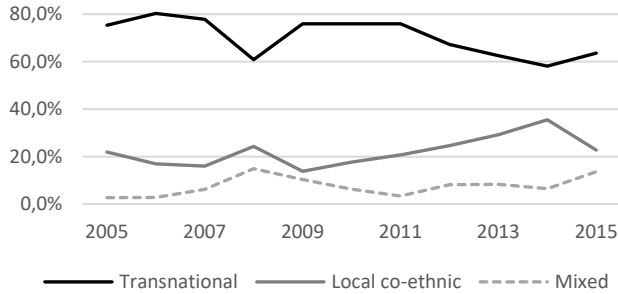


Figure A.19 Remarriages of Moroccan men, second generation (N = 2,937)

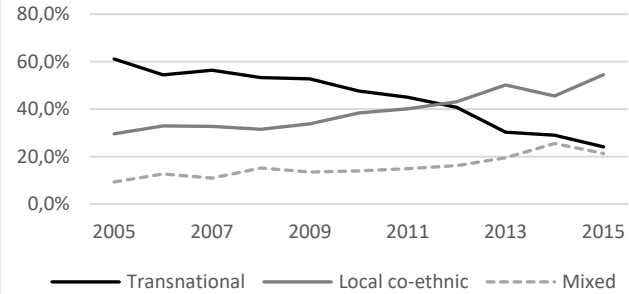


Figure A.20 First marriages of Moroccan women, first generation (N = 2,773)

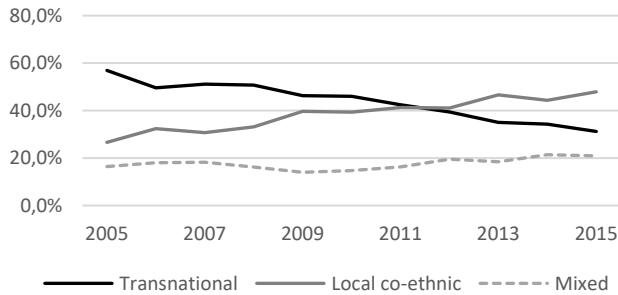


Figure A.21 First marriages of Moroccan women, 1.5 generation (N = 1,081)

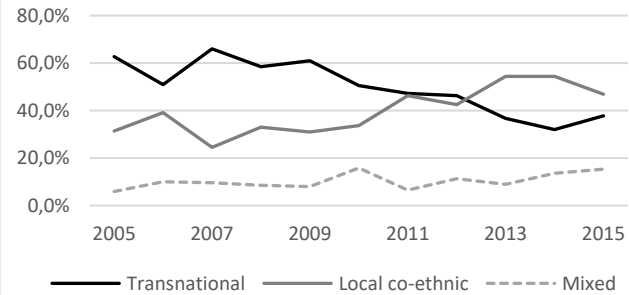


Figure A.22 First marriages of Moroccan women, second generation (N = 14,691)

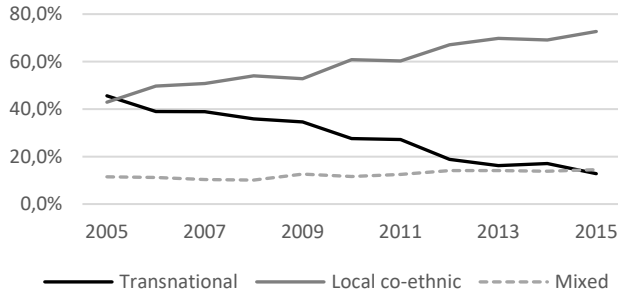


Figure A.23 Remarriages of Moroccan women, first generation (N = 5,364)

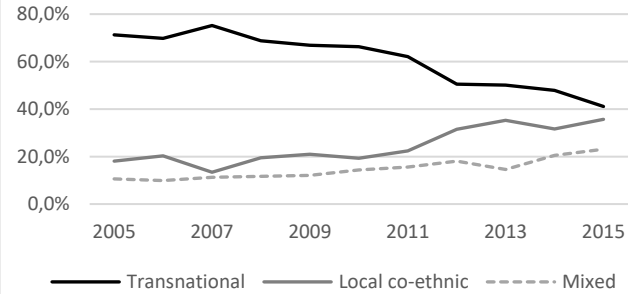


Figure A.24 Remarriages of Moroccan women, 1.5 generation (N = 476)

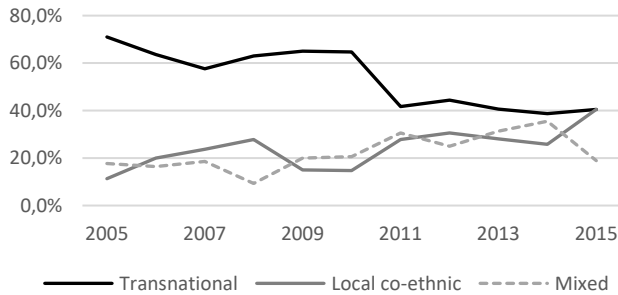
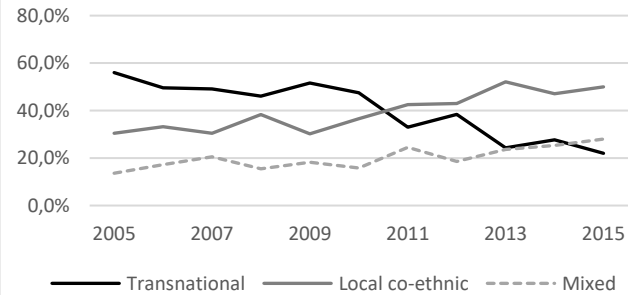


Figure A.25 Remarriages of Moroccan women, second generation (N = 3,689)



Appendix 7

In the analyses of Chapter 6, the first and 1.5 generation are also combined in what is called 'the first generation.' Table A.8 shows the distribution of partnership type according to ethnicity, sex, and migration generation. With regard to first partnerships that are cohabitations, the 1.5 generation occupies a middle position between the first and second generation.

Table A.8 Distribution of partnership type according to three migration generations

		Marriage	Cohabitation	N
Turkish men	1 st gen.	79.93%	20.07%	2,322 (100%)
	1.5 gen.	88.15%	11.85%	962 (100%)
	2 nd gen.	93.41%	6.59%	8,215 (100%)
Turkish women	1 st gen.	77.19%	22.81%	1,074 (100%)
	1.5 gen.	92.16%	7.84%	970 (100%)
	2 nd gen.	95.26%	4.74%	8,793 (100%)
Moroccan men	1 st gen.	88.60%	11.40%	6,871 (100%)
	1.5 gen.	89.31%	10.69%	1,226 (100%)
	2 nd gen.	94.27%	5.73%	15,317 (100%)
Moroccan women	1 st gen.	84.78%	15.22%	3,271 (100%)
	1.5 gen.	91.92%	8.08%	1,176 (100%)
	2 nd gen.	94.12%	5.88%	15,608 (100%)
				65,805
Data source: BNR 2005–2015				

Table A.9 shows the distribution of cohabitation according to partner type for three migration generations. With regard to co-ethnic partnerships that are cohabitations instead of marriages, the 1.5 generation occupies a middle position between the first and second generation. Among mixed partnerships, the highest prevalence of cohabitation is found among the members of the 1.5 generation, followed by the first then the second generation.

Table A.9 Prevalence of legally registered cohabitation according to partner type and three migration generations

	First generation		1.5 generation		Second generation	
	Co-ethnic	Mixed	Co-ethnic	Mixed	Co-ethnic	Mixed
Marriage	90.54%	70.66%	95.09%	66.43%	98.01%	74.96%
Cohabitation	9.46%	29.34%	4.91%	33.57%	1.99%	25.04%
<i>N</i>	9,959 (100%)	3,579 (100%)	3,625 (100%)	709 (100%)	40,128 (100%)	7,805 (100%)

Data source BNR 2005–2015

Based on Tables A.8 and A.9, and bearing in mind the similar partner selection trends of the first and 1.5 generations, which are displayed in Appendix 4, I chose to combine the first and 1.5 generation into what I call the first generation. Table A.10 shows that the impact of this decision on the multivariate analyses of Chapter 6 is small. The multivariate regression models estimating the odds to cohabit instead of marrying are built for first-generation members as well as first- and 1.5-generation members combined, as reported in Chapter 6. I observe two differences, which are indicated in grey. First, in M1, for Moroccan men the effect of forming a partnership at a younger compared to an average age is significant for first-generation members, but is not when first- and 1.5-generation members are combined. Second, in M2, for Turkish women the interaction effect between partner type and having children born before the registration of the partnership is significant for first-generation members, but is not when first- and 1.5-generation members are combined.

**Table A.10 Odds ratios for cohabiting versus being married:
'First generation' operationalized in two different ways**

		Turkish men		Turkish women		Moroccan men		Moroccan women	
		1 st and 1.5 gen.	1 st gen.	1 st and 1.5 gen.	1 st gen.	1 st and 1.5 gen.	1 st gen.	1 st and 1.5 gen.	1 st gen.
		N =	N =	N =	N =	N =	N =	N =	N =
		3,284	2,322	2,044	1,074	8,097	6,871	4,447	3,271
M1	Intercept	0.024***	0.031***	0.029***	0.047***	0.011***	0.012***	0.023***	0.029***
	Year of partnership formation	1.185***	1.197***	1.170***	1.192***	1.177***	1.184***	1.168***	1.180***
	Mixed partnership	4.868***	4.805***	3.765***	4.341***	7.966***	7.751***	3.246***	3.108***
	Age at partnership formation								
	Younger	0.528**	0.525**	0.435**	0.346**	0.772	0.737*	0.240***	0.279***
	Older	2.397***	2.204***	2.125***	1.704**	2.701***	2.404***	2.768***	2.098***
	Child(ren) born before partnership	5.883***	4.814***	8.090***	5.341***	7.793***	8.558***	6.495***	6.408***
M2	Intercept	0.022***	0.028***	0.028***	0.045***	0.008***	0.009***	0.020***	0.026***
	Year of partnership formation	1.182***	1.195***	1.166***	1.184***	1.183***	1.190***	1.172***	1.184***
	Mixed partnership	6.162***	5.783***	4.496***	5.426***	12.814* **	11.726* **	4.363***	3.834***
	Age at partnership formation								
	Younger	0.542**	0.528**	0.446*	0.356**	0.714*	0.680**	0.256***	0.292***
	Older	2.367***	2.176***	2.053***	1.672**	2.714***	2.385***	2.776***	2.104***
		Child(ren) born before partnership	7.788***	6.013***	9.468***	6.476***	17.379* **	18.439* **	9.381***
	Mixed*Child(ren) born before partnership	0.483**	0.540*	0.498	0.341*	0.192***	0.182***	0.389***	0.485**

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Appendix 8

Table A.11 shows the distribution of considering ethnicity unimportant (regarding the partner of daughters or sons) according to three migration generations. The 1.5 generation occupies a middle position between the first and the second generation when the partner of sons is considered. With regard to the partner of daughters, the highest percentage of respondents indicating ethnicity as unimportant is found among 1.5-generation members. As less than 20 respondents belong to the 1.5 generation, I chose to include them in the second generation.

Table A.11 Distribution of considering ethnicity unimportant (regarding the partner of daughters and sons) according to migration generation

Migration generation	Considering ethnicity unimportant (partner of daughters)			Considering ethnicity unimportant (partner of sons)		
	Important	Unimportant	<i>N</i>	Important	Unimportant	<i>N</i>
First	78.3%	21.7%	115 (100%)	61.5%	38.5%	117 (100%)
1.5	68.8%	31.3%	16 (100%)	66.7%	33.3%	18 (100%)
Second	73.3%	26.7%	120 (100%)	75.0%	25.0%	116 (100%)

Data source: Sexpert survey

Appendix 9

Table A.12 displays preferences regarding ethnicity of children's partners, as analyzed in Chapter 8, according to three migration generations. There is no clear pattern in the distribution of the dependent variables according to three migration generations. This is not surprising as, again, the 1.5 category is very small. To obtain similarity with the operationalization of migration generation in Chapter 7, I include 1.5 generation members in the second generation.

Table A.12 Distribution of preferences regarding ethnicity of daughters'/sons' partners, according to migration generation

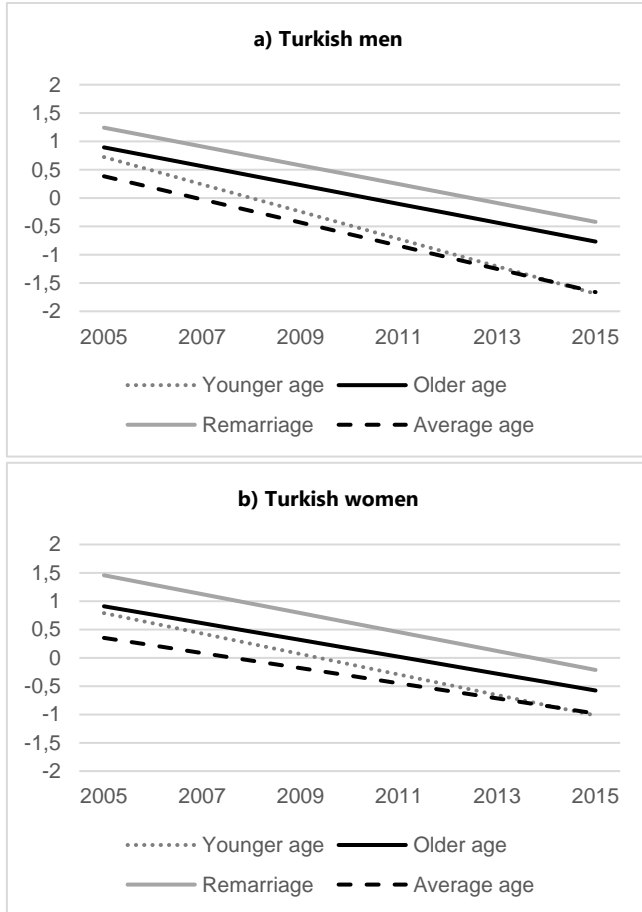
Preferences regarding ethnicity of daughters' partners				
Migration generation	Openness to interethnic partnerships	No distinct preference	Ethnic homogamy important, regardless of residence	<i>N</i>
First	21.7%	17.4%	60.9%	115 (100%)
1.5	25.0%	18.8%	56.3%	16 (100%)
Second	29.2%	18.3%	52.2%	120 (100%)
Preferences regarding ethnicity of sons' partners				
First	38.8%	12.9%	48.3%	116 (100%)
1.5	31.6%	15.8%	52.6%	19 (100%)
Second	34.8%	18.3%	47.0%	115 (100%)

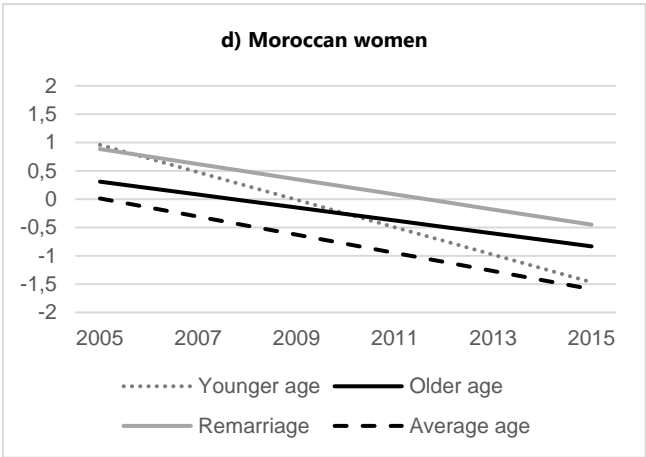
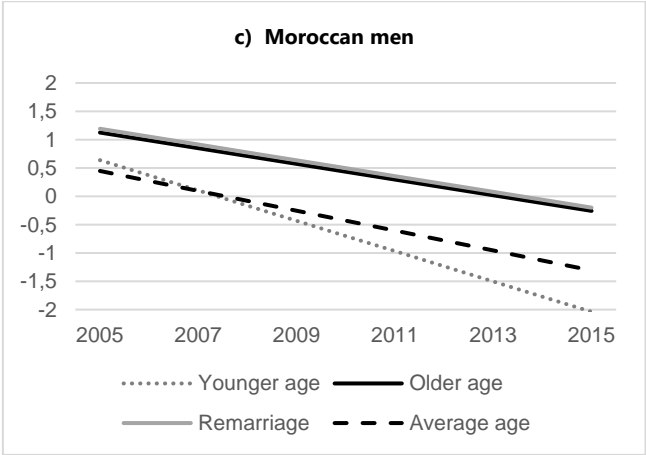
Data source : Sexpert survey

Appendix 10

Figure A.26 Expected log-odds to choose a transnational instead of a local co-ethnic marriage, per year and age category:

a) Turkish men, b) Turkish women, c) Moroccan men, d) Moroccan women

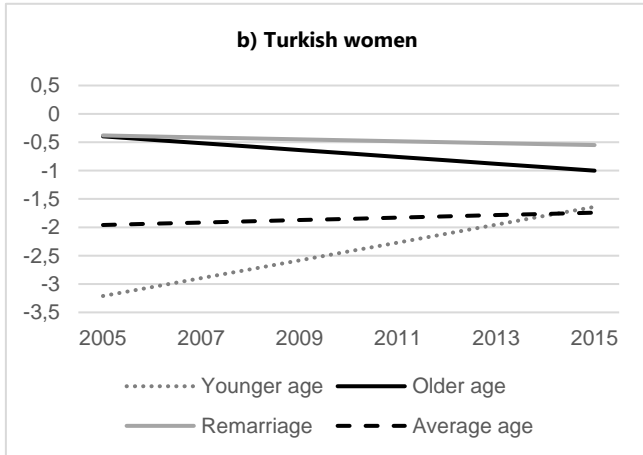
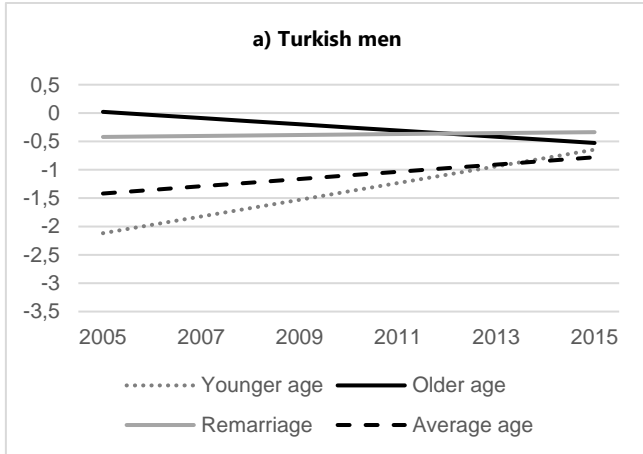


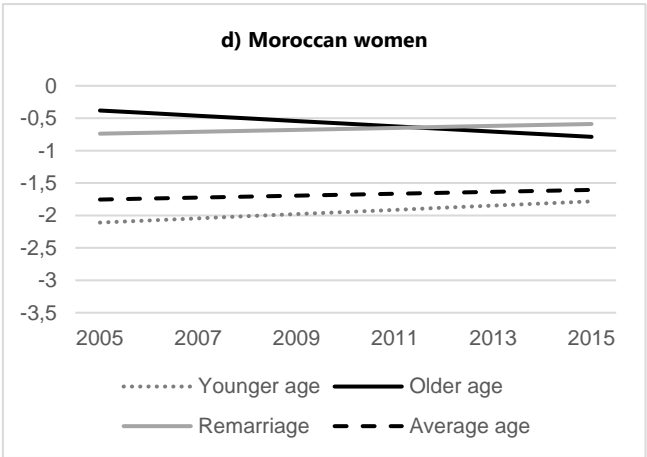
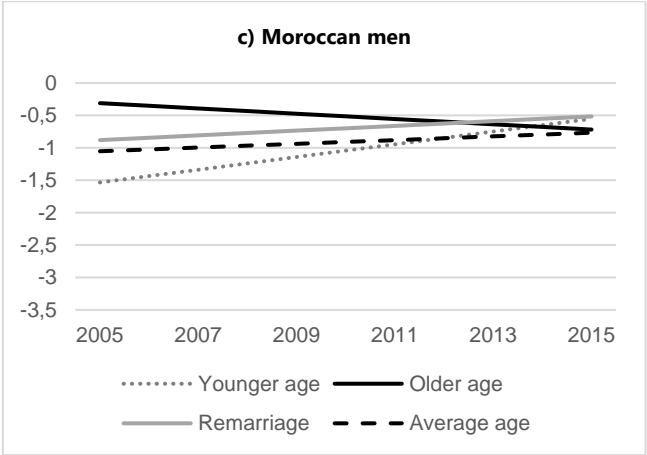


Appendix 11

Figure A.27 Expected log-odds to choose a mixed instead of a local co-ethnic marriage, per year and age group:

a) Turkish men, b) Turkish women, c) Moroccan men, d) Moroccan men

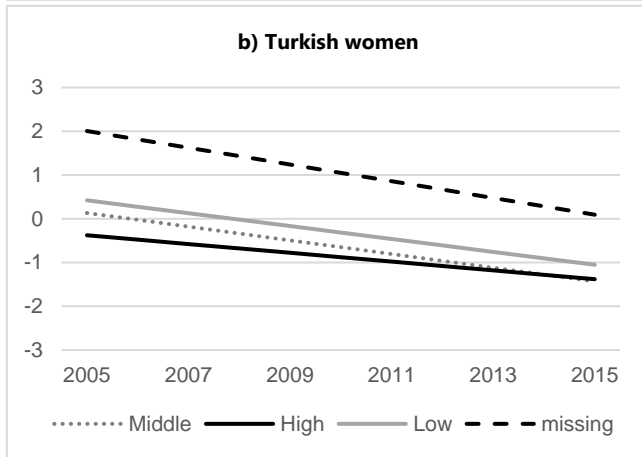
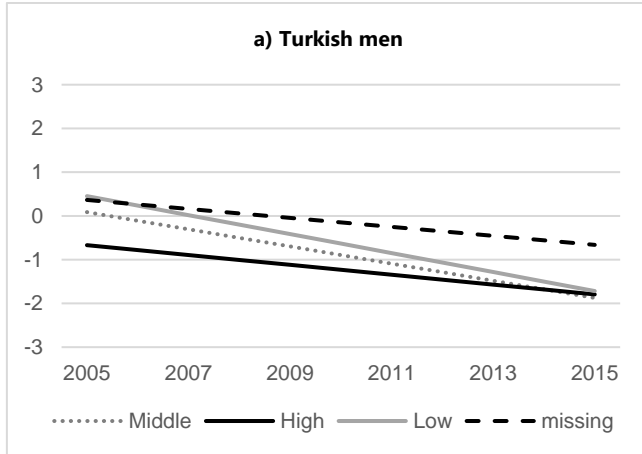


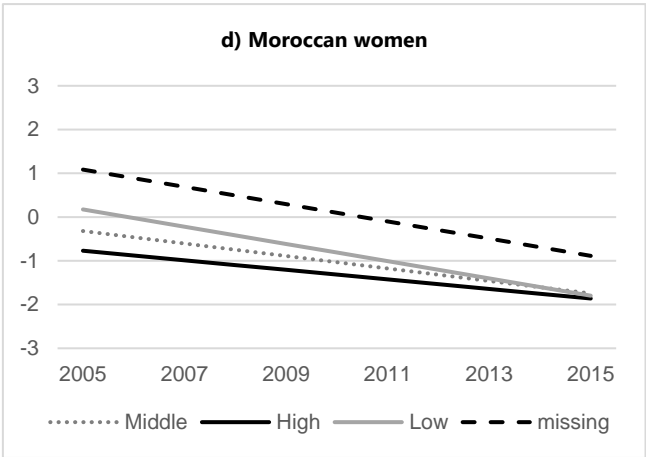
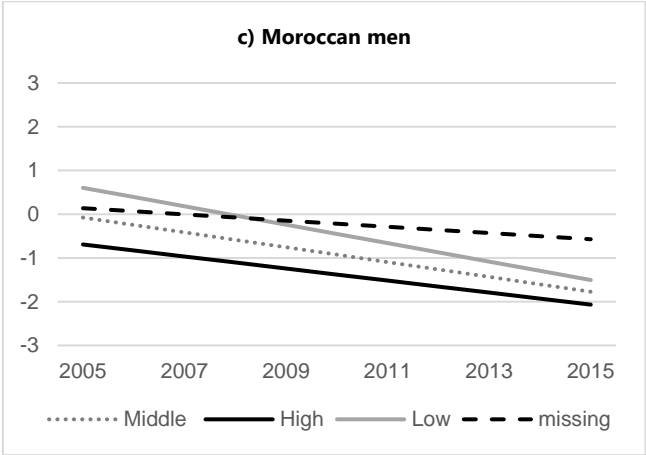


Appendix 12

Figure A.28 Expected log-odds to choose a transnational instead of a local co-ethnic marriage, per year and educational level:

a) Turkish men, b) Turkish women, c) Moroccan men, d) Moroccan women

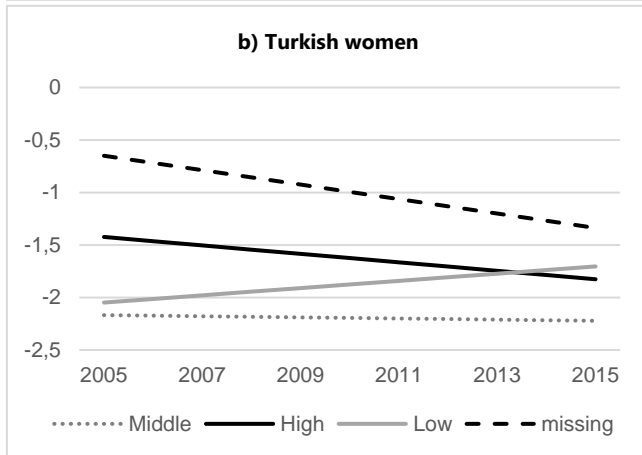
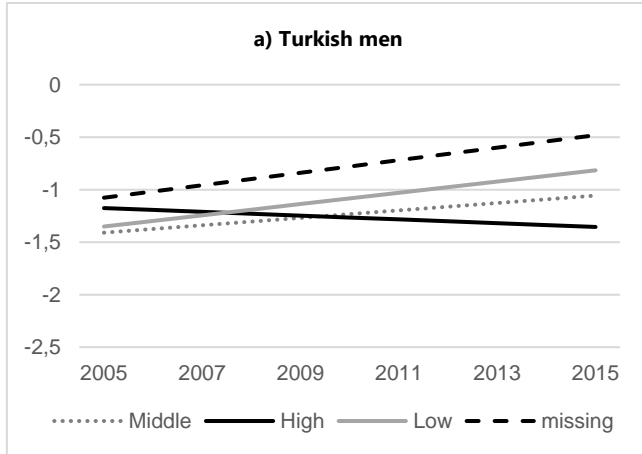


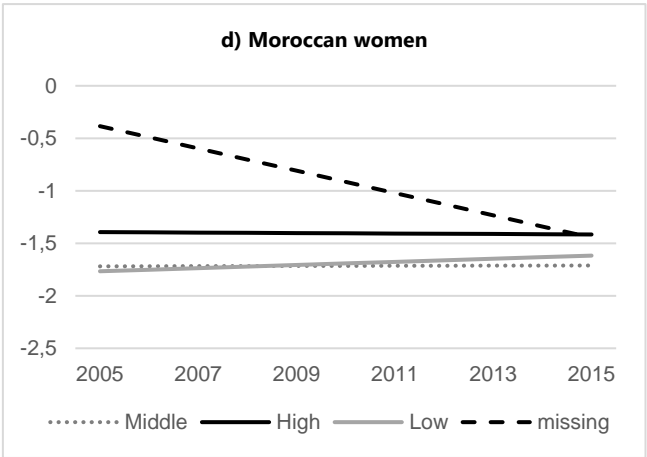
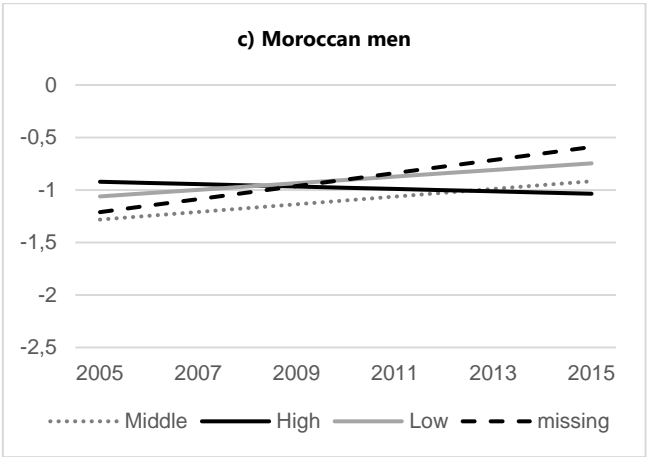


Appendix 13

Figure A.29 Expected log-odds to choose a mixed instead of a local co-ethnic marriage, per year and educational level:

a) Turkish men, b) Turkish women, c) Moroccan men, d) Moroccan women





Appendix14

This appendix shows the multinomial logistic regression analysis of parental influence in the partner selection process, mentioned in Footnote 49 in Chapter 7. The results indicate that respondents with a low educational attainment, a transnational partner, and who formed their partnership at a younger age, have higher odds to have experienced high levels of parental influence in their partner selection process.

Table A.13 Log odds for parental influence in the partner selection process

(N = 170)

	M1	M2	M3	M4
SOME (vs. none to little)				
<i>Intercept</i>	-1.35 (0.38)***	-1.12 (0.43)**	-1.02 (0.52)*	-1.47 (0.68)*
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	0.07 (0.49)	-0.01 (0.49)	0.02 (0.50)	0.20 (0.57)
Female				
<i>Educational attainment</i>				
Low		-0.63 (0.64)	-0.57 (0.65)	-0.16 (0.71)
Middle				
High		-0.45 (0.83)	-0.48 (0.84)	-0.85 (1.09)
<i>Partner type</i>				
Transnational			0.09 (0.53)	0.14 (0.54)
Local co-ethnic and mixed				
<i>Age at partnership formation</i>				
Younger				0.60 (0.69)
Average				0.25 (0.68)
Older				
HIGH (vs. none to little)				
<i>Intercept</i>	0.57 (0.22)**	0.06 (0.28)	-0.38 (0.38)	-1.21 (0.50)*
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	-0.73 (0.30)*	-0.57 (0.31)	-0.48 (0.34)	-0.54 (0.39)
Female				
<i>Educational attainment</i>				
Low		0.95 (0.34)***	1.12 (0.39)***	1.19 (0.44)**
Middle				
High		0.49 (0.48)	0.62 (0.52)	0.92 (0.58)
<i>Partner type</i>				
Transnational			1.11 (0.36)***	1.25 (0.38)***
Local co-ethnic and mixed				
<i>Age at partnership formation</i>				
Younger				1.31 (0.50)**
Average				0.69 (0.48)
Older				

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Data source: Sexpert survey

Appendix 15

Review of author contributions

The empirical studies were conducted under the coordination and supervision of my administrative supervisor John Lievens. Thorough feedback was consistently and elaborately given on first research ideas, questions, drafts and analyses originated by me, and this was the case for each of the four empirical studies. Also, three out of the four studies (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) were conducted in collaboration with my two other supervisors Frank Caestecker and Bart Van de Putte. They provided feedback on first research ideas and the final drafts. In Chapter 7 I also collaborated with colleague Emilien Dupont. She analyzed the Register data (BNR 2001-2008) and provided feedback on first research ideas and the final draft.

Summaries.

Summary

Belgium is characterized by a large Turkish and Moroccan minority, which, as is the case for other Western European countries, originated in the context of labor migration in the 1960s. Despite a moratorium on labor migration in 1974, immigration from Turkey and Morocco to Belgium continued, driven by family reunification and, more importantly, marriage migration. Consequently, the most preferred partner types are transnational marriages with a partner from the origin country, followed by local co-ethnic marriages. Mixed marriages are the least preferred. Based on a classical assimilation perspective, the expectation was that the high prevalence of transnational marriages would decline rapidly, particularly as more second-generation members began looking for a partner. Better structural and social integration of the second generation would alter their partner selection preferences and behavior. However, the majority of the first and second generation were still opting for a transnational marriage in the mid-1990s and early 2000s.

Indications that partner selection behavior may be changing after remaining constant for decades are recent. Local co-ethnic instead of transnational marriages seem to have become the most common partner type for Turkish and Moroccan minority members by 2008. The decline in transnational marriages may also be—to a lesser extent—accompanied by an increase in mixed partnerships, at least for some minority members. Research on remarriages suggests these recent changes may be present primarily among first marriages.

However, these studies present an incomplete picture; some deal only with homogamous marriages or the second generation, others do not differentiate between marriage and cohabitation, or according to partnership rank, although these are important factors in predicting partner selection trends. Furthermore, their focus is on the earliest stage of change, and thus they cannot demonstrate whether the observed changes are the onset of a structural trend or not. Hence, more comprehensive analyses over a longer period are necessary to assess whether and to what degree partner selection behavior has changed over the last decade.

Therefore, I analyze Belgian National Register data on all first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who registered a marriage between 2005 and 2015. These analyses offer a comprehensive overview of the trends in partner selection, paying particular attention to differences according to individual and partnership characteristics. The descriptive results indicate that the partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minority members changed significantly over the last decade. From the trend of transnational marriages we can firmly conclude that the previously reported decline until 2008 indeed was the first phase of a structural downward trend, resulting in a gradually diminishing preference for transnational marriages up until 2015. In 2015, local co-ethnic marriages are preferred by all subpopulations when marrying for the first time and by the second generation when remarrying. The prevalence of mixed marriages also increases slowly among almost all subpopulations. Moreover, when the second generation marries, mixed marriages are not the least preferred partner type; transnational marriages are.

The observed declining trend in the prevalence of transnational marriages is similar to declines observed in, for example, the Netherlands and Sweden. Recent policy changes implemented throughout Europe to reduce marriage migration partially explain this trend. However, I cannot ignore the possibility that attitudinal changes may also contribute to this decline. This may be especially true in Belgium, where immigration policies became stricter in 2011, and where the decline in transnational partnerships among the second generation started prior to the timeframe of this dissertation—around 2004 – and evenly continues up to 2015. Our results show that among the first generation, the prevalence of transnational marriages only starts to decline after 2011. Qualitative research among Turkish minorities in Belgium provides initial insight into the attitudinal mechanisms behind the recent decline. First, adolescent minority members tend to prefer local co-ethnic partners because they recognize the risks and downsides of transnational marriages and evaluate the dependence of newly immigrated partners negatively. Second, lower levels of parental involvement among the more recent marriage cohorts could also contribute to the decline, as parents are believed to be more traditional and to prefer transnational marriages for their children. Hence, the question that arises is whether the decline could be associated with a change in the attitudes and preferences of minority members.

Therefore, I analyze the extent to which there are attitudinal changes regarding parental influence in the partner selection process and regarding preferred partner types, and how these changes could influence the prevalence of transnational and, potentially, mixed partnerships. Analyses of population data from the Belgian National Register are complemented by analyses of data from the Sexpert survey to obtain more extensive information on partner selection attitudes of both Turkish minority parents and adolescents. The results show, with regard to parental influence, an evolution towards more individualization in the partner selection process. However, high levels of parental involvement when selecting a partner remain prevalent, well respected and do not interfere with freedom of choice. Regarding partner selection preferences, the results show no distinct preference for transnational or mixed marriages among both minority parents and adolescents. Most respondents prefer a (local) co-ethnic partner. Nevertheless, more than a fourth of the minority parents have no distinct preference for a particular partner type for their children. These parents may have moved away from ethnicity's central role in the partner selection process and be more open to mixed partnerships for their children. An increasing openness towards mixed partnerships is consistent with analyses of National Register data that show a general increase in the prevalence of mixed marriages among almost all minority members, including women and lower educated minority members.

Furthermore, I research the extent to which this openness to mixed partnerships among minority parents may be affected by the presence of ethnic boundaries between minority and majority members. Many researchers have linked the prevalence of mixed partnerships to ethnic boundaries on an aggregate, structural level, as it can be an indicator of ethnic boundaries in a society. Hence, when strong ethnic boundaries and, consequently, relatively low levels of social acceptance and a high ethnic distance characterize a society, the prevalence of heterogeneous partnerships will probably be rather low. In this dissertation I turn to the micro level and question the extent to which Turkish minority members experience ethnic boundaries in Belgian society and the extent to which the perception of ethnic boundaries reinforces the preference for ethnic homogamy. Based on the analyses of Sexpert survey data, I identify a strong presence of ethnic prejudice in the daily lives of Turkish minority members. Specifically for men, minority members with lower socioeconomic attainment, and partner migrants. Furthermore, experiencing ethnic prejudice has a negative effect on minority parents' openness to mixed marriages for their children.

Three out of the four empirical chapters of this dissertation, as well as previous studies on partner selection patterns of Turkish and Moroccan minorities, have primarily assessed married couples. Cohabitation is often not an option because marriage plays a central role in the family-forming process, which is characterized by strongly embedded social and religious norms. Recently, however, there are indications from qualitative studies that the preference of young Turkish and Moroccan minority members for cohabitation as a step towards marriage, or even as a full alternative to marriage, is increasing. Nevertheless, quantitative studies have been able to draw only preliminary conclusions about cohabitation among these minorities, as the prevalence of this partnership type has been low and cohabiting couples hard to identify.

Therefore, I study legally registered cohabitation using an extraction of the National Register containing all first- and second-generation Turkish and Moroccan minority members who registered their first partnership between 2005 and 2015. The results show that the proportion of first partnerships that are legally registered cohabitations is less than 5 percent in 2005. By 2015, however, that frequency doubled among second-generation members and tripled among the first generation. Among mixed partnerships especially, cohabitation is becoming an acceptable partnership type, and has a prevalence of more than 25 percent of all first partnerships registered in 2015. An increasing prevalence and positive effects of age and of having a mixed partnerships on the odds to cohabit, indicate that the collectivistic family system is changing in line with the Second Demographic Theory's expectations. Nevertheless, besides classical assimilation, other dynamics may also influence the choice for cohabitation for some minority members. A strong positive effect of having a child born before the registration of – especially homogamous – partnerships, could suggest that cohabitation can be an alternative strategy to form an official partnership when marriage may not be an acceptable option.

The results of this dissertation—as summarized above—are sociologically relevant because they provide greater insight into the processes of adaptation of Belgium's largest two minority groups originating from third countries. In addition, the results also give us more insight into the presence of ethnic boundaries in Belgian society. Finally, they are socially relevant as partner selection dynamics of minority members, especially Turkish and Moroccan minorities, are high on political agendas. Below, I briefly discuss these implications.

First, I consider how family systems of minority communities develop over time in Belgian society, characterized by the Second Demographic Transition. Collectivistic family systems could remain prevalent among minority members due to strong transnational networks. However, the collectivistic family systems in the origin countries are subject to change, often in line with the Second Demographic Transition's expectations. Hence, the family formation and partner selection behavior of minority members could change towards the Belgian system because of a combination of exposure to the residence country's family system and changes in the origin country.

This dissertation's results show that processes of adaptation prevalent within minority groups are characterized by several changes towards the Belgian society: a decreasing parental influence in the partner selection process, a shift in orientation from the transnational to the local marriage market, and an increase in the prevalence of cohabitation. These changes do not mean a complete disengagement from the values and practices of the more collectivistic family system, because minority members continue to face the challenge of combining two different family systems that often conflict. From a classical assimilation perspective, the expectation is that socially and structurally better integrated minority members will tend more towards the family system of the residence country. However, our results show that the changes in the partner selection behavior towards the Belgian family system do not occur solely among, for example, the second generation or higher educated minority members. All minority members combine values and practices of two contradictory systems in various ways, resulting in different adaptation processes depending on individual characteristics but also on, for example, changing immigration policies, the strength of transnational ties, experiences ethnic prejudice, levels of uncertainty, and evolutions of family systems in the origin countries.

Second, the results of this dissertation have several implications for understanding ethnic boundaries in Belgian society. I discuss how strong ethnic boundaries are present in Belgian society between Turkish minorities and the Belgian majority population. Experiencing symbolic boundaries in the form of ethnic prejudice can have numerous consequences for (mental) health as well as adaptation processes and partner selection, for example. This dissertation shows how experiencing ethnic prejudice negatively influences minority parents' intergroup openness to mixed partnerships for their children. Consequently, experiencing ethnic prejudice

can consolidate and perpetuate ethnic boundaries, as individuals behave according to symbolic boundaries by marrying co-ethnic partners. However, the low prevalence of mixed marriages increases among almost all minority members, including women and lower educated minority members. This indicates that the social resistance towards mixed marriages may be decreasing. Social and religious norms, which mainly affect women's partner selection, may be becoming less strict. An increasing prevalence of mixed partnerships could contribute to changing boundaries between ethnic groups in the future as well as to changing the social structure of society.

Third, the consistent high prevalence of transnational marriages contributed to the strengthening of legal immigration procedures in various European countries such as Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Belgium. These policy changes partially resulted from policymakers' concerns about minorities' levels of integration in the face of a constant influx of immigrants, as well as concerns that the underlying motives for migration might be more economic than familial. The policies establish a minimum age and include income, language, and housing requirements for partner migrants to legally immigrate and become a resident in the receiving country. As studies in the Netherlands and Sweden illustrate, they have been implemented to reduce immigration in general and transnational marriages in particular. Belgium implemented similar stricter immigration policies in 2011.

However, I question the efficacy of stricter immigration policies implemented in several European countries, including Belgium, that target the prevalence of transnational partnerships for two reasons. First, the decline in the prevalence of transnational partnerships predates the implementation of the restrictive legislation among the second generation. The restrictive measures merely reinforce an ongoing trend already occurring due to other, mainly attitudinal, mechanisms. Second, these restrictive measures may create or perpetuate inequalities regarding socioeconomic position, age, gender, or a combination of these. They can indirectly target socioeconomically disadvantaged minority groups (such as Turkish and Moroccan minorities), create high levels of uncertainty among the individuals involved, and counteract processes of integration.

Samenvatting

België wordt gekenmerkt door een grote Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheid die, net als andere West-Europese landen, is ontstaan in de context van arbeidsmigratie na 1960. Ondanks een moratorium op arbeidsmigratie in 1974, bleef de immigratie vanuit Turkije en Marokko duren, gedreven door gezinshereniging en voornamelijk huwelijksmigratie. De meest voorkomende partnerkeuze van Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden is dan ook een transnationale huwelijk met een partner uit het land van herkomst, gevolgd door lokale co-etnische huwelijken. Gemengde huwelijken komen het minst voor. Vanuit een klassiek assimilatieperspectief werd verwacht dat de hoge prevalentie van transnationale huwelijken snel zou afnemen, vooral omdat meer leden van de tweede generatie op zoek gingen naar een partner. Een betere structurele en sociale integratie van de tweede generatie zou hun partnerkeuzevoorkeuren en -gedrag veranderen. De meerderheid van de eerste en tweede generatie koos halverwege jaren negentig en begin jaren 2000 echter nog steeds voor een transnationaal huwelijk.

De aanwijzingen dat het partnerkeuzegedrag van Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden aan het veranderen is, zijn slechts recent. In tegenstelling tot transnationale huwelijken, lijken lokale co-etnische huwelijken in 2008 de meest voorkomende partnerkeuze te zijn geworden. De afname van transnationale huwelijken zou ook in mindere mate gepaard gaan met een toename van gemengde partnerschappen, althans voor sommigen. Onderzoek naar hertrouw suggereert dat deze recente veranderingen voornamelijk aanwezig zijn bij eerste huwelijken.

Deze recente aanwijzingen laten echter een onvolledig beeld zien. Sommige hebben enkel betrekking op co-etnische huwelijken of de tweede generatie terwijl andere geen onderscheid maken tussen huwelijk en samenwonen of naargelang de rang van het partnerschap hoewel dit belangrijke factoren zijn bij het voorspellen van partnerkeuzegedrag. Bovendien zijn de studies beperkt tot het vroegste stadium van verandering, en kunnen ze dus niet aantonen of de waargenomen veranderingen het begin zijn van een structurele trend of niet. Daarom zijn uitgebreidere analyses over een langere periode nodig om te beoordelen of en in welke mate het partnerkeuzegedrag van Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden recent is veranderd.

Daarom analyseer ik alle huwelijken van Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden in België die werden geregistreerd tussen 2005 en 2015, op basis van rijksregistergegevens. Deze analyses bieden een uitgebreid overzicht van de partnerkeuzetrends, met aandacht voor verschillen naargelang individuele en partnerschapskenmerken. De beschrijvende resultaten geven aan dat het partnerkeuzegedrag van Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden de afgelopen tien jaar aanzienlijk is veranderd. Uit de trend van transnationale huwelijken kunnen we overtuigend concluderen dat de eerder gerapporteerde daling tot 2008 inderdaad de eerste fase was van een structurele neerwaartse trend, met als resultaat een geleidelijk afnemende voorkeur voor transnationale huwelijken tot 2015. In 2015 hebben lokale co-etnische huwelijken de voorkeur wanneer men voor de eerste keer trouwt, en bij de tweede generatie ook wanneer men hertrouwt. De prevalentie van gemengde huwelijken neemt eveneens langzaam toe bij bijna alle subpopulaties. Bovendien zijn gemengde huwelijken niet langer de minst voorkomende partnerkeuze wanneer de tweede generatie trouwt, transnationale huwelijken zijn dat wel.

De dalende trend in transnationale huwelijken bij Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden in België is vergelijkbaar met trends die onder meer in Nederland en Zweden werden waargenomen. Recente beleidswijzigingen die in Europa zijn doorgevoerd om huwelijksmigratie te verminderen, zouden deze trend gedeeltelijk kunnen verklaren. Ik kan echter niet negeren dat attitudeveranderingen ook kunnen bijdragen aan deze daling. Dit is zeker het geval voor België waar het immigratiebeleid gevoelig strenger werd in 2011 maar de daling in transnationale huwelijken bij de tweede generatie al startte in 2004 en voortduurt tot 2015. Mijn resultaten tonen dat bij de eerste generatie begint de prevalentie van transnationale huwelijken wel pas na 2011 af te nemen. Kwalitatief onderzoek bij Turkse Belgen geeft een eerste inzicht in de attitudemechanismen van deze daling. Ten eerste geven adolescenten de voorkeur aan lokale co-etnische partners omdat ze de risico's en nadelen van transnationale huwelijken erkennen en de afhankelijkheid van pas geïmmigreerde partners negatief beoordelen. Ten tweede zou een afname in ouderlijke invloed bij de recentere huwelijkscohorten ook kunnen bijdragen aan de daling, aangezien ouders verondersteld worden traditioneler te zijn en ze de voorkeur geven aan transnationale huwelijken voor hun kinderen. De vraag is dan of de daling in transnationale huwelijken kan worden geassocieerd met een verandering in attitudes en voorkeuren van etnische minderheden.

Daarom analyseer ik in hoeverre er een attitudeverandering is met betrekking tot ouderlijke invloed in het partnerselectieproces, welke partnerkeuzes geprefereerd worden, en hoe deze veranderingen de prevalentie van verschillende partnerkeuzes kunnen beïnvloeden. Multivariate analyses van populatiegegevens uit het Rijksregister die het partnerkeuzegedrag van Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden in kaart brengen, worden aangevuld met analyses van gegevens uit de Sexpert-enquête om meer informatie te verkrijgen over de partnerkeuzevoorkeuren van zowel Turkse ouders als adolescenten. Met betrekking tot ouderlijke invloed, laten de resultaten een evolutie zien naar meer individualisering in het partnerselectieproces. Ouderlijke betrokkenheid blijft echter wel wijdverspreid, gerespecteerd en belemmert de keuzevrijheid niet. Wat betreft partnerkeuzevoorkeuren zie ik geen duidelijke voorkeur voor transnationale of gemengde huwelijken bij ouders of adolescenten. De meeste Sexpert-respondenten geven de voorkeur aan een (lokale) co-etnische partner. Toch heeft meer dan een vierde van de ouders geen duidelijke voorkeur voor een bepaald partnertype voor hun kinderen. Deze ouders hebben wellicht afstand genomen van de centrale rol van etniciteit in het partnerkeuzeprocess en staan meer open voor gemengde partnerschappen. Dit laatste komt overeen met analyses van gegevens uit het Rijksregister, die een algemene toename laten zien in de prevalentie van gemengde huwelijken bij bijna alle subpopulaties, inclusief vrouwen en lager opgeleiden.

Vervolgens onderzoek ik in hoeverre deze openheid voor gemengde partnerschappen bij ouders beïnvloed wordt door de aanwezigheid van etnische grenzen tussen minderheids- en meerderheidsgroepen. Verschillende onderzoekers hebben de prevalentie van gemengde partnerschappen in verband gebracht met etnische grenzen op een structureel niveau, aangezien het een indicator kan zijn voor de mate waarin etnische grenzen aanwezig zijn in een samenleving. Wanneer sterke etnische grenzen en bijgevolg weinig sociale acceptatie een samenleving kenmerken, zal de prevalentie van gemengde partnerschappen wellicht laag zijn. In dit proefschrift wend ik me tot het individuele niveau en onderzoek in hoeverre Turkse respondenten etnische grenzen ervaren, die zich manifesteren als etnische vooroordelen, en in welke mate de voorkeur voor etnische homogamie versterkt wordt door het ervaren van etnische vooroordelen. Op basis van de analyses van Sexpert-enquêtegegevens identificeer ik een sterke aanwezigheid van etnische vooroordelen in het dagelijks leven van Turkse respondenten. Voornamelijk bij mannen, respondenten met een

lagere socio-economische status en partnermigranten. Bovendien heeft het ervaren van etnische vooroordelen duidelijk invloed op ouderlijke partnerkeuzevoorkeuren. Ouders die meer worden beïnvloed door etnische vooroordelen staan minder open voor de mogelijkheid dat hun kinderen een huwelijk met iemand van de meerderheidspopulatie zouden afsluiten.

Drie van de vier empirische hoofdstukken van dit proefschrift, evenals eerdere studies naar partnerkeuzepatronen van Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden, hebben voornamelijk getrouwde koppels onderzocht. Samenwonen is vaak geen optie omdat het huwelijk een centrale rol speelt in het Turks en Marokkaans familiesysteem, wat wordt gekenmerkt door sterk verankerde sociale en religieuze normen. Recent zijn er echter aanwijzingen uit kwalitatief onderzoek dat de voorkeur van jonge Turkse en Marokkaanse adolescenten voor samenwonen toeneemt als opstap naar het huwelijk, of zelfs als volwaardig alternatief voor het huwelijk. Niettegenstaande heeft kwantitatief onderzoek slechts voorlopige conclusies kunnen trekken over het samenwonen bij deze minderheden, aangezien de prevalentie laag was en samenwonende koppels moeilijk te identificeren waren.

Daarom bestudeer ik de mate waarin Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden bij hun eerste partnerkeuze kiezen voor wettelijk samenwonen in plaats van huwen. Uit de rijksregistergegevens blijkt dat in 2005 minder dan vijf procent kiest voor een wettelijk geregistreerde samenwoning als eerste partnerkeuze. In 2015 is de prevalentie echter verdubbeld bij de tweede generatie en verdrievoudigd bij de eerste generatie. Vooral onder gemengde koppels wordt samenwonen een acceptabel partnerschapstype met een prevalentie van meer dan 25 procent van alle eerste partnerschappen die in 2015 zijn geregistreerd. Een stijgende prevalentie en positieve effecten van leeftijd en het hebben van een gemengd partnerschap, suggereren dat het collectivistische familiesysteem aan het veranderen is in overeenstemming met de verwachtingen van de Tweede Demografische Transitie. Desalniettemin kunnen naast klassieke assimilatie ook andere dynamieken de keuze voor samenwonen beïnvloeden. Een sterk positief effect van het krijgen van een buitenechtelijk kind suggereert dat samenwonen een manier kan zijn om een eerste officieel partnerschap aan te gaan wanneer het huwelijk wellicht geen aanvaardbare optie is.

De resultaten van dit proefschrift – zoals hierboven samengevat – zijn sociologisch relevant omdat ze meer inzicht geven in de adaptatieprocessen van de twee

grootste minderheidsgroepen afkomstig uit een derdeland. De resultaten geven ons ook meer inzicht in de aanwezigheid van etnische grenzen in de Belgische samenleving. Daarnaast kunnen ze maatschappelijk relevant zijn aangezien het partnerkeuzegedrag van etnische minderheden, met name Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden, hoog op de politieke agenda staat. In wat volgt, bespreek ik kort deze drie implicaties.

Ten eerste bekijk ik hoe collectivistische familiesystemen van etnische minderheden zich doorheen de tijd ontwikkelen in de Belgische samenleving, die gekenmerkt wordt door de Tweede Demografische Transitie? Door sterke transnationale netwerken zouden collectivistische familiesystemen kunnen blijven bestaan. In de herkomstlanden zijn deze familiesystemen echter aan veranderingen onderhevig, die vaak in lijn zijn met de verwachtingen van de Tweede Demografische Transitie. De gezinsvorming en partnerkeuze van etnische minderheden zou dus kunnen veranderen in de richting van het Belgische systeem door een gecombineerde blootstelling aan het familiesysteem van het verblijfsland en veranderingen in het land van herkomst.

Mijn resultaten tonen dat aanpassingsprocessen van Turkse en Marokkaanse etnische minderheden worden gekenmerkt door verschillende veranderingen in de richting van de Belgische samenleving: een afnemende ouderlijke invloed op het partnerkeuzep proces, een verschoven oriëntatie van de transnationale naar de lokale huwelijksmarkt en een toenemende prevalentie van samenwonen. Deze veranderingen betekenen niet dat etnische minderheden zich volledig onttrekken aan de waarden en tradities van het meer collectivistische familiesysteem aangezien ze twee verschillende familiesystemen dienen te verzoenen die vaak tegenstrijdig zijn. Vanuit een klassiek assimilatieperspectief wordt verwacht dat wie sociaal en structureel beter geïntegreerd is, meer naar het familiesysteem van het ontvangende land zal neigen. Mijn resultaten tonen echter aan dat niet alleen het partnerkeuzegedrag van de tweede generatie of hoger opgeleiden verandert in deze richting, maar iedereen binnen de etnische minderheidspopulaties probeert de waarden en tradities van twee tegenstrijdige familiesystemen te combineren. Dit resulteert in verschillende adaptatieprocessen afhankelijk van individuele kenmerken, maar ook van bijvoorbeeld een veranderend immigratiebeleid, het ervaren van etnische vooroordelen, de sterkte van transnationale banden, of evoluties binnen de familiesystemen in herkomstlanden.

Ten tweede omvatten de resultaten van dit proefschrift verschillende implicaties met betrekking tot etnische grenzen in de Belgische samenleving. Ik bespreek hoe sterke etnische grenzen aanwezig zijn in de Belgische samenleving tussen Turkse minderheden en de Belgische meerderheidsbevolking. Het ervaren van symbolische grenzen, in de vorm van etnische vooroordelen, kan meerdere gevolgen hebben voor bijvoorbeeld (mentale) gezondheid, maar ook voor aanpassingsprocessen en partnerselectie. Dit proefschrift laat zien hoe het ervaren van etnische vooroordelen een negatieve invloed heeft op de openheid van Turkse ouders met betrekking tot gemengde huwelijken voor hun kinderen. Bijgevolg kan het ervaren van etnische vooroordelen etnische grenzen consolideren en bestendigen, aangezien individuen zich gedragen volgens deze symbolische grenzen door met co-etnische partners te trouwen. De lage prevalentie van gemengde huwelijken neemt echter structureel toe, ook bij vrouwen en lager opgeleiden. Dit geeft aan dat de sociale weerstand tegen gemengde huwelijken mogelijk afneemt. Sociale en religieuze normen, die voornamelijk het partnerkeuzegedrag van vrouwen beïnvloeden, worden mogelijk minder streng. Ten slotte kan een toenemende prevalentie van gemengde partnerschappen in de toekomst bijdragen aan het veranderen van de grenzen tussen etnische groepen, evenals aan het veranderen van de sociale structuur van de samenleving.

Ten derde heeft de aanhoudende hoge prevalentie van transnationale huwelijken bijgedragen aan de versterking van de wettelijke immigratieprocedures in verschillende Europese landen, zoals Denemarken, Zweden, Nederland en België. Deze wijzigingen zijn gedeeltelijk het gevolg van de bezorgdheid van beleidsmakers over de mate van integratie van minderheden in het licht van een constante toestroom van immigranten, evenals de bezorgdheid dat de onderliggende motieven voor migratie meer economisch dan familiaal zouden kunnen zijn. De verstrengde maatregelen omvatten een minimumleeftijd en vereisten omtrent inkomen, taal en huisvesting om als partnermigrant legaal te immigreren en te verblijven in Europa. Deze maatregelen werden geïmplementeerd om immigratie in het algemeen en transnationale huwelijken in het bijzonder te beperken, zoals bevestigd werd in Nederlands en Zweeds onderzoek. Het Belgische immigratiebeleid voor partnermigranten werd in 2011 verstrengd.

Ik stel echter de doeltreffendheid in vraag van een strikter immigratiebeleid dat zich richt op de prevalentie van transnationale partnerschappen, omwille van twee

redenen. Ten eerste tonen analyses van gegevens van het Belgische Rijksregister aan dat de daling in transnationale huwelijken bij de tweede generatie dateert van voor 2011. De implementatie van strenge maatregelen versterkt een bestaande trend die ontstond omwille van andere onderliggende mechanismes. Ten tweede kunnen deze maatregelen ongelijkheden creëren of bestendigen naargelang sociaaleconomische positie, leeftijd, geslacht of een combinatie hiervan. Ze kunnen indirect gericht zijn op sociaaleconomisch benadeelde minderheidsgroepen (zoals Turkse en Marokkaanse minderheden), grote onzekerheid creëren bij de betrokken individuen en integratieprocessen tegengaan.

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Amelie Van Pottelberge