

Discrimination Perceptions of Turkish Skilled Migrants in Norway

Meltem Yilmaz Sener¹

Abstract

This study focuses on the discrimination perceptions of Turkish skilled migrants living in Norway. Based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 44 skilled migrants from Turkey, the paper discusses their perceptions of the following: i) prejudices against their ethnic group, ii) discrimination against themselves and other people from Turkey, and iii) the implications of prejudices and discrimination for how migrants from the same country perceive each other. Looking at the case of Turkish migrants in Norway, the paper argues that the prejudices against a certain migrant group lead to more polarization between different groups of migrants coming from the same country. When all the members of one ethnic group are marked and stereotyped, those who have enough capitals (economic, social, cultural) use discursive and material strategies to distance themselves from an imagined migrant (of their ethnic origin) who is stereotyped.

Keywords: *Perceived discrimination; Turkish; skilled migrant; Norway; prejudice; stereotype*

Introduction

Growing ethnic and racial diversity in Europe is leading to major social changes, among them an increase in ethnic/racial inequalities in employment, education, housing, health, as well as in other social areas (Dollman 2019, 2016; Finney et al. 2014). An increasing number of studies have demonstrated that it is difficult to explain the inequalities between long-term citizens and migrants with reference to the lack of skills or social capital on the part of migrants. Even migrants' descendants face disadvantages in education, employment, and other areas, which are not necessarily due to their levels of education and skills (Busetta et al. 2020, Ahmad 2020, Luthra 2010, Berson 2009, Krings and Olivares 2007). According to OECD (2015), unemployment rates of native-born children of immigrants were twice as high as the rate of their peers from the majority group in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the UK. In this context, discrimination emerges as an important explanatory factor.

The area of discrimination studies demonstrates that not only first-generation migrants but also their descendants face discrimination while trying to access services and resources in European countries (Fibbi et al. 2021). Even in the presence of high levels of skills and will, discrimination experiences create barriers for migrants and their descendants in becoming active members of their societies. Migrants from certain countries systematically face more discrimination. As Kustov (2019: 973) argues, “people have a disposition for maintaining a status hierarchy between ethnic groups... (and) independent of perceived economic or cultural threat, natives are more likely to prefer immigrant groups of higher status based on the development level of the group’s national origin.” Especially against migrants who are

¹ Meltem Yilmaz Sener, Senior Researcher (Forsker II), VID Specialized University, Norway.

E-mail: yilmazmeltem@hotmail.com



considered to have a “non-Western” background, there is boundary-making which results in discrimination against them (Siebers & Koster 2021, Hellgren & Gabrielli 2021, Bagley & Abubaker 2017, Karlsdottir et al. 2017, Andriessen et al. 2012, Støren & Wiers-Jenssen 2010). As Pettigrew (1998) argues, these “new Europeans” have been considered as not belonging, and both direct and indirect discrimination against them has been pervasive. The continuation of racial/ethnic discrimination has far-reaching consequences. When migrants are denied an equality of chances, it hinders their full participation in that society (Peucker 2009).

Currently, there is expanding literature that documents discrimination against migrant groups in different contexts. A frequent assumption in the studies on the discrimination of migrants is that these groups are already disadvantaged educationally and in the socio-economic sense and that being exposed to discrimination puts them in an even more disadvantaged position. However, what if we are looking at migrant individuals who are advantaged educationally and professionally? In terms of discrimination, what is the combined result of being disadvantaged because of being a minority on the one hand, but being advantaged due to educational and cultural capital? Does being skilled and educated rescue an ethnically different person from the experiences of discrimination that people of lower education are exposed to? What are the implications of discrimination for the relationships between these two groups?

This paper deals with these questions by focusing on the discrimination perceptions of Turkish skilled migrants who live in Norway. Depending on their responses, the paper will discuss: i) whether they perceive prejudices against their ethnic group; ii) to what extent and in what areas they perceive discrimination against themselves and other people from Turkey; iii) the implications of prejudices and discrimination for how different migrant groups from the same country perceive each other. The paper argues that the prejudices against certain migrant group lead to even more polarization between different groups of migrants who come from the same country. When all the members of one ethnic group are marked and stereotyped, those who have enough capital (economic, social, cultural) do their best to distance themselves from the members of the ethnic group that they associate with those stereotypes. Although many migrants use these strategies, skilled migrants have access to more resources in their efforts to distance themselves from this stereotyped migrant.

Racism, Ethnic Prejudice, and Discrimination

As one of the first scholars who used the term, Benedict (1945: 87) defined racism as “the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority.” It was defined as “an ideology of racial domination” (Wilson 1999). Prejudice against a group is defined as “...antipathy based on a faulty or inflexible generalization.” (Allport 1954) According to this definition, two attributes characterize prejudice: irrationality (a faulty generalization) and emotional evaluation (antipathy). The poorly founded but inflexible beliefs about members of the target group are also known as *stereotypes* (Taylor and Pettigrew 2000). As Quillian (1995) discusses, there are individual-level and group-level theories of prejudice. Although individual-level theories also provide important insights, this paper will especially depend on group-level theories of prejudice. Accordingly, prejudice develops when groups define their sense of social position with reference to one another (Quillian 1995: 588). According to Blumer (1958), there are four feelings among members of the dominant group that set in motion racial prejudice: “1) a feeling of superiority, 2) a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien,



3) a feeling of proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, 4) fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race.”

Differently from prejudice, which is an attitude that is present in individuals' heads, discrimination exists in behavior (Quillian 2006: 300). Feagin and Eckberg (1980: 9) defined race-ethnic discrimination as consisting of “practices and actions of dominant race-ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on subordinate race-ethnic groups.” Many times, prejudice is the main motivating factor behind discrimination. However, there may also be times when prejudice and discrimination do not occur together. Non-prejudicial individuals may discriminate when they conform to social norms or prejudiced individuals may refrain from discriminating because of legal regulations.

Discrimination can be individual, institutional, or structural. *Individual discrimination* refers to the behavior of individual members of a race/ethnic group that intentionally have differential/harmful effects on the members of another race/ethnic group. *Institutional discrimination* refers to the policies of dominant race/ethnic institutions that intentionally have differential/harmful effects on minority race/ethnic groups. Lastly, structural discrimination refers to the policies of dominant race/ethnic groups that unintentionally have differential/harmful effects on minority race/ethnic groups (Pincus 1996: 186).

The literature has highlighted the existence of persistent discrimination, which will not disappear on its own without active policy intervention. This will consequently have negative implications in terms of the integration of migrants into their new societies. Compared to previous periods, ethnic discrimination is more subtle and difficult to identify today in most Western societies (Pearson et al. 2009, Pager 2007, Neto 2006, Deitch et al. 2003, Noh et al. 1999, Rowe 1990) and this creates problems in terms of social scientific conceptualization. Contrary to overt racism, which can be easily identified, discrimination is often a hidden part of decisions and selection processes which are not explicitly based on ethnic or racial characteristics (Fibbi et al. 2021). Although discrimination exists, it is often hard to make it visible. For this reason, a major task of research in migration studies is to provide evidence for the processes of discrimination.

How do scholars measure discrimination in their studies? The methods that are most often used to measure racial/ethnic discrimination in social sciences are statistical analyses of observational data on racial/ethnic disparities, reports from subordinate group members, reports from dominant group members, and audit studies of discrimination (Quillian 2006: 302; see also Pager and Shepherd 2008, Fibbi et al. 2021). This paper depends on a study of reports from subordinate group members and explains their perceptions of prejudice about and discrimination against their ethnic group. Although they are subjective, perceptions of discrimination are important findings in their own right for several reasons: individuals who perceive high levels of discrimination are more likely to have depression, anxiety, or other health concerns, and perceived discrimination may lead to a decrease in motivation and effort in education and labor market (Pager and Shepherd 2008: 2). In addition to these effects of perceived discrimination discussed in the literature, this study demonstrates that perceptions of prejudice and discrimination also have negative impacts on how members of the same ethnic group perceive each other. This leads to increased polarization among them.

Ethnic Discrimination in Norway

The analyses of Scandinavian societies in general and Norway revolve around the concept of equality. Earlier writings on the Norwegian notion of equality failed to address the duality of meaning in the concept of *likhet* (Abram 2018, Longva 2003). *Likhet* is the most common translation of equality. However, it also means similarity, likeness, or sameness. It implies that individuals must consider themselves as almost the same to feel of equal value. In other words, *likhet* depends on the basic requirement of cultural similarity; to be equal requires to be alike (Gullestad 2002, 1989, 1986). This also implies that when others are perceived to be “very different”, it is considered a problem. As Gullestad (2002: 47) emphasizes, while this logic has led to the blurring of the divisions between individuals from different social classes, it led to the differences between “Norwegians” and “immigrants” to become more significant.

Norway has, for a long time, considered itself as an ethnically homogeneous society, although it has always been heterogeneous due to the populations of Sami and Finnish origin, Rom and other travelers and a Jewish population (Østby 2013). Large-scale immigration to Norway is relatively recent, starting at the end of the 1960s with the immigration of people from Third World countries. An immigration ban was introduced in 1974, after which the newcomers were only admitted based on being skilled workers, family members, students, or asylum seekers and refugees. Still, since 1970, Norway has received a new inflow of migrants from all parts of the world. Some impacts of that migration have been considered challenging, and consequently, questions related to migration have always been high on the political agenda.

For a long time, gender remained the only basis for a broad coverage against discrimination in the national legislation and Norway has received increasing criticism from civil society organizations, UN agencies, and Council of Europe forums for not providing comprehensive protection against discrimination against ethnic and national minorities (Skjeie & Langvasbråten 2009). In 1997, the Norwegian parliament approved the foundation of the Norwegian Center for Combating Ethnic Discrimination, and in 2005, the Act of Prohibition on Discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin color, language, religion, or belief (Discrimination Act) was also adopted. More recently, the government has prepared an action plan against racism and discrimination based on ethnicity and religion for the period 2020–2023.

Research

For this research, I have conducted 44 semi-structured interviews with Turkey-originated migrants who were born in Turkey and migrated to Norway. They live in or around Oslo or Drammen. This specific study focuses on the findings on the discrimination perceptions of these migrants. As skilled migrants, I focused on people who had at least an undergraduate degree. After getting an ethics approval from NSD (Norwegian Center for Research Data)², I conducted interviews between March 2019 and August 2020. At the beginning of my research, I was a newcomer to Norway, with less than two years of living experience in the country. My process of adaptation to the new country went in parallel with my research. I became a member of several groups on Facebook, which have been established by Turkey-originated people living in Norway. I’ve attended their social activities, like dinners, parties, seminars, etc. I have had extensive observations during these events.

² NSD ref: 757919



For my interviews, I used multiple channels to recruit my respondents. I shared my call on the Facebook groups of Turkey-originated people, which target different groups from Turkey. I also used my own network to reach people who meet the criteria for my research. Additionally, I did snowball sampling; I asked my respondents to give the names of people that I could interview. Before Corona regulations, I conducted the interviews face-to-face at places where my respondents chose and got written informed consent. After the Corona measures, I conducted the interviews online and my respondents gave oral consent, which were recorded. The interviews lasted 1.5 h on average. The interviews were conducted in Turkish, but respondents sometimes also used Norwegian and English during the interviews. All the interviews have been recorded and transcribed verbatim. The respondents have been anonymized. Each respondent has been identified with the letter M and a number.

Although I shared my research ad in many groups that have different profiles and political orientations, it will be inaccurate to say that I could conduct interviews with individuals from these diverse positions. In Turkey, there are divisions among people along the axes of religious-secular, supporters of vs. against the AKP government, Turkish-Kurdish, Sunni-Alevi, etc. Most people who reached me are Turks who are not religious and are critical of the AKP government. This is presumably because they perceive me as a member of this group. While having interviews, my respondents told me that they got information about me in advance. Those who saw me as a member of “their group” were more willing to be interviewed. However, there are also some Alevis, Kurdish people, religious people, and AKP supporters that I interviewed, although fewer in number. Additionally, only a few women who wore a headscarf contacted me to be interviewed.

This study mainly focuses on the respondents’ narratives and perceptions of discrimination. For this research, I asked

- As a person who was born in a different country/in Turkey, do you think that you are treated differently than how Norwegian-born people are treated? In which areas are you treated differently?

I also asked them whether there are certain stereotypes and prejudices in Norway about people who come from Turkey, and if so, how do those prejudices and stereotypes impact their lives. In addition to the responses to these questions, I analyzed their responses to other questions, where they talked about their own, their families’, or other Turkey-originated people’s experiences of differential treatment based on ethnicity and/or (perceived) religion.

Being Turkish in Norway: The Weight of Prejudice in Social Life

Many of my respondents feel that the question “Where are you from?” is not a conversation starter but serves the purpose of categorizing and hierarchically ordering people based on their nationality in the context of Norway. When they say they are Turkish, many times they feel that they are placed at a lower level of that hierarchy. M12 is an engineer and has been living and working in Norway for five years. Depending on her experiences, she states that many people in Europe think that she should feel herself bad because she is from Turkey. She thinks that there are many prejudices about Turks in Norway and observes that Turks are first defined with reference to Islam and expected to be religious. As a non-religious person who defines herself as “not even remotely related to religion,” she talks about her discomfort because of being exposed to many questions about religion. Ironically, in one sense, she is

feeling that she is being called to being a more religious Muslim. When she diverts from what stereotypes suggest, she is told that she is not like other Turks.

They mentioned other assumptions about them because of their nationality: M33 talks about some of his experiences with his co-workers. After he started working at his current job, while he was socializing with some of his co-workers, they said that they were really concerned about working with him at the beginning. They had heard that a Turkish person would start working, and it made them anxious. But then they said to him “We’ve seen that you come to work wearing jeans, and you smell of perfume. Then, we relaxed. . .” He thought that they were expecting a person who would smell bad, and who would not be dressed “properly.”

My female respondents especially complained about the stereotypes about Turkish women as uneducated and conservative, who can only be homemakers and mothers. As educated women, they express their frustration because of these assumptions in a country like Norway, which is known for its emphasis on gender equality. M19 mentions getting questions like why she does not wear a veil like other Turkish women and why she is different from them. According to her, Norwegians think of Turkish women as necessarily religious and uneducated.

Discrimination

Discrimination as a matter of individual perspective or effort?

During the interviews, some of my respondents approached the question of discrimination, saying that it is a matter of one’s perception or the result of one’s own behavior. M16 argues that discrimination is very much a matter of perception; the same person can feel discriminated or not depending on their perspective. M50 works at a labor union and she says that they are receiving complaints from people of migrant origin about discrimination at the workplace. She argues that it depends on the individual person to be discriminated or not. She explains that when she came to Norway as a person without any connections in this country, she spent a lot of effort on socializing with people and establishing her own networks. In other words, she implies that by spending effort, one can prevent being discriminated against.

While talking about her experience living in Norway, M12 mentioned that she started seeing a psychologist to deal with the significant transformations that happened in her life due to living in a different society. She said that before her conversations with this psychologist, she thought that she was being discriminated against. “As I was feeling bad, I was perceiving my environment negative. Maybe negative things were happening to me because I was spreading negative energy around. But now, after these conversations, everything is falling into place, especially about identity, my own identity.” She came to believe that feeling discriminated is a matter of one’s own perception.

Not discrimination, but being unprepared to interact with non-European people?

Another approach to the question about differential treatment is that it exists, but it is wrong to call it discrimination; it is rather about not knowing how to interact with “non-European” people. M40 has had academic positions in several different countries and is a newcomer to Norway. He currently works at a Norwegian university. He doesn’t perceive any treatment



that he can name as discrimination. However, he thinks that at the university, many people have recently adapted to having international people as their co-workers. They are not really used to working together with people from other countries. Practices related to hiring or having international people have not been institutionalized yet. Especially outside the university, he observes that Norwegians are not ready to be in constant interaction with people from outside Europe.

Norway compared to other European countries

When asked questions about differential treatment, many of my respondents made comparisons between Norway and other European countries, either depending on their own experiences in different countries or depending on their perception of differential treatment in these countries. As a person who also lived in Germany during her childhood, M23 compares her experiences in Germany and Norway. She thought that there was direct and visible discrimination in Germany. From her childhood, she remembers seeing “Turks, get out!” written on walls or hearing such things from the other kids at school. She explains that such discrimination was a major reason why her family decided to return to Turkey in the past. Her parents feared that as she would grow up, she would not be given many opportunities as a Turkish-origin person. They returned to Turkey to guarantee that she would get good educational and job opportunities and rights. In Norway, even when some Norwegians have prejudices against migrants and discriminate against them, she thinks that it is more subtle and indirect.

Employment

According to many of my respondents, the sphere of employment is the most problematic sphere in terms of differential treatment. Some of them came to Norway at earlier ages, speak Norwegian fluently and had their education in Norway, and others migrated during the later stages of their lives as adults, have difficulty speaking Norwegian and had their education in Turkey or other countries. However, individuals from both of these groups talked about employment as the most challenging sphere for a foreign person, although the kinds of challenges they mentioned differed.

Below is a list of the practices that they consider as differential treatment in the sphere of employment:

a) Not being called to job interviews because of a foreign name

M18 mentions people who changed their names to find jobs. As a person who has been an active member of a Turkish association in Norway, he talks about hearing such stories from many other Turks. M34 came to Norway when he was seven years old. He completed his education in Norway, completing his BS and MS degrees at a Norwegian university. M34 is certain that he was not called to job interviews because of his name when he was making applications. He talks about one case when one of his classmates was accepted to a position that he had also applied. He was not even called to the interview. He knew of that classmate as a person who had lower qualifications compared with him. He communicated with the employer and asked for an explanation of why he was eliminated. He claims that the employer accepted the foreign name having played a role in the decision. After these unsuccessful attempts to find a job, he decided to establish his own business.

M55 made over 500 job applications but has been called to only one interview so far. She has two last names, and one of them clearly signals that she has Turkish origin. One time when she did not write that last name, but only used the more neutral-sounding one, she was called to an interview. She now thinks that name and last name may play a role in these applications. M3 thinks that people who have foreign names are directly eliminated in hiring processes. She states that she made hundreds of job applications and received no response.

M58 has lived in Norway since she was seven years old and had her education in Norway. However, after finishing her MS education abroad, she had a hard time finding a permanent job in Norway. She had to work at several temporary jobs. She says that it took her five years to get a permanent position. Although she was not expecting that prejudices could limit her chances in the job market, her experiences led her to change her opinion:

I never considered the fact that there could be any prejudice against me. And, in fact, it did not strike me after trying for a year to get something proper. And one of my lecturers said, could this be a case of prejudice. And then, I thought, you know, my name, on paper, I am someone else. So, I think I felt the impact of those prejudices at the time. Because when I returned, I had a master's degree, I could speak five languages. Yet, I did not even get a foot in any interview. And the only way I got my first proper job was because I sent them my CV, and I told them I wanted to meet them to determine more about their organization. And when they saw me, then I began getting offers.

b) Difficulty of finding a job that matches one's qualifications for people of foreign origin

Several of them expressed their frustration about the difficulty in finding a job in line with their qualifications. Different factors were mentioned here: unwillingness to hire migrants to professional positions; expectation that migrants should work in areas related to migrants or where there is a labor shortage; not being a part of the networks of Norwegians; their educational credentials being degraded because they were from Turkish educational institutions.

Unwillingness to hire migrants for professional positions

Although M32 had an undergraduate degree from Norway, she had a very hard time finding a job. She made many applications, and even when she was ready to work as an intern without being paid, she got negative responses. She believes that for people from other countries, it is challenging to find a job in Norway, especially if they are applying for more professional positions.

Expectation that migrants should work in areas related to migrants

M33 has been living in Norway for more than 40 years. He graduated from a university in Norway. He remembers an incident when he was sitting together with a group of friends who had graduated from the same university and department at the same time. When it came to where they were working at the time, he noticed that many of them had already gotten prestigious professional jobs. He was working as a teacher for foreign students because that was the only job that he could find then. "I was the only one who was working as a teacher. The feeling that I had at the time was like, although I had my education here, it is still impossible for me to have a job that is not related to migrants."



The negative impact of not being a part of the networks of Norwegians

M14 thinks that for people who come to Norway from other countries, not having received their first levels of education in Norway becomes a disadvantage. Even if they have a university education here, she believes that they are excluded of the networks. She thinks of Norway as a country where networks make a big difference, especially for finding a job, and those networks are established during the very early stages of people's lives.

Their Turkish educational credentials being degraded

M61 has a degree in engineering from a reputable university in Turkey. She also had some work experience in Turkey before coming to Norway. She is living in Norway because she was married to a Norwegian citizen, a man whose family migrated to Norway from Turkey. In Turkey, the name of her university gives the employers the message that she is a brilliant and successful person, and her degree from that university enable her to get prestigious jobs. However, she cannot transfer that cultural capital to Norway; employers see it only as a degree from Turkey.

In Turkey, when I say the name of my university and department, it creates a certain impression. People think, she should be brilliant. But it doesn't happen here. And Norway has a different culture in that sense. . . I am told that Norwegians have this notion that nobody is better than the others. . . But I feel that I got this education despite the economic difficulties, limited resources of my family. I have struggled a lot to achieve this. And now, I cannot get anything in return because I am here. I don't know, maybe this is how it should be. Maybe I should get used to this new world.

c) Glass ceilings for foreigners

For some of them who could find jobs and who have stayed in Norway for extended periods, not being able to reach upper, managerial positions is a problem. M16 came to Norway for her master's degree. She has been in the country for more than 30 years now and has been working at a public institution. As a person who has been working at the same institution for a long time, she feels that a glass ceiling or a barrier prevents people of foreign-origin from advancing to managerial levels: "After you reach a certain level, if you want to be a manager and apply for it, you see that you can never become one for some reason. . . You think that you deserve things. But there is a barrier, and you cannot get over it." M23 believes that in Norway, there is a silent policy of reserving the better paying, upper-level positions to "themselves"; they don't want to hire individuals of migrant origin for those positions. She observes that as an implication of this policy, there are many migrants with higher education who cannot find prestigious jobs and who work at lower level positions.

d) Workplaces and work conditions that mostly foreigners accept

M55 thinks that it is easier for migrant-origin women to find employment at a barnehage or primary school compared to other areas. Many migrant women, although they previously worked at professional positions in their countries, can only find employment in this sphere. This is also because there are not enough Norwegians who accept those positions. M61 is currently working at a company where mostly other foreigners work. She feels that she is overqualified for that job. However, as a newcomer to Norway, she does not speak fluent Norwegian, and at this point, she can only apply to jobs for English-speakers. That significantly limits her options. She thinks that her company mostly hires foreigners because Norwegians would never accept such working conditions or corporate culture. According to

her, managers of the company are aware that Norwegians would not accept working in such environment and they intentionally hire migrants.

f) Negative experiences at work because of foreign/Turkish origin

For those who could find a job in Norway, there were some unpleasant experiences that have made their work life less than satisfactory. M43 was a child when she came to Norway. She had her education in Norway and completed a master's degree. She is currently working as a teacher. She explains that at the school where she is working, there are mostly "ethnic Norwegian" kids. She feels that because she is of migrant origin, she is being challenged by parents and easily blamed for issues over which she has no control. In one case, she was insulted by a parent, and she needed to have meetings with the school administration regarding the issue. The parents even asked her if she had sufficient education to be a teacher at that school. As a teacher who was hired according to regular procedures, this question offended her. The impression that she got from this incident was that the parent did not want her child to have an ethnic-minority teacher.

M52 is a professional who has been transferred to the Oslo branch of his company. Working at an international company, he feels the impact of the hierarchy of nations at his work. He thinks that being a foreigner in Norway is not the same for an American person as a Turkish one. For a Turkish person, it is more burdensome to live as a foreigner. He currently has a managerial position, but he was also nominated for a position to be a group leader. During that process, it was clearly communicated to him that they do not want him to have that position because he is not Norwegian. He thinks that it is a discriminatory practice. He thinks that as people feel concerned about those who are not from their group, when they encounter a foreigner, it creates anxiety in them. However, when a person is from a country like Turkey, it makes the situation even more difficult. "The discomfort is partially caused by being a foreigner. But the level of discomfort increases if you are Turkish."

M51 thinks that work is the main area where she experiences discrimination. She thinks that at the workplace, she has had experiences that she can easily call racist. During a lunch break, when she told her coworker that she was from Turkey, he told her that Turkey is an uncivilized country. She said, "Look at me. Do I look uncivilized?" The man told her that she is civilized because she is married to a Norwegian man. She thinks that there is a fixed portrayal of Turks in Norway, and it seems quite hard to change that portrayal.

f) Disadvantages related to language

Although disadvantages were mentioned related to speaking English, not speaking Norwegian, not speaking it fluently, or speaking it with a foreign accent, not all of them considered these disadvantages as linked to discrimination. Although the working language at her company is English and there are efforts to make the company more international, M41 feels uncomfortable because of the constant pressure to speak Norwegian. She finds it offensive that at every meeting where they speak English, she gets the question why she still doesn't speak Norwegian. She thinks that although the company tries presenting itself as international, being Norwegian and speaking Norwegian are still crucial. Therefore, she feels herself disadvantaged in that regard.

M52 is also an English-speaking professional, but he does not experience speaking English as a disadvantage. His working language is English. He thinks that being an English-speaking



professional who previously worked and lived in the US, he is exposed to less discrimination. English is a second language for both him and his Norwegian clients. If he was speaking Norwegian, he thinks that he could be discriminated because of his accent, which is not something that he is currently experiencing.

In terms of Norwegian spoken with a foreign accent, M33 has seen some changes in the situation in especially Oslo during the last 5–6 years. He thinks that more people who speak Norwegian with accents have been hired to public institutions. He thinks that in the past, there was a culture of not-hiring people who had non-native accents. He states that people of foreign descent, like him, have also contributed to changing that culture; as a person who is involved in hiring decisions, he did his best to give opportunities to people who are from minority groups or who spoke with accents. However, he thinks that people of migrant origin are still concentrated in non-skilled jobs regardless of their qualifications. Those who make hiring decisions prefer to hire the ones who are like them.

Education

My respondents gave several examples of discrimination related to education. First, examples were given for differential treatment in the school environment. M5 explains that while their child, who was born and raised in Norway, was growing up, he and his wife had to struggle a lot to protect her rights as a citizen of Norway. When their daughter was at primary school, they noticed that the teachers were arranging the tables during the lunch time so that their daughter was sitting together with other children whose families were of non-Western origin. Norwegian and other European-origin kids were seated together at a separate table. He criticized the fact that, according to Norwegian egalitarianism, they give the same milk to all the kids. But while seating those same kids, they discriminate based on which countries their families came from.

Another example of differential treatment in the school environment was given by M37, who has been living in Norway for 30 years. She has two children, who were born and grew up in Norway. She reported that at her children's school, when there were bombings in different countries in Europe, there were moments of silence to commemorate those who died. However, there was a big bombing in Turkey during the same period, and there was no commemoration although there were many children of Turkish origin at the school. Her children became frustrated, feeling unrecognized.

A second problem that was emphasized during the interviews was related to how migrant children are guided in the educational system. For instance, as a teacher, M55 has the impression that those schools that have fewer migrant-origin children have much better conditions than the other ones, although they are all public schools. She has also observed that migrant-origin students are being channeled to lower-skilled jobs. M34 has worked as the head of a migrant association in Norway. He speaks based on the experiences of many Turkish migrants who shared their problems and complaints with them. He argues that students of migrant origin are “manipulated” and directed to “lower-level occupations” during their education; they are not channeled to more professional areas.

Thirdly, they have provided accounts of those instances when the additional needs of their children due to their migrant background were not recognized. M36 came to Norway in 2004, six years after she got married to a Norwegian citizen. When she came to Norway with her

daughter, neither she nor her daughter spoke much Norwegian. Her daughter had to directly start primary school without going to barnehage. However, because of the challenges in the language, she became quite and withdrawn. Although she was talking a lot at home in Turkish, at school she did not talk much. Her teachers called M36 to school and told her that her daughter had retardation in her intellectual development. R36 protested and told the teachers that her daughter knew many things, but they were not interested enough to understand her difficulties in language. M36's general impression was that neither teachers nor administrators took migrant kids or families seriously. However, thanks to her persistence and ongoing pressures with teachers, her daughter was offered extra classes, and the rest of her education went more smoothly.

Citizenship without Recognition

Those of them who have lived in Norway for long periods and have held the Norwegian citizenship for extended periods feel that they are still treated as foreigners, not Norwegians. Both M5 and his wife graduated from a reputable university in Turkey and had graduate education in Norway. M5, who has been living in Norway for more than 30 years with his wife, thinks that they have both contributed to Norway significantly, being role models especially for many people who are of foreign origin. However, he complains that despite their love and loyalty to the country and their contributions, Norwegians still consider them as foreigners. He thinks that it takes several generations to be considered as Norwegian.

M33 thinks that although he has been in Norway for 40 years, he always feels that he is a person from another country. He prefers to introduce himself as Turkish rather than as Norwegian. Although he accepts that part of the reason for this identification is his own attachment to Turkey, it can also be considered an attempt to protect himself psychologically. As he thinks that he is never considered as Norwegian by Norwegians, it is "safer" for him to think of himself as Turkish:

I don't know, I could never see or feel myself as a Norwegian. The Norwegians make us feel this way. When there is a conflict, they can easily say 'You are a foreigner, not Norwegian.' I think I emphasize my Turkish identity not to be exposed to such psychological pressures or, in one sense, to protect myself.

M37 believes that as a person who becomes a citizen of Norway, she has the same responsibilities and obligations, but not the same rights as other Norwegians. She thinks that her right to criticize issues about Norway is not recognized. Many times, when she participates in a debate on social media and writes a criticism about Norway, she gets the comment "If you do not like it here, go back to your country!" As a person who is a Norwegian citizen and has been living, working, and paying taxes in Norway for a long time, she finds it disappointing that her right to voice her opinion is not recognized.

Intersectionality: Discrimination based on ethnicity and gender

Although they recognize that Norway is a country that stresses gender equality, some of my respondents expressed their discomfort as migrant women, especially in professional life. In Turkey, M13 worked at the managerial level of a reputable, big company that also has operations in other countries. She had come to Norway as an expatriate. While answering the question about differential treatment, she responded by saying that in Norway, she feels



discrimination based on being a woman in addition to her nationality. Compared to her work environment in Turkey, where there were many women managers, she finds her new environment in Norway quite male-dominated. She says that she is currently the only woman at the managerial level, and she is often exposed to sexist jokes at her workplace. Although she has been constantly hearing things about the egalitarian culture in Norway in terms of gender, she states that her own experience as a Turkish woman manager has been quite different.

M51 is an engineer. Even in Norway, which is known for its practices supporting gender equality, she says that there are few woman engineers. M51 had difficulties in her previous job in Norway because of both her gender and ethnicity. One of her coworkers was a member of a radical Christian group and had negative opinions about women who work. She filed a complaint about that coworker. As a woman engineer, she feels discriminated against because of her gender, especially when she interacts with older men. She thinks the fact that she is a Turkish woman engineer makes her situation even more difficult. These problems sometimes take the form of mobbing. Although there were times when she filed complaints, she thinks that nothing really changed “even if this is Norway!”

Discrimination in social relationships

As people coming from a “non-Western” country, several of my respondents feel that they are not treated as equals in social relationships. Even when they get “help” from Norwegians in social life, they do not necessarily see it as positive, but rather consider it as patronizing. M36 thinks that Norwegians like showing compassion to people who they perceive as inferior; they like establishing relationships of help. She thinks that they don’t really want to establish relationships as equals with non-Western people. M57 also refers to it as an “attitude”, which makes her feel uncomfortable:

Norway is a beautiful country. It is one of the countries where people can live comfortably. Norwegians are aware of it. The way they treat migrants who come here is like ‘We are good at everything. We are good people. We are helping you. You are coming from somewhere, which is at a low level. But we are high, up here. We have developed a lot. But we are helping you.’

A very common complaint about living in Norway as a person from Turkey is that one needs to be ready to discuss Turkish politics all the time and to be considered a political representative of Turkey in Norway. They see it as an indication that they are not seen as equals in social relationships. M55 finds questions about politics as disrespectful. She sees Norwegians as people who are sensitive about not asking such questions to each other. When she feels forced to voice her opinions on political issues, she thinks that they do not respect her (and Turks in general). M50 additionally complains because every Turkish person is considered as somehow related to the President Erdoğan or almost as responsible for what he is doing.

The Impact of Prejudices on Polarization among Turkey-Originated Migrants

As discussed at the beginning, in Turkey, there are divisions among people along several axes, like religious-secular, supporter of -against the AKP government, Turkish-Kurdish, Sunni-Alevi, etc. I have observed that these distinctions become more pronounced among migrants from Turkey who are living in Norway. Many of my interviewees stressed their differences

from those “other migrants” from Turkey who are conservative, not highly educated, and without professional jobs. Some stressed that those migrants from Turkey were responsible for the prejudices about and discrimination against Turks in general. For some, it made a big difference to be a migrant who was educated at Western educational institutions, has a profession and can speak multiple languages fluently. They think that their experiences significantly differed from the experiences of worker migrants.

Both M61 and M21 think that the behavior and characteristics of some Turkish groups are feeding the stereotypes about Turks in Norway. They both say that many Turks who live in Norway came from small cities and they are not well-educated. M21 thinks that they did not try to integrate into their new society and became isolated. Therefore, according to her, negative prejudices that Norwegians have are linked to their previous encounters with this group. “Even *we* are prejudiced against them. Norwegians naturally have negative opinions. They do not try learning the language, don’t familiarize themselves with the culture, don’t open themselves up. . . Naturally, people form prejudices.” Similarly, according to M52, the dominant impression in Norway about Turkish migrants is shaped by what they know about Turkish workers who have lived in Norway since the 1950s. He characterizes this group as not highly educated and mostly isolated from the rest of society.

M15 has been living in Norway for more than 40 years now. He and his wife are both Turkish-originated professionals and work at well-known institutions in Oslo. Discursively, he tries distancing himself from other migrants from Turkey. He thinks that asylum seekers, refugees, and religious people are more visible in the Norwegian media. “People like us are not visible, as we are part of the normal society. Newspapers do not cover us; they write nothing about us. The media focuses on what they see as the problem groups. . .” He also thinks the “problem groups” represent the general situation of Turks in the eyes of Norwegians. He says that even in his own circle, there are at least 50 Turks who are professionals and have made significant contributions to Norwegian society. However, they are still considered exceptions.

M33 thinks that some people who come to Norway from Turkey are more attached to Turkey than to Norway. For him, this also applies to the second and even third generation. He thinks that several problems are related to Turkey-originated groups, especially in Drammen: They are not highly educated, have difficulty finding jobs, and have not improved in terms of how they see women’s position in society. According to these criteria, he thinks that “those Turks” have been unsuccessful in integrating into the Norwegian society and they are responsible for how Turks are perceived in Norway.

Conclusion

This paper focused on the discrimination perceptions of Turkish skilled migrants who are currently living in Norway. Depending on their responses, the paper looked at their perceptions about prejudices and stereotypes about their ethnic group, to what extent and in what areas they perceive discrimination against themselves and others from Turkey, and the implications of prejudices and discrimination for how migrants from the same country perceive each other. The research findings demonstrate that Turkey-originated migrants who are living in Norway think of themselves as the members of an ethnic group about which there are many negative prejudices and stereotypes. They feel that their nationality is situated at a lower level in the hierarchy of nations and they are treated accordingly. They are defined with reference to Islam even if they are not religious or are non-believers, and they think that



being a Muslim is considered negatively in Norway. Some of them think that they are treated as people who do not know the proper ways of behavior. They have given examples related to discrimination in employment or at work, in education, social life, and in terms of getting recognition as Norwegians after they become citizens. Some women also talked about being discriminated against based on gender and nationality.

This paper argues that the prejudices and stereotypes about certain migrant group lead to even more emphasized polarizations between different groups of migrants from the same country. When all members of an ethnic group are stereotyped, skilled migrants who have adequate capital usually spend their efforts to distance themselves from the members of their ethnic group that they see as responsible for those stereotypes. For stereotyped groups, both skilled and unskilled migrants use discursive and material strategies to distance themselves from an imagined migrant (of their ethnic origin) who is portrayed negatively. Although both groups of migrants use these strategies, skilled migrants have access to more resources in their efforts to distance themselves from this imagined migrant. In my interviews, I have observed many examples of discursive distancing strategies. In addition to the other impacts of perceived discrimination that are discussed in the literature, this study demonstrates that perceptions of prejudice and discrimination can also have negative impacts on how members of the same ethnic group perceive each other in the migrated country. Future studies can show the extent to which this finding applies to migrants in different contexts.

References

- Abram, S. (2018). Likheth is not equality: Discussing Norway in English and Norwegian. In *Egalitarianism in Scandinavia* (pp. 87-108). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Ahmad, A. (2020). Ethnic discrimination against second-generation immigrants in hiring. *European societies*, 22(5), 659-681.
- Allport, G. W., Clark, K., & Pettigrew, T. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Andriessen, I., Nievers, E., Dagevos, J., & Faulk, L. (2012). Ethnic discrimination in the Dutch labor market: Its relationship with job characteristics and multiple group membership. *Work and occupations*, 39(3), 237-269.
- Bagley, C., & Abubaker, M. (2017). Muslim woman seeking work: An English case study with a Dutch comparison, of discrimination and achievement. *Social sciences*, 6(1), 17.
- Benedict, R. (1945). *Race and racism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Berson, C. (2009). Private vs. public sector: Discrimination against second-generation immigrants in France. HAL id: halshs-00423944v2.
- Blumer, H. (1958). Race prejudice as a sense of group position. *Pacific sociological review*, 1(1), 3-7.
- Busetta, G., Campolo, M. G., & Panarello, D. (2020). The discrimination decomposition index: a new instrument to separate statistical and taste-based discrimination using first-and second-generation immigrants. *International journal of social economics*, 47(12), 1577-1597.
- Deitch, E. A., Barsky, A., Butz, R. M., Chan, S., Brief, A. P., & Bradley, J. C. (2003). Subtle yet significant: The existence and impact of everyday racial discrimination in the workplace. *Human relations*, 56(11), 1299-1324.
- Dollmann, J. (2019). Educational institutions and inequalities in educational opportunities. In R. Becker (Ed.) *Research handbook on the sociology of education* (pp.263-283). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Dollmann, J. (2016). Less choice, less inequality? A natural experiment on social and ethnic differences in educational decision-making. *European sociological review*, 32(2), 203-215.
- Feagin, J. R., & Eckberg, D. L. (1980). Discrimination: Motivation, action, effects, and context. *Annual review of sociology*, 6(1), 1-20.
- Fibbi, R., Midtbøen, A. H., & Simon, P. (2021). Consequences of and Responses to Discrimination. In R. Fibbi, A.H. Midtbøen, P. Simon (Eds.) *Migration and discrimination* (pp. 65-78). Springer, Cham.

- Finney, N., Lymperopoulou, K., Kapoor, N., Marshall, A., Sabater, A., & Simpson, L. (2014). Local ethnic inequalities: ethnic differences in education, employment, health and housing in districts of England and Wales 2001-2011 (Runnymede Report).
- Gullestad, M. (2002). Invisible fences: Egalitarianism, nationalism and racism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 8(1), 45-63.
- Gullestad, M. (1989). Small facts and large issues: The anthropology of contemporary Scandinavian society. *Annual review of anthropology*, 18(1), 71-93.
- Gullestad, M. (1986). Equality and Marital Love: The Norwegian case as an illustration of a general Western dilemma. *Social analysis: The international journal of social and cultural practice*, (19), 40-53.
- Hellgren, Z., & Gabrielli, L. (2021). Racialization and aporophobia: intersecting discriminations in the experiences of non-western migrants and Spanish Roma. *Social sciences*, 10(5), 163.
- Karlsdóttir, A., Sigurjónsdóttir, H. R., Ström Hildestrand, Å., & Cuadrado, A. (2017). Policies and measures for speeding up labour market integration of refugees in the Nordic region: A knowledge overview (Nordregio Working Paper 2017: 8).
- Krings, F., & Olivares, J. (2007). At the doorstep to employment: Discrimination against immigrants as a function of applicant ethnicity, job type, and raters' prejudice. *International journal of psychology*, 42(6), 406-417.
- Kustov, A. (2019). Is there a backlash against immigration from richer countries? *International hierarchy and the limits of group threat. Political psychology*, 40(5), 973-1000.
- Longva, A. N. (2003). The trouble with difference: Gender, ethnicity, and Norwegian social democracy. In G. Brochmann (eEd.) *Multicultural Challenge* (pp.153-175). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Luthra, R. R. (2010). Assimilation in a new context: Educational attainment of the immigrant second generation in Germany (No. 2010-21). ISER Working Paper Series. (<https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/65936/1/632259515.pdf>)
- Neto, F. (2006). Psycho-social predictors of perceived discrimination among adolescents of immigrant background: A Portuguese study. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 32(1), 89-109.
- Noh, S., Beiser, M., Kaspar, V., Hou, F., & Rummens, J. (1999). Perceived racial discrimination, depression, and coping: A study of Southeast Asian refugees in Canada. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 193-207.
- OECD. 2015. *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: Settling In*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing. (https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/indicators-of-immigrant-integration-2015-settling-in_9789264234024-en#page1)
- Østby, L. (2013). Norway's population groups of developing countries' origin: Change and integration. (Statistics Norway Reports 10/2013)
- Pager, D., & Shepherd, H. (2008). The sociology of discrimination: Racial discrimination in employment, housing, credit, and consumer markets. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 34, 181-209.
- Pager, D. (2007). The use of field experiments for studies of employment discrimination: Contributions, critiques, and directions for the future. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 609(1), 104-133.
- Pearson, A. R., Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2009). The nature of contemporary prejudice: Insights from aversive racism. *Social and personality psychology Compass*, 3(3), 314-338.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Reactions toward the new minorities of Western Europe. *Annual review of sociology*, 24(1), 77-103.
- Peucker, M. (2009). Ethnic discrimination in the labour market-empirical evidence on a multi-dimensional phenomenon. (Efms paper, 2009-3).
- Pincus, F. L. (1996). Discrimination comes in many forms: Individual, institutional, and structural. *American behavioral scientist*, 40(2), 186-194.
- Quillian, L. (2006). New approaches to understanding racial prejudice and discrimination. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 32, 299-328.
- Quillian, L. (1995). Prejudice as a response to perceived group threat: Population composition and anti-immigrant and racial prejudice in Europe. *American sociological review*, 586-611.
- Rowe, M. P. (1990). Barriers to equality: The power of subtle discrimination to maintain unequal opportunity. *Employee responsibilities and rights journal*, 3(2), 153-163.



- Siebers, H., & Koster, M. (2021). How official nationalism fuels labour market discrimination against migrants in the Netherlands and its institutional alternatives. *Nations and nationalism*, 28(1), 98-116.
- Skjeie, H., & Langvasbråten, T. (2009). Intersectionality in practice? Anti-discrimination reforms in Norway. *International feminist journal of politics*, 11(4), 513-529.
- Støren, L. A., & Wiers-Jensen, J. (2010). Foreign diploma versus immigrant background: determinants of labour market success or failure?. *Journal of studies in international education*, 14(1), 29-49.
- Taylor, M., & Pettigrew, T. (2000). Prejudice. *Encyclopedia of sociology*, 2, 2242-2248.
- Wilson, W. J. (1999). *The bridge over the racial divide*. University of California Press.

Table 1. List of respondents

	Gender	Age	Civil Stat	Arrival Norw	Citizen,	Education
M3	F	43	Married	2000	N, T	MS (Norway)
M5	M	63	Married	1985	N, T	MS (Norway)
M8	F	39	Married	2014	T (res.perm)	MS (USA)
M9	F	39	Married	2015	T (res.perm)	MS (Norway)
M11	F	55	Single	2018	T (res.perm)	MS (USA)
M12	F	34	Single	2015	T (res.perm)	MS (Turkey)
M13	F	51	Married	1990	N	PhD (Norway)
M14	F	46	Single	2016	T (res.perm)	MS (USA)
M15	M	67	Married	1976	N, T	PhD (Norway)
M16	F	58	Married	1988	N	MS (Norway)
M17	F	36	Single	2017	T (res.perm)	PhD (Turkey)
M18	M	46	Married	1981	N, T	MS (Norway)
M20	F	47	Married	2003	T (res.perm)	University (Turkey)
M21	F	79	Widow	2002	N,T(blue c)	University (Turkey)
M23	F	44	Married	2016	T (perm.res)	University (Turkey)
M24	F	56	Married	1985	N, T	University(Turkey)
M26	F	29	Married	2018	T (res.perm)	University (Turkey)
M27	F		Married	2018	T (res.perm)	PhD (Other country)
M30	F	54	Divorced	1991	N, T	University (T&N)
M32	F	27	Single	2011	T (perm.res)	MS (Norway)
M33	M	56	Married	1974	N, T	University (Norway)
M34	M	50	Married	1976	N, T	MS (Norway)
M36	F	50	Married	2004	N, blue card	University (Turkey)
M37	F	55	Married	1991	N, T	University (Norway)
M39	F	28	Married	2016	T, perm.res.	University (Turkey)
M40	M	34	Single	2019	T, res.perm	PhD (Turkey)
M41	F	49	Married	2011	T, perm.res.	MS (Turkey)
M42	F	41	Married	2018	T, res.perm	MS (Turkey)
M43	F	40	Single	1983	N,T	MS (Norway)
M46	M	28	Married	2018	T, res.perm	University (Turkey)
M49	M	29	Single	2018	T, refugee	MS (Turkey)
M50	F	38	Married	2007	N	MS(Turkey+Norway)
M51	F	47	Married	2005	N, blue card	University(Turkey)
M52	M	43	Married	2018	T, res.perm	MS (US)
M53	F	33	Divorced	2012	T, perm.res.	Univer(Norway)
M55	F	34	Married	2016	T,N	University(Turkey)
M57	F	50	Married	2017	T, res.perm	MS (US)
M58	F	52	Married	1974	N, blue card	PhD (Norway)
M61	F	30	Married	2019	T, res.perm	University(Turkey)
M62	M	25	Single	2019	T	University(Turkey)
M63	F	37	Married	2015	N,T	MS (Turkey)
M65	F	36	Married	2019	T, res.perm	University(Turkey)
M68	M	37	Married	2018	T,refugee	University(Turkey)
M69	M	30	Single	2005	N	University(Norway)