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Structural position and relative deprivation among recent migrants: a longitudinal take on the integration paradox

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of recent migrants' broader structural position for their destination country identification is studied in this manuscript. In three ways, we build upon previous work referring to an integration paradox, concluding that more structurally integrated migrants turn away from the destination country. First, we extend existing research that mainly tests this for migrants' educational level, by acknowledging that structural integration also includes migrants' economic position. Second, we elaborate on the relative deprivation framework by testing how a mismatch between educational and economic position affects destination country identification. Third, we not only study how migrants feel about the native population, used as outcome in most integration paradox studies, but also for a sense of belonging to the destination country. We test our hypotheses cross-sectionally *and* dynamically using the New Immigrants to the Netherlands Survey. Results indicate that migrants' educational and economic position hardly affects the way they feel about the native population, whilst a higher structural position does hamper a sense of belonging to the destination country. This latter finding is not explained by a mismatch between educational and economic position, as a mismatch does not systematically affect new immigrants' feelings about the native population or their sense of belonging.

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Host country identification; destination country identification; integration paradox; structural integration; relative deprivation

Introduction

Migrants' integration into their destination country is a topic heavily debated in media and academia, in which the claim that migrants' lack of attachment to the destination country has a central role (De Vroome and Verkuyten 2014; Verkuyten and Martinovic 2014; Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). National cohesion and a shared identity are stressed for a well-functioning society, where migrants' feelings of belonging to the destination country are considered a prerequisite for such a society (Grzymala-Kazłowska and Phillimore 2017; Verkuyten 2016; Verkuyten and Martinovic 2012). To obtain such a sense of

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national belonging, educational level and participation in society are key according to politicians, opinion makers and previous scientific work (Verkuyten and Martinovic 2014). This assumption is prevalent and widely shared; however, recent research has concluded that educational level – as main indicator of structural integration – does not always increase destination country identification (De Vroome and Verkuyten 2014). Even though some studies challenge this finding (Martinovic, Van Tubergen, and Maas 2009; Verkuyten and Martinovic 2012), several studies in the last decade have found that structurally integrated migrants turn away from the destination country, instead of becoming more oriented towards it (Buijs, Demant, and Hamdy 2006; De Vroome and Verkuyten 2014; Steinmann 2018). This counterintuitive finding challenges the assumption of migrants' unidirectional assimilation (Alba and Nee 1997; Gordon 1964), and has therefore been dubbed the integration paradox.

In building upon existing studies, we first acknowledge not only educational level but also other economic indicators of structural position and study whether these other economic indicators affect destination country identification comparable to education. Second, in order to explain the role of education in the integration paradox, earlier contributions referred to the relevance of relative deprivation. We theorise and elaborate the role of relative deprivation by testing how *mismatches* between educational level and economic position affect destination country identification.

By answering our research question '*To what extent is migrants' structural position (negatively) related to their destination country identification?*', we identify three contributions. First, we argue that while the integration paradox theoretically refers to the role of structural integration, it has empirically been studied rather unidimensionally with often a sole emphasis on the role of education (e.g. Van Doorn, Scheepers, and Dagevos (2013); Tolsma, Lubbers, and Gijsberts (2012)). Structural integration refers to migrants' position in the host society and is conceptually understood as (economic) participation in structures and institutions (De Vroome and Verkuyten 2014; Snel, Engbersen, and Leerkes 2006). Indicators of structural integration can therefore relate to both an educational component and an economic component (i.e. occupational status, labour market participation and income) (De Vroome et al. 2011). This study will extend insights on the paradox by also including this economic component of structural integration (as recommended by De Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten (2014)).

Second, we will integrate existing work of the relative deprivation framework into the paradox literature by theorising the mutual dependence between educational level and economic position, which has remained implicit in previous studies. A mismatch between educational level and economic position, such as being underemployed, is a common experience among migrants (Wassermann, Fujishiro, and Hoppe 2017). Previous research has illustrated that such a mismatch has negative consequences for subjective well-being and life satisfaction in the destination country (George et al. 2012), whereas there is surprisingly little known about the impact of such mismatches on integration outcomes such as destination country identification (Piracha and Vadean 2013). Therefore, we will disentangle whether the integration paradox can be attributed to economically unsuccessful higher educated migrants, or mainly, as research from the integration paradox has suggested, to a stronger perception of (group) disadvantages among higher educated in general.

Third, we also rely on a broader measurement of destination country identification, by which measure the theoretical assumptions from the paradox literature more closely.

In previous paradox studies, migrants' destination country identification,¹ described as an emotional form of attachment (Leszczensky, Maxwell, and Bleich 2019), is often assessed using attitudes towards natives or the destination country only (Ten Teije, Coenders, and Verkuyten 2013; Tolsma, Lubbers, and Gijsberts 2012). The underlying assumption seems that a positive attitude to natives or the destination country is a result of experiencing destination country identification, such as conceptualised in earlier studies (Verkuyten 2005; Hamamura 2017). However, the integration paradox literature theorises about (a lack of) belonging to the destination country, not about an evaluation of the population of the destination country. The concept of belonging, in its most basic sense, involves 'identifying with and feeling attachment to a social group' (Simonsen 2018, 120). Currently, the integration paradox literature hardly captures identification with such entities. We argue that migrants' sense of belonging – so embeddedness within the destination country or population – is therefore the relevant indicator for testing the integration paradox. We will include both migrants' attitude towards native Dutch, to be able to compare our study to previous integration paradox studies, and their sense of belonging in the Netherlands as measurement of the theoretically central concept of destination country identification (as suggested by Raijman and Geffen (2017)).

Empirically, we will study the integration paradox both as being a dynamic process and cross-sectionally (De Haas and Fokkema 2011; Verkuyten 2016) by using panel data with multiple waves: the New Immigrants Survey Netherlands. These data include recent migrants from Bulgaria, Poland, Spain and Turkey (Lubbers et al. 2018) who registered as new resident of the Netherlands in 2012 or 2013. We selected the migrants who indicated to have lived there up to five years before registration; at the time of the third wave in 2016, these migrants lived in the Netherlands for on average five years. Migrants supposedly experience the biggest changes in their integration process in the first years after migration (Geurts and Lubbers 2017; Phinney 2001; Diehl et al. 2016). In the last decade, there is a rising number of new immigrants moving from Middle- and Eastern Europe to Western European countries, including the Netherlands (Favell 2008). The question whether an integration paradox is also present among such recent migrants is left unaddressed as previous research has mainly studied second-generation and longer-established first-generation migrants. Steinmann (2018) recently showed that new higher educated migrants perceive more discrimination. We will build upon these results by exploring the impact of migrants' structural position on destination country identification among such new migrants.

Theoretical background

The integration paradox (re)defined

The existing empirical measurements of structural integration in studies on the integration paradox are mainly narrowed down to educational level (obtained in destination and/or origin country). Labour market integration is thereby left largely unaddressed and under-theorised, whereas it is conceptually part of the paradox.

The previous focus on educational level can not only be viewed as questionable with respect to measuring the concept of structural integration, it also raises doubts to what extent this indicator reflects actual integration into a destination country. Educational level seems relevant for integration *at a group level*, where a higher average is indicative

for a group's position relative to the native population. However, previous studies on the integration paradox derived hypotheses about the influence of education *at the individual level*. Yet, a lower level of education (and the same holds for lower socio-economic status or income) cannot simply be dubbed as being not well (structurally) *integrated* but rather refers to a migrant's structural *position*, emphasising whether one is economically successful in the destination country. We will henceforth refer to migrants' structural position instead of structural integration in assessing its influence on destination country identification.

Structural position and destination country identification

In this paper we formulate two main hypotheses to explain a possible negative effect of structural position on destination country identification. The first builds on the integration paradox literature where we are interested in to what extent the previously proposed mechanisms of perceived group acceptance and discrimination apply to the case of recent migrants, and whether they work similarly for various measurements of destination country identification. The second hypothesis provides a new explanation for the integration paradox building on the relative deprivation framework.

Research assumes that the integration paradox implies a relation between structural position and destination country identification as well as a mediation (De Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten 2014; Verkuyten 2016). There is consensus that both perceived group acceptance and perceived group discrimination explain the negative association between structural position and destination country identification (Verkuyten 2016; De Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten 2014; Ten Teije, Coenders, and Verkuyten 2013; Verkuyten and Martinovic 2012). The proposition is that migrants with a higher structural position often have more developed cognitive sophistication, which makes these migrants more likely to be interested in and have an understanding of public and political debates. This can increase awareness of a negative opinion climate on migration and diversity issues (Van Doorn, Scheepers, and Dagevos 2013). The cognitive interpretation seems to align with education most, and is previously studied accordingly. However, the exposure linkage also presumes that migrants who are employed are, due to greater participation in the destination country, more exposed to negative reactions and non-acceptance towards ethnic minority groups. This mechanism supposes migrants with a higher structural position to have more contact with natives in the public sphere, which not just depends on education but also on economic position indicators such as occupational status and labour market participation.

Following that migrants who have a structurally higher position are more receptive of a disadvantaged position of their ethnic group, it is argued that these migrants are likely to have less (willingness for) attachment and feelings of belonging to the destination country (Verkuyten 2016). This aligns with studies building on the rejection-identification model: migrants who feel their group is not fully accepted and discriminated against by natives will identify less with the destination country (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, and Solheim 2009; De Vroome et al. 2011).

Based on the above-explicated mechanisms, we formulate the hypothesis that *migrants with a higher structural position will have lower levels of destination country identification because of lower perceived group acceptance (H1a) and/or greater perceived group discrimination (H1b).*²

Mismatch between educational and economic position

Building upon previous studies that find educational level hampers destination country identification, we want to add a mechanism of individual relative deprivation to explain this negative impact. A mismatch between migrants' educational qualifications and economic success, which combined form migrants' structural position, can be interpreted as an experience of a disadvantaged individual position. An example is presented by migrants who worked as engineers or managers in the country of origin, but are manual labourers or housemaids in the destination country. Being economically unsuccessful despite having the necessary educational attributes and (transferable) skills can result in the feeling of not 'fitting in', and decrease the motivation to do so, as one is not able to contribute to society (De Vroome, Verkuyten, and Martinovic 2014). As part of the relative deprivation framework, the notion of rising expectations (based on Gurr (1970) and Runciman (1966)) assumes that advancing one's structural position brings about greater expectations, and in the case of unequal opportunities or treatment greater disappointment. This discrepancy between expectations and opportunities can create status inconsistency, offering a source for various emotions central to relative deprivation such as sadness and disappointment (Grant and Nadin 2007; Johnson and Roy Johnson 1996). Hereby we expect that those with advanced education are likely to have heightened expectations of their occupational status and job compared to those who are lower educated (Painter 2014). Put differently, when educational efforts and achievements are not valued as such, one is likely to feel relatively deprived (Verkuyten 2016; Grant 2008; Van Doorn, Scheepers, and Dagevos 2013).

Such skilled migrants with a higher education can moreover – compared to lower educated migrants – more justifiably claim that they get lower returns for their educational level or investments, where a lack of efforts and skills is not to blame (Verkuyten 2016). For them, it is important to feel recognised and included, in order to prevent such a discrepancy between expectations and attainment (Smith et al. 2012).

A mismatch between educational and economic position may resolve the integration paradox as it implies that it is not so much being successful in the structural domain which causes migrants to turn away from the destination country, but actually a mismatch between educational level and economic position that does so. That relative deprivation might matter indeed has been illustrated before, for instance by studies on life satisfaction (Grant 2008; Wassermann, Fujishiro, and Hoppe 2017). We argue that a mismatch between educational level and economic position can also bring about lower destination country identification. We therefore propose that:

The expected negative association between educational level obtained and destination country identification will be weaker for those migrants who are employed (**H2a**), have a higher occupational status (**H2b**) and have a higher income (**H2c**).

In addition, the focus on deprivation draws attention to the perceptions of success as another moderator of education's impact on belonging. When, objectively, a discrepancy between educational level and economic success exists, migrants do not necessarily have to feel deprived due to this mismatch. However, economic success is often referred to and studied using objective indicators such as absolute income and occupational status. Still, it is most likely that in the end it are the subjective experience with respect to one's economic

success that matter (Verkuyten 2008; Gurr 1970). Here it is important to realise that compared to an objective evaluation of a person’s economic position, a subjective one may reflect economic success more accurately as the past and the future situation are implicitly taken into account by the person (Singh-Manoux, Adler, and Marmot 2003). Some migrants may have anticipated on a lower economic position or are simply content with their current position despite having obtained a certain (higher) educational level.

Not acknowledging whether migrants are currently satisfied with their destination country economic position possibly explains the mixed results with respect to the integration paradox in previous studies. A so-called mismatch between educational level and economic success is likely to have consequences with respect to migrants’ (socio-cultural) integration when migrants themselves experience their economic position as unsatisfactory. We therefore argue that the presumed negative effect of educational level on destination country identification is more likely to be present among migrants who are not content with their economic position.

The expected negative association between educational level obtained and destination country identification will be weaker the more satisfied migrants are with their economic position (H2d).

Similar to previous studies, we have formulated hypotheses cross-sectionally. We do not have reason to expect that these relationships work differently when tested over time. We underline the call to interpret integration as a dynamic process (Schunck, Reiss, and Razum 2015). Therefore, we will provide insight in the way migrants’ structural position can bring about differences in destination country identification (tested cross-sectionally) as well as whether development in this position causes changes in such identification (tested dynamically). The supposed associations are presented in Figure 1.

Data and measurements

Data

To test the proposed hypotheses, we use the ‘New Immigrants Survey Netherlands’ (NIS2NL) survey. NIS2NL is designed to analyse early integration processes and provides

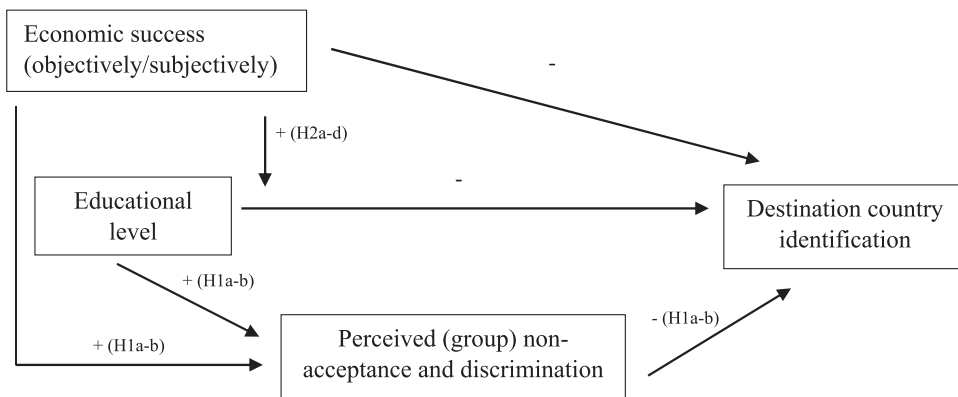


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

information of Bulgarian, Polish, Spanish and Turkish migrants (Lubbers et al. 2018). Within 18 months of registration, a sample of migrants older than 18 years old was invited to participate in a written or online survey in September 2013. The first wave was collected in November 2013 and March 2014. Invitations and questionnaires were translated into the migrants' mother tongue. The mean response rate was 32.3 per cent leading to 4808 respondents participating in the first wave.³ The survey includes multiple waves, which makes it possible to test hypotheses dynamically. After on average fifteen months from wave 1, the 81.5 per cent of respondents who had consented to be contacted again and still lived in the Netherlands was approached to participate in wave 2 (March–May 2015). Wave 2 included 2257 respondents (response rate: 58.7 per cent⁴), after which 1334 respondents also completed wave 3 (September–November 2016; response rate: 68.1 per cent⁵).

The dropout between waves can be selective, since it is to a large extent affected by return migration or migration elsewhere. With respect to dropout after wave 1, it appears that migrants who were female, higher educated, employed, had a higher occupational status, or higher intention to stay in the Netherlands were less likely to drop out. From wave 2 to wave 3, only those who intended to stay were less likely to dropout. Also the migrants who perceived more group discrimination or a mismatch were more likely to dropout. Evidently, this dropout is selective and can be interpreted as a lack of identification to the Netherlands. On the one hand, it could be argued that this dropout increases the representativeness of our data compared to the *settling* migrant population in the Netherlands, as the group that remains in the Netherlands is different from those who return or migrate elsewhere. On the other hand, if this selective dropout would lead to bias it seems to result in underestimation of our effects, particularly on Hypothesis 2: the results here indicate that a mismatch increases the likelihood of leaving the destination country, strongly suggesting less identification to the destination country.

We will test our hypotheses using both the (static) sample of respondents included in wave 1, and a panel sample of those who participated in all three waves.⁶ For both samples, we selected only those respondents who have been in the Netherlands for five years or less. This cut-off point has been used previously to study and define recently arrived migrants (Rienzo 2011). This resulted in $N = 4400$ of the wave 1 sample and $N = 1226$ of the balanced panel sample. To assure we included the same respondents over the waves, we moreover excluded respondents who had inconsistent answers on questions on sex and birth year, resulting in a sample of 4244 and 1121, respectively. Finally, we excluded respondents who were enrolled in an educational programme as main activity, as these migrants are difficult to categorise regarding their (obtained) structural position in the Netherlands. This resulted in a final sample of 3588 respondents in the first wave, and 979 respondents in the balanced panel sample.

Destination country identification

We measure migrants' destination country identification in two ways. Previous studies on the integration paradox have most often operationalised destination country identification as *positive attitude towards natives* (e.g. Ten Teije, Coenders, and Verkuyten 2013; Gijsberts and Vervoort 2007; De Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten 2014). In line with

these studies, our first dependent variable is based on a feeling thermometer ranging from (0) which is the most negative attitude to (10) the most positive attitude towards Dutch natives. The mean values presented in appendix Table A1 show migrants become on average slightly less positive towards native Dutch over time (from 7.54 in wave 1 to 7.32 in wave 3).

In addition, we include a second dependent variable in our study, which is closer to the paradox literature's theoretical focus on migrants' own identification with the destination country. Therefore, we study migrants' own *sense of belonging in the Netherlands*. The latter is measured by two items: How important is the following to your sense of who you are: your current country of residence [i.e. the Netherlands]', ranging from (1) very important to (4) not important at all and 'I have a strong sense of belonging to the Netherlands', ranging from (1) totally agree to (5) totally disagree. Factor analysis shows that these two items are indeed empirically distinguishable from migrants' positive attitude towards natives.⁷

We recoded the answer categories so that a higher score indicates a greater sense of belonging and transformed the items to have the same scale length before taking their mean. Correlation between these items was around .60 in each wave. Table A2 shows that migrants' sense of belonging seems rather stable over time, as the mean was 2.09 in wave 1 and 2.14 in wave 3.

Structural position

The present study aims to extend the prevailing way in integration paradox studies to operationalise structural position by migrants' educational level only. Therefore we include multiple indicators of structural position. In line with previous studies, we included the *highest obtained level of education* attained in either one's country of origin (measured on a country-specific scale), the Netherlands, or another country. The majority of migrants obtained their educational in their country of origin (around 93.0 per cent). All education items were standardised into the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) scale of 2011 (UNESCO 2012), which ranges from (0) pre-primary education to (8) doctoral or equivalent. We included this linearly.⁸

Regarding the economic component of migrants' structural position, we included multiple indicators that are acknowledged aspects of one's economic position. We cover migrants' *employment status* as one's main activity in the Netherlands: (0) unemployed, (1) non-employed or (2) employed. The first category included actual unemployment and the second category being retired, long term sick or disabled, or looking after the home or children. Maternity and paternity leave are included in employment.

Of the respondents who have (had) a job in the Netherlands, we include their *occupational status* in International Socio-Economic Index (ISEI) scores. Open question answers regarding one's job were transformed to International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO-08) scores, which were recoded to ISEI. A higher score indicates higher occupational status. Next, net monthly *household income* was included, ranging from (1) under €400 to (16) €5600 or more.

Last, the subjective perception of one's economic position is based on the question 'How satisfied were you with the earnings from your current/your last job?' with answer categories ranging from (1) very satisfied to (5) very dissatisfied indicating one's

satisfaction with one's income. While the question about finances does not cover all aspects of economic position, including the available subjective measurement taps into the larger concept and advances the literature. Other subjective items on economic position were not available. Correlations of the main variables included in the analyses are presented in Appendix A1.

Experienced group acceptance and discrimination

The items for our mediating variables are rather similar to those included in previous studies on the integration paradox (Ten Teije, Coenders, and Verkuyten 2013; Hagedoorn, Veenman, and Vollebergh 2003). *Perceived group acceptance* was measured using the item 'In general, the Netherlands is a hospitable/welcoming country for [country of origin people].' After recoding it ranged from (0) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. *Perceived group discrimination* was measured with the question 'Some say that people from [country of origin] are being discriminated against in the Netherlands. How often do you think [country of origin] people are discriminated against in the Netherlands?'. The answers ranged from (0) never to (4) very often. The two items correlate around -0.50 ($p < .001$), which suggest no issues of multicollinearity despite their mutual influence. Moreover, confirmatory factor analyses show that the items measure different concepts than our dependent variables.⁹

Mismatch between educational and economic position

We included the interaction terms between migrants' educational and economic position to capture a possible mismatch. In doing so, we test whether the assumed effect of educational level changes for one's economic position (Hypotheses 2a–2c). In addition to the interaction term between migrants' education and economic position, we explored several alternative measurements to capture a mismatch. We for example tested whether there was only an influence of economic position among migrants with a university degree (subset alternative). We also tested separate dummy categories of combinations between educational level and economic position, such as being overeducated with respect to one's employment situation and/or income (categorical alternative), which is line with previous studies using measurements of realised matches (Chiswick and Miller 2009; Aleksynska and Tritah 2013). Where possible, we included a mismatch comparing one's score to for example the mean of similarly educated Dutch as well as to the mean of similarly educated recent migrants from the same country (objective comparative alternatives). We use both comparison groups alternately as recent migrants might compare themselves to either one. There are no measurements available that capture the feelings or experience of relative deprivation subjectively (such as feelings of frustration or stress).

Control variables

We control the relationships of interest for a number of factors that are expected to be associated with both (the development) of destination country identification and its relation with structural position. First, *duration of stay* was constructed using the

Table 1. Descriptive statistics wave 1, analysis on Sense of belonging in the Netherlands.

	Range	M	SD	N	% imputed
Sense of belonging in the Netherlands	0–4	2.079	.829	3531	0
Positive attitude towards native Dutch (0 = very negatively, 10 = very positively)	0–10	7.364	2.074	3459	0
<i>Structural position</i>					
Highest obtained educational level (0 = Less than primary, 8 = Doctoral or equivalent)	0–8	4.566	2.171	3531	0
Employment status in the Netherlands					0.255
Unemployed	0,1	.222	.416	3531	
Non-employed	0,1	.079	.270	3531	
Employed	0,1	.688	.464	3531	
Job status (ISEI)	11–88	36.302	21.045	2741	24.480
Household income	1–16	7.963	3.949	3531	15.123
Satisfaction with income (0 = Very dissatisfied, 4 = Very satisfied)	1–5	2.335	1.090	2741	3.685
<i>Mediators</i>					
Perceived group acceptance (0 = Strongly disagree, 4 = Strongly agree)	0–4	2.639	.947	3531	10.195
Perceived group discrimination (0 = Never, 4 = Very often)	0–4	1.881	1.020	3531	1.699
<i>Control variables</i>					
Duration of stay					0
<12 months	0, 1	.377	.485	3531	
12–18 months	0, 1	.178	.382	3531	
>18 months	0, 1	.335	.472	3531	
Missing	0, 1	.111	.314	3531	
Intention to stay					0
Permanent	0, 1	.365	.482	3531	
Circular	0, 1	.097	.097	3531	
Temporary	0, 1	.537	.537	3531	
Migration motive					0
Economic	0, 1	.551	.497	3531	
Family	0, 1	.250	.433	3531	
Education	0, 1	.054	.225	3531	
Other or no specific	0, 1	.146	.353	3531	
Sex (0 = man, 1 = woman)	0, 1	.538	.498	3531	0
Country of origin					0
Poland	0, 1	.373	.484	3531	
Bulgaria	0, 1	.128	.334	3531	
Turkey	0, 1	.193	.394	3531	
Spain	0, 1	.306	.461	3531	
Age at migration	18–66	30.108	7.986	3531	9.516

Source: NIS2NL wave 1.

migration date and the interview date. The duration of stay was included using four categories: (1) Fewer than 12 months, (2) Between 12 and 18 months, (3) Longer than 12 months and (4) Missing. We include migrants' *intention to stay* categorised into (1) temporary, (2) circular and (3) permanent, and *migration motive*, divided in line with previous research (Van Tubergen and Van De Werfhorst 2007) into (1) Economic, (2) Family, (3) Education or (4) Other or no specific reason. And we included migrants' *sex* being either (0) man or (1) woman, migrants' *country of origin* being either (1) Poland, (2) Bulgaria, (3) Turkey or (4) Spain, and their *age at migration*.

Descriptive statistics of the wave 1 sample are presented in Table 1. Developments in these variables over the three waves are presented in Appendix A2.

Missing values

After deletion of missing values with respect to the dependent variables, the sample of wave 1 includes 3531 (of 3588) respondents in the models for sense of belonging in the

Netherlands, and 3459 for migrants' positive attitude towards Dutch natives. With respect to the balanced panel sample the number of respondents is 853 and 847 (of 979), respectively. Remaining missing values on the items described above are estimated using multiple imputation (see Table 1). Respondents who stated to have never worked in the Netherlands and consequently are unable to have a valid (imputed) score on occupational status and satisfaction with income, were excluded from those models.

Analysis and results

Analytical strategy

To test the formulated hypotheses, we first study the wave 1 sample using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses. Effects of the structural position indicators are, although presented in the same table, estimated independently from each other. In this way, we can explore the individual effect of each indicator, which is in line with previous studies who only included migrants' educational level. The bivariate association between structural position and destination country identification are presented in the first models, after which control variables are included. After that we test whether the theorised variables explain this (negative) association. Therefore, the subsequent step is to add perceived group acceptance and perceived group discrimination as mediating variables. Last, we test to what extent a *mismatch* between migrants' educational and economic position affects destination country identification, also including control variables. For reasons of readability, the effects of control variables are presented in the appendix, Table A3, not in the main table. Table 2 presents the results for our first dependent variable: migrants' positive attitude towards native Dutch; Table 3 does so for sense of belonging in the Netherlands.

For each step we also tested the hypotheses dynamically, applying fixed effects estimates to the panel data. These models are indicated as models b. With the use of the Hausman test we determined that fixed effects models were preferred over random effects models. Fixed-effects models only use within-individual changes, completely controlling for time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity (Allison 2009). We include no fixed effects estimates for educational level as there is close to no variance in the highest obtained level of education over the waves. The mismatch panel models are presented in the appendix Table A4, as the effects are similar to results for the wave 1 sample.¹⁰

Structural position and destination country identification

Our results suggest that every indicator of structural position relates negatively to *sense of belonging* in the Netherlands, which is in accordance with the expectations from the integration paradox literature. Surprisingly, this conclusion cannot be drawn for migrants' positive *attitude towards native Dutch*, the measure that figures in most integration paradox literature, for which most indicators show little systematic impact.

Regarding the latter, Model 1 (Table 2) illustrates that migrants' educational level for example does neither hamper a positive attitude towards the Dutch, nor does it stimulate it ($b = 0.017$). Also, neither occupational status matters for one's attitude towards native Dutch, nor does household income. Only, with respect to employment status, we find

Table 2. OLS and FE-estimates on (development on) positive attitude to native Dutch, a horizontal line indicates a separate model.

	Models 1		Models 2a		Models 2b		Models 3a		Models 3b		Models 4a	
	Uncontrolled		Controlled		Controlled		Mediation		Mediation		Mismatch	
	Cross-sectional		Cross-sectional		Dynamic		Cross-sectional		Dynamic		Cross-sectional	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
<i>Education (ISCED)</i>	.017	.016	.010	.018			.022	.017				
Acceptance							.623***	.041				
Discrimination							-.243***	.042				
<hr/>												
<i>Employment status</i> (ref.=Unemployed)												
Non-employed	.150	.148	.159	.149	.114	.242	.083	.140	.040	.238	.394	.304
Employed	.142~	.086	.227*	.095	.184	.128	.168~	.089	.164	.126	.373~	.200
Acceptance							.631***	.042	.306***	.059		
Discrimination							-.243***	.044	-.224***	.055		
Education (ISCED)											.025	.036
ISCED*Employment status (ref.=ISCED*Unemployed)												
ISCED*Non-employed											-.061	.070
ISCED*Employed											-.034	.041
<hr/>												
<i>Job status (ISEI)</i>	.003	.002	.002	.002	-.004	.003	.001	.002	-.004	.003	.001	.006
Acceptance							.669***	.045	.318***	.066		
Discrimination							-.243***	.045	-.242***	.062		
Education (ISCED)											-.005	.041
ISCED*ISEI											.000	.001
<hr/>												
<i>Household income</i>	.001	.010	-.011	.010	-.008	.015	-.011	.010	-.010	.015	.001	.027
Acceptance							.617***	.042	.346***	.064		
Discrimination							-.248***	.043	-.224***	.059		
Education (ISCED)											.039	.044
ISCED*Household income											-.003	.005
<hr/>												
<i>Satisfaction with income</i>	-.170***	.036	-.169***	.037	-.006***	.002	-.021	.035	-.006***	.002	-.179*	.089
Acceptance							.666***	.045	.282***	.063		
Discrimination							-.240***	.046	-.224***	.059		
Education (ISCED)											-.012	.045
ISCED*Satisfaction with income											.002	.017

Source: NIS2NL wave 1-3.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ~ $p < .1$.

Table 3. OLS and FE-estimates on (development of) sense of belonging in the Netherlands, a horizontal line indicates a separate model.

	Models 1		Models 2a		Models 2b		Models 3a		Models 3b		Models 4a	
	Uncontrolled		Controlled		Controlled		Mediation		Mediation		Mismatch	
	Cross-sectional		Cross-sectional		Dynamic		Cross-sectional		Dynamic		Cross-sectional	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
<i>Education (ISCED)</i>	-.080***	.006	-.035***	.006			-.029***	.006				
Acceptance							.231***	.015				
Discrimination							.020	.017				
<hr/>												
<i>Employment status</i> (ref.=Unemployed)												
Non-employed	.084	.058	.040	.054	.059	.085	.020	.052	.059	.084	.037	.107
Employed	-.077*	.034	.034	.034	.052	.045	.026	.033	.041	.045	-.004	.071
Acceptance							.235***	.016	.113***	.021		
Discrimination							.029~	.017	-.025	.020		
Education (ISCED)											-.044**	.013
ISCED*Employment status (ref. = ISCED*Unemployed)												
ISCED*Non-employed											-.003	.025
ISCED*Employed											.014	.015
<hr/>												
<i>Job status (ISEI)</i>	-.008***	.001	-.003***	.001	-.002	.001	-.003***	.001	-.002~	.001	.001	.002
Acceptance							.235***	.016	.123***	.021		
Discrimination							.022	.016	-.006	.021		
Education (ISCED)											-.016	.015
ISCED*ISEI											.000	.097
<hr/>												
<i>Household income</i>	-.033***	.004	-.016***	.003	.002	.005	-.015***	.003	.001	.005	-.016	.009
Acceptance							.233***	.015	.113	.020		
Discrimination							.019	.016	-.020	.020		
Education (ISCED)											-.034*	.009
ISCED*Household income											.001	.002
<hr/>												
<i>Satisfaction with income</i>	-.026~	.014	-.038**	.014	.001	.001	-.003	.014	.000	.000	-.031	.032
Acceptance							.235***	.015	.113***	.020		
Discrimination							.024	.017	-.020	.020		
Education (ISCED)											-.030~	.016
ISCED*Satisfaction with income											-.003	.006

Source: NIS2NL wave 1-3.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ~ $p < .1$.

that those who are employed are marginally more positive towards Dutch natives compared to those who are unemployed ($b = 0.142$ in Model 1, Table 2), which goes against the integration paradox literature. This difference is larger when control variables are added ($b = 0.227$ in Model 2a). Last, those with greater satisfaction with income from their job are *less* positive towards native Dutch ($b = -0.169$ in Model 2a), which is in line with the integration paradox. Overall, the impact of structural position on the attitudes towards the Dutch, if present at all, is rather weak and mixed.

With respect to *sense of belonging*, results are substantially different. Table 3 suggests that a higher educational level decreases one's sense of belonging to the Netherlands, which is in accordance with the integration paradox ($b = -0.035$ in Model 2a). Also, results of employment status show that those who are employed have a lower sense of belonging in the Netherlands compared to those who are unemployed ($b = -0.077$ in Model 1). This effect however disappears when control variables – in specific country of origin, intention to stay and migration motive – are added ($b = 0.012$ in Model 2a). Table 3 moreover shows that both migrants' occupational status and household income decrease migrants' sense of belonging to the Netherlands ($b = -0.003$ and $b = -0.016$ in Model 2a, respectively). And for the subjective indicator of migrants' structural position, the results suggest that those with greater satisfaction with their income experience lower sense of belonging in the Netherlands ($b = -0.038$) too. Overall, these results are in line with expectations based on the integration paradox literature.

So, although there is support for the integration paradox thesis with respect to recent migrants' sense of belonging in the Netherlands, it is hardly there for these recent migrants' positive attitude towards Dutch natives. Whilst there is no negative impact of migrants' structural position on the way they feel about Dutch natives, there is no positive effect either.

The dynamic, panel analyses furthermore suggest that development in one's structural position hardly brings about change in either sense of belonging in the Netherlands or positive attitude towards native Dutch (Models 2b and 3b, Tables 2 and 3). The only significant association is that when one becomes more satisfied with their income, this is associated, in line with integration paradox theory, with a drop in one's positive attitude towards native Dutch ($b = -0.006$ in Model 2b).

As robustness test, we ran a model with all structural position indicators included simultaneously (Appendices A5 and A6). Doing so tests whether the indicators have an effect independently from each other. For instance, educational level might work via economic position and its effect may turn zero once controlled for socio-economic status and/or income. The results of this additional model show similar patterns as when the indicators are included separately. First of all, only satisfaction with income hampers one's positive attitude towards native Dutch. Second, for migrants' sense of belonging, all structural position indicators, except for employment status, have a negative impact – regardless of people's position on other indicators. Third, the models add that although education's direct effect remains significant, the effect is partially mediated by the economic position indicators – its effect decreases from -0.055 (Table 3, Model 2a) to -0.026 (Table A6, Model 2) – as shown by the use of Bootstrap Confidence Intervals.

Also, we explored whether the patterns are robust across the four ethnic groups (see Appendices A7 and A8). Regarding the attitude towards native Dutch as outcome, the main difference we find is that migrants from Bulgaria and Turkey who are non-employed

are more positive about Dutch than those who are unemployed, whereas for migrants from Poland and Spain there are no differences between non-employed and unemployed. Regarding sense of belonging in the Netherlands as outcome, patterns are robust, but it might be noteworthy that the negative impact of education and employment status is strongest among Turkish migrants, being the only group where those who are employed experience less belonging than those who are unemployed. Migrants from Poland and Turkey who are more satisfied with their income experience less belonging, whereas migrants from Bulgaria and Spain with a higher income show less belonging to the Netherlands. Overall, even when there are differences between the four groups there is no clear pattern, and most importantly the negative impact of structural position generally applies to all four groups.

Mediation by perceived group acceptance and discrimination

Following previous integration paradox studies, we tested whether the negative impact of education can be explained by their perceived group acceptance and perceived group discrimination (H1a, H1b). For such a mediation, an impact of these variables on destination country identification is a prerequisite. Accordingly, Tables 2 and 3 show that greater perceived group acceptance positively impacts both one's positive attitude towards native Dutch and one's sense of belonging in the Netherlands, whereas perceived group discrimination only decreases migrants' positive attitude towards native Dutch. Similarly, the dynamic fixed effects results in Model 3b suggest that an increase in perceived group acceptance increases both outcomes, whereas more perceived group discrimination decreases one's positive feelings towards native Dutch.¹¹

Next, it needs to be assessed whether this inclusion partly explains the impact of the structural position variables, which we tested using Bootstrap Confidence Intervals (Hayes 2013). Overall, there is some support that they do mediate this relationship, but this does not apply to every indicator of structural position and differs between the two outcomes.

With respect to migrants' positive *attitude towards native Dutch*, perceived group acceptance and perceived group discrimination mediate the negative effect of satisfaction with income (model 2a: $b = -0.169$; model 3a: $b = -0.021$).

For recent migrants' *sense of belonging* in the Netherlands, the negative effect of educational level (model 2a: $b = -0.035$) is partly mediated (model 3a: $b = -0.029$). Those with a higher educational level experience less group acceptance and more group discrimination, which lowers their sense of belonging in the Netherlands. Similarly, the negative effect of satisfaction with income decreases from -0.038 (model 2a) to -0.003 (model 3a): recent migrants who are more satisfied with their income perceive less group acceptance and more group discrimination, which consequently decreases their sense of belonging in the Netherlands. Whilst mediation takes place, the main effects of educational level and satisfaction with income remain significant.¹²

As robustness test, we explored to what extent the results hold when perceived group acceptance and discrimination are added separately (Appendices A9 and A10). This leads to very similar conclusions compared to including the mediators simultaneously. Additionally, we do find that perceived group discrimination has the expected direct negative impact on both dimensions of destination country identification when perceived

group acceptance is excluded. This suggests that the two items are closely related and that perceived group discrimination partly works via lower perceived acceptance.

Last, the dynamic panel perspective shows that the negative impact of satisfaction with income on attitude towards native Dutch does not change when perceived group acceptance and discrimination are added (Table 2, models 3b). It should be noted, that after adding these mediators, an increase in one's occupational status does decrease one's sense of belonging slightly. Rather than mediation, this indicates a suppression effect of perceived group acceptance and discrimination.

Mismatch between educational and economic position

Building upon the relative deprivation framework, we expect that the negative impact of level of education on destination country identification is stronger negative in case their economic position does not match their educational level (H2a–H2d). Table 2 and 3 (Models 4a) show that differences in economic position in the Netherlands do not affect the way educational level matters for either dependent variable. Migrants' educational position does not hamper destination country identification stronger *when the migrants' economic position is worse*. Moreover, Models 4b (see Appendix A4) suggest that the impact of changes in one's economic position do not depend upon educational level either. Also using alternative measurements of the mismatch, as discussed in the data section, lead to the same conclusion (presented in Appendices A13 and A14).¹³ The hypotheses with respect to a mismatch do not find support.

Conclusion and discussion

We studied to what extent and why migrants experience a so-called integration paradox in the early phase after migration. Previous research has concluded that a higher educational level negatively affects migrants' destination country identification, or more specific the way migrants feel about the native population (De Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten 2014; Verkuyten 2016; Ten Teije, Coenders, and Verkuyten 2013). Reiterating former studies, we find that migrants' educational level does not stimulate destination country identification, not among recent migrants either. We find that migrants' educational level does not affect the attitude towards the native population and, in line with the integration paradox findings, actually hampers feelings of belonging in the destination country.

Although the integration paradox theoretically refers to the possible negative impact of 'structural integration', empirical studies have mainly focused on the role of educational level, while often ignoring migrants' economic position. We showed that a higher economic position also lowers migrants' sense of belonging in the Netherlands. By including both education and other economic indicators, we can now conclude that it is not necessarily those who have more cognitive skills who identify less with the destination country, but rather those who are structurally 'better off'. A direct implication hereof is that policies should not only target higher educated migrants who might disengage with the destination country, but those who are structurally successful more generally. Such policies are not only important in terms of social cohesion (Leszczensky, Maxwell, and Bleich 2019; Verkuyten and Martinovic 2012). Our results draw attention to the 'global race for talent', as

the 'talent' seems to disengage relatively easily. This echoes and underlines the OECD's (2016) recommendation to the Netherlands to improve their policies to attract *and retain* talented migrants in order to strengthen its position as a knowledge-based economy.

In accordance with previous integration paradox studies (Verkuyten 2016), we found that perceived group acceptance and perceived group discrimination are important for the way migrants identify with their destination country. However, these two mechanisms seem to explain the presence of an integration paradox in a few instances only. Perhaps for recent migrants, the underlying explanations for such a paradox differ from previously studied second-generation migrants due to a smaller degree of exposure to and experience in the destination country. Moreover, since we followed previous research on the paradox, we disentangled between perceived group acceptance and discrimination. However, our study shows that the concepts are closely related and largely seem to capture similar mechanisms. Future studies should address the (empirical) difference between the two concepts in more detail.

To explore alternative explanations of the integration paradox, we combined the relative deprivation framework with the integration paradox literature. Whereas previous studies have stressed that a mismatch between educational level and economic position can affect one's mental well-being and life satisfaction (Wassermann, Fujishiro, and Hoppe 2017; George et al. 2012), our study shows that such a mismatch does not influence migrants' destination country identification, even though this was one of the implicit suggestions in the paradox literature. In general, a higher educational level decreases migrants' sense of belonging in the Netherlands regardless of their economic position and a mismatch therewith. A mismatch, however, might particularly apply to migrants who have obtained their educational level in the destination country. Moreover, our results suggest it is particularly subjective measurements of economic position that matter, although we acknowledge that our study was limited in capturing refined measurements of feelings of relative deprivation. Some (higher educated) recent migrants will probably not expect to find fitting jobs, underlining the importance of knowing migrants' expectations. In short, the deprivation logic we introduced here could still be relevant for future research and deserves more attention.

Another contribution revolves around the theoretically distinction between feelings *towards* the native population and country and feeling *part of* these entities. We acknowledged this distinction and incorporated it into the empirical analyses. Its relevance for the integration paradox was clearly illustrated: recent migrants' structural position *does not* systematically affect attitudes towards the Dutch, but *does* hamper a sense of belonging in the Netherlands. How one feels about a group is indeed not the same as feeling part of this group. The interrelationship between identification and attitudes deserves further theorising within the paradox literature as part of a comprehensive evaluation of the integration paradox. Perhaps being educated or employed can also result in awareness of being different from the Dutch, which hampers feeling part of the society, but does not hamper liking its population. Similarly, recent higher-skilled migrants have been argued to hold a more international outlook (Nedelcu 2012), which might lead to less belonging to the country, but not to the dislike of the population. Such reflection on the concept of destination country identification and the integration paradox should be explored in future studies.

A particular observation relevant to our study and a limitation to our reliance on panel data is panel attrition due to return or further migration. Migrants who identify with the destination country less are more likely to have dropped from our study between waves, diminishing the opportunity to reveal associations and possibly underestimating the (fixed) effects. Future research could study to what extent return or further migration is indeed a sign of low identification to the destination country.

Last, we attempted to view integration as a process by also acknowledging dynamics in the analyses. Our results illustrate that changes in migrants' structural position matter little for how destination country identification develops. Still, our study shows that already in the first decade after migration, migrants' structural position does not have the presumed positive effect on migrants' destination country identification, which opposes the classic assimilation theory (similarly argued by Tolsma, Lubbers, and Gijsberts 2012). Altogether, the negative impact of migrants' educational level and their economic position on their sense of belonging in the Netherlands supports and builds upon previous integration paradox literature. It further illustrates that migrants' structural position is more likely to form a stumbling block rather than a stimulus for destination country identification, whilst at the same time being a possible trigger for a broader, international outlook which surpasses identification with one specific country.

Notes

1. Although previous studies often use the term 'host country', to us this implies that migrants are viewed as (temporary) guests. We therefore prefer 'destination country' instead.
2. These hypotheses presume mediation by perceived acceptance and discrimination on the group level. We also explore whether personal discrimination mediates the supposed paradox, but focus on group-level explanations given the central place thereof in existing research.
3. By country of origin: Poland (31.9%), Bulgaria (23.1%), Turkey (28.8%) and Spain (48.4%).
4. Poland (55.0%), Bulgaria (57.4%), Turkey (57.4%) and Spain (66.9%).
5. Poland (65.4%), Bulgaria (64.2%), Turkey (66.9%) and Spain (75.9%)
6. The cross-sectional hypotheses have been re-run on the panel sample which yielded similar results.
7. The items of sense of belonging in the Netherlands load on one underlying dimension (factor loadings >0.67); the attitude towards natives' factor loading on that dimension was 0.31.
8. For ordinal and interval items, deviation from linearity was checked in multivariate regression analyses using subtests with dummy variables. We decided accordingly which operationalization to include.
9. There is one underlying dimension for perceived group acceptance and perceived group discrimination (factor loadings >0.66), where sense of belonging in the Netherlands and positive attitude towards natives do not load as high on this factor (0.25 and 0.43 respectively) and have unsatisfactory communalities (0.10 and 0.13 respectively).
10. These models (4b) provide an additional test of the association between a mismatch and destination country identification. It is tested how migrants with a stable educational level develop their destination country identification due to (conditioning of) dynamics in their economic position.
11. Without perceived group acceptance, perceived group discrimination also has a negative effect with respect to sense of belonging in the Netherlands, both cross-sectionally and dynamically.
12. We studied whether *personal* discrimination is possibly more relevant than perceived group discrimination (Appendices A11 and A12). We conclude that personal discrimination does

not have an additional (mediation) effect (comparing it to models in A9 and A10 where only group discrimination is included) and that it is less important than group discrimination for both outcomes.

13. The exception is people with a household income below average of Dutch people with the same education, who experiences less belonging than when the household income matches. However, those who have an above average household income also experience less belonging, which counters our hypothesis.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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