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8 Explaining Cross-national Differences in Educational Mobility

8.1 Introduction

There is substantial literature on educational inequalities based on ethnicity and varying levels of educational mobility for children of immigrants in north-west European countries. Fairly stable patterns have been documented in various national studies indicating that children of immigrants in Europe whose parents originate from less-developed non-European countries perform below their respective majority student groups. In north-west Europe, ample attention is devoted to the children of Turkish immigrants, one of the largest groups in these countries and among the most disadvantaged groups in terms of education. Although these patterns are evident in most of these countries, first comparative studies point towards remarkable differences in the size of these disadvantages for second-generation Turks from one country to another. But as stated in the introductory chapter of this book, neither the extent of the differences nor the reason for those cross-border variations are at all clear. There is very little systematic research that compares institutional settings for educational mobility in north-west European countries and their effects on second-generation Turks. Accordingly, this study asked what explains the variations in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks across three north-west European countries and five cities, namely Sweden (Stockholm), France (Paris and Strasbourg) and Austria (Vienna and Linz).

I studied educational mobility in the first place by analysing education outcomes at the aggregated level. I looked at the detailed range of *educational attainment* as well as, in greater detail, at two extremes of the education spectrum: leaving school early and achieving a post-secondary/tertiary education. The dichotomy of 'failure and success' in schooling provides valid and comparable measures across countries to establish cross-national differences.

Secondly, this study investigated *education pathways* as a dependent variable in order to shed light on the processes of mobility. Using retrospective data on education careers, I was able to apply a longitudinal approach in order to examine how groups navigate the education systems by passing through a set of transitions from beginning to end.

As I have argued throughout this study, both perspectives – outcomes and pathways – are crucial to gaining a detailed picture of educational

mobility across countries. This two-fold approach extends previous studies that tended to look primarily at current or final educational attainment.

In addition to the two-fold approach to systematically examining the degree of educational mobility across countries, the analysis took a multitude of explanatory factors into consideration to explain differences in the degree of educational mobility for second-generation Turks. In more concrete terms, two analytical foci have guided this study: First, *individual-level factors* were considered to explain different outcomes in attainment and education pathways. Second, by drawing on social capital literature in the sociology of education and its links to immigration studies, I explored the role played by *family members* and *outside-family agents* and their resources that might be relevant to educational mobility.

Particular attention has been paid to *parents' education levels* as a factor explaining educational mobility. As demonstrated here, the Turkish second generation often comes from a less advantaged background in terms of levels of education. Given the well-established link between socio-economic family background and educational attainment in the sociology of education, a substantial part of the differences in education between the comparison group and second-generation Turks was expected to be explained by differences in the education levels of their parents.

Moreover, this study moved beyond the classic explanation of parents' education by investigating the transmission of resources between generations. Therefore, different *involvement strategies and patterns of support* provided by family members were examined. This analytical step extended previous studies in three ways. First, most research provides some evidence that the effectiveness of family involvement varies across different ethnic origin groups, but few studies look systematically at parental involvement, including its possible variations across countries and cities and variations within the same origin group. Moreover, most of the studies are limited to parental influences only. But, especially within immigrant families, it is often the older siblings who act as role models and provide their younger brother and sisters with relevant information on and support in schooling activities. Thus, sibling as well as parental involvement and support have been analysed.

Previous studies further indicate that external family networks may provide additional resources that help to overcome a disadvantaged position at school. The most important agents in the educational mobility process outside the family home are *peers* and *teachers*. This is why this study examined the significance of the perceived importance of peers, the ethnic composition of peer groups, and the number of dropout friends. Extra

support provided by teachers and the perceived importance of teachers have also been studied. These factors were considered in given education systems.

The second focus of this study changed the perspective of the role played by the *institutional arrangements of education systems* in shaping education pathways and outcomes. Attention was given to the generic characteristics of the education systems (in Austria, France and Sweden) and their *degree of differentiation* in the following areas: the quantity of education received (the number of years of schooling received and the length of the school day), the point in children's schooling when they are selected for different tracks, tracking, and the degree of permeability between education tracks. I analysed how decisions about which education options to choose are made, and how these decisions may be pre-determined by the opportunities available to students – which are, in turn, defined by structural configurations and institutional arrangements.

Thirdly, to establish explanatory factors and to understand the divergent patterns of educational mobility by the Turkish second generation across countries, much attention was given to *interaction mechanisms* between individual-level and institutional-level factors. Interactions were defined as the interplay between institutional arrangements of education systems on the one hand, and individual and group-related characteristics and resources on the other hand – and the ways in which these are used to navigate successfully through these education systems. Although chapter 7 has already provided an overview of these interaction mechanisms, they will be a major topic of this concluding chapter.

All these elements formed part of the analytical framework that was used to explain cross-national differences in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks. Drawing on the unique data set of the TIES survey, and by applying a variety of quantitative methods, these elements have been studied on the basis of two levels of comparison, both of which contribute to the systematic investigation of cross-national variations in educational mobility. In the *relative comparison*, outcomes for the Turkish second generation have been compared with a native comparison group in each of the cities studied, and the differences in education levels found between these groups were then compared across countries. With this approach, the comparison group served as a reference group to describe the educational mobility process. The *absolute comparison* evaluated the opportunities of the Turkish second generation across countries, with the aim of shedding light on how variations in national institutions, such as education systems, account for differences in outcomes. Within this level

of comparison, educational mobility is characterised in relation to the best performing second-generation Turkish group in one of the countries and cities. Both levels of comparison are important perspectives to describe educational mobility processes of second-generation Turks.

In this concluding chapter, I will try to deepen the scope of the comparative analysis by looking in greater detail into the interaction mechanisms between individual-level and institutional-level explanatory factors, which aim to understand and explain cross-national differences in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks. Different pieces of this puzzle have been highlighted throughout this study and will be brought together in this chapter. They need to be considered in relation to each other in order to understand the variations found.

The structure of this concluding chapter is as follows: In line with the first research question, the next section establishes the actual size of the absolute and relative differences in educational mobility, both from one country to another and from one city to another within those countries. Afterwards, I turn to the main question of this study: 'What explains cross-national differences in educational mobility?' I present outcomes for each set of explanatory factors separately (individual-level and institutional-level factors) before interaction mechanisms between these two sets of explanatory factors are described in greater detail. I conclude this chapter with some general remarks on the relevance of the applied approach for future comparative studies of the educational mobility of children of immigrants.

8.2 Cross-national and cross-city differences in educational mobility

A number of national studies have shown that second-generation Turks are one of the most educationally disadvantaged groups in north-west Europe. First comparative studies pointed to remarkable differences in the size of these disadvantages but came with a number of methodological limitations: They had to rely on secondary data with varying definitions of 'the second-generation' and often on outcomes for educational attainment across countries which were not comparable. This study aimed to redress these shortcomings by providing a systematic inquiry into cross-national differences in the educational mobility of children of Turkish immigrants in Austria, France and Sweden. It also used the first comparable data set available, the TIES survey, which allowed for a systematic comparison.

Accordingly, this study started to examine variations in education outcomes at the aggregated level by investigating three levels of comparison: Among second-generation Turks, in the three survey countries and five survey cities between generations, and in relation to local comparison groups in the cities, concerned. The investigation of *absolute differences* between second-generation Turks across countries revealed that the size of the group of high achievers (post-secondary or more) is twice as high in France and Sweden as it is in Austria. At the same time, the highest percentage of early school leavers (primary and lower-secondary education at the most) among the Turkish second generation was seen in the Austrian cities.

Although there has been substantial *inter-generational progress* made by the Turkish second generation relative to their parents in all three countries, this progress in the levels of education attained appeared at very different rates. The Turkish second generation in Sweden and France displayed exceptional inter-generational achievement, while it was moderate in Austria. The proportion of second-generation Turks that experienced long-range upward mobility (leaping over at least one of their parents' education categories), for example, is almost three times as high in Paris and Stockholm, and twice as high in Strasbourg, as in the Austrian cities, Vienna and Linz.

The *relative comparison* between second-generation Turks and the comparison group showed that educational attainment differences were most pronounced at the bottom and the top of the education ladder in Austria and France. In both countries, such comparative attainment differences were higher overall than in Sweden. These attainment differences were also mirrored in the analysis of education pathways. In general, second-generation Turks are academically more disadvantaged than the comparison group because they attend more frequently the less academic tracks and are less likely to follow the academic tracks that lead to tertiary education. These relative differences in education pathways are most evident in the Austrian education system, can be seen clearly in France, and are least pronounced in Sweden.

Overall, the absolute and relative comparisons of attainment and education pathways revealed similar rankings across the three compared countries and five cities. Second-generation Turks show the weakest performance in Austria, a medium to high level in France and the best performance in Sweden. So the educational mobility of second-generation Turks shows significant differences between Austria, France and Sweden. The next section looks at how these differences can be explained.

8.3 Explaining differences in educational mobility

This section summarises the findings of investigations into two sets of explanatory factors for differences in the educational mobility and education outcomes of second-generation Turks – (1) individual-level factors and (2) the role played by the generic institutional arrangements of education systems. The former set of explanatory factors concentrates on family members, such as *parents* and *older siblings* and their resources, as well as on *peers* and *teachers* as the most important agents outside the family. The latter perspective on the institutional arrangements of education systems focuses on the three most important dimensions for describing the degree of differentiation in education systems and their relevance for explaining cross-national variations. These are: *pre-school age and age at entering education* (quantity of education), *timing of selection and tracking*, and the degree of *permeability and opportunities for upward transfers*.

Individual-level factors

Parents

One of the most important factors explaining the extent of the differences between the compared groups is the *education background of the parents*. I found that a substantial part of the disadvantage observed in second-generation Turks can be explained by differences in the parents' education levels. This finding applies to all three countries and all five cities. For example, the over-representation of early school leavers could be completely explained in four out of the five cities when holding the education level of the parents constant (the gap only remained statistically significant in Strasbourg). Also, the significant under-representation of second-generation Turks among high achievers was substantially reduced in all three countries when controlled for parents' education levels.

In other words, in each of the three countries, a substantial part of the disadvantaged position of second-generation Turks can be linked to their parents' levels of education. Children of Turkish immigrants come in higher numbers from less educated families, which accounts for a large part of the educational disadvantage. Nevertheless, significant disadvantages did not always vanish after statistically testing for parents' levels of education.

Several scholars have claimed that the quality of ties between generations is important in explaining the transmission of resources. Therefore, I explored the involvement strategies and patterns of support provided by Turkish families in Austria, France and Sweden. Research has shown that

children of immigrants benefit from such involvement and that parents are crucial in determining their children's experiences and academic success.

Results based on the perception of the Turkish second generation revealed that the frequency of parental involvement varies across countries. On average, it is most frequent in Austria, followed by France, with least involvement in Sweden. At the same time, parental involvement is most dependent on certain family characteristics in Austria, such as parents' education levels or language abilities in German. Although some of these factors significantly influence parental involvement in Sweden and France as well, the magnitude of these findings was greatest in the Austrian cities. The upward educational mobility of second-generation Turks in Austria has been found to correlate much more closely with various forms of additional support provided by their parents, when compared to their counterparts in France and Sweden. This finding remains significant even after controlling for parents' education levels, indicating that parental involvement *does* increase educational mobility irrespective of the parents' levels of education. Talking about their children's studies, the most common type of parental involvement is probably a form of parental control and a way for parents to communicate effectively their expectations to their children, which translates into better education outcomes in the Austrian context.

Taken together, the results show that the support provided by parents is a relevant factor in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks in Austria. At the same time, only those Turkish fathers and mothers who are equipped with higher educational credentials and a sophisticated ability in the German language are able to support their children educationally. This is still the minority of the Turkish community in Austria. The importance of parental support in school-related activities is, however, not *per se* a characteristic of Turkish families, but rather an aspect common to all students in the Austrian education system – albeit to a lesser extent for the comparison group than for second-generation Turks.

Older siblings

In addition to the role played by parents, I extended the discussion about family influences by investigating simultaneously the supportive behaviour of older siblings. Older siblings can act as intermediaries between younger children and their schools, and their own experiences of school can be a major source of support. Examining the role of older siblings' involvement in the school activities of their younger brothers and sisters, I observed similar patterns to those found for parental support: educational upward mobility by second-generation Turks in Austria correlates with the extra

support they receive from older siblings, beyond parental involvement and parents' own education levels. However, I did not find significant benefits beyond parental involvement as a result of older sibling support in France or Sweden. Thus, school support provided by older siblings is of great importance for second-generation Turks in Austria beyond parental involvement, while siblings are less relevant to educational mobility by second-generation Turks in France and Sweden.

Peers

While previous studies of the educational success of second-generation immigrants in general revealed that 'significant others', such as peers and teachers, are important mediating actors in processes of educational attainment, systematic research into their significance specifically for second-generation Turks in Europe is scarce. In this study I partially redressed this shortcoming. I examined the relative influence of peers and the mechanisms through which they operate to affect education outcomes.

The results show that closest friends and peers are perceived as relatively important in second-generation Turks' schooling in all three countries and all five cities. On a descriptive level, they are evaluated as being as important as their family members. When examining the influence of the perceived importance of peers on educational attainment, I did not find, however, the expected positive link to educational attainment once parents' education levels and support were held constant. In other words, even if peers and best friends are perceived as important in helping with second-generation Turks' study and homework, they are less central in the process of educational mobility than parents.

Instead, what seems to matter in Austria and France but not in Sweden is the ethnic composition of peers. Having a high proportion of non-co-ethnics among their best friends increases the likelihood of a second-generation Turk becoming a high achiever in Austria – beyond the parents' education levels and parental support. In France, a similar finding could be seen for the 'school' peer group of second-generation Turks. The more they are surrounded in their secondary schools by students with native parents, the greater the likelihood of moving beyond upper-secondary education. These findings seem to be in line with previous US studies into the schooling of children of immigrants that indicated that non-immigrant peers and closest friends often served as important agents enabling them to access resources and information that were not available in their families, but which were relevant for upward educational mobility.

Teachers

As well as the significant role played by peer groups, teachers have been highlighted as important agents in strengthening the upward educational mobility of the second generation. My analysis revealed that support from teachers is positively correlated with higher achievement among second-generation Turks in Austria and France, which suggests that teachers are important mediating actors in educational mobility. But this applies to all students in these two countries. With increasing levels of teacher support, students in either group show a greater likelihood of making it to the top of the education ladder. Surprisingly, the results for Sweden work in the opposite direction. Students of both groups in Stockholm who perceived their teachers to be of great importance for schooling and help with homework were less likely to become high achievers.

Comparing the magnitude of the correlation between individual-level explanatory factors (inside and outside the family home) and education outcomes for second-generation Turks across the three countries and five cities, I observed a 'ranking' similar to the findings of my previous chapters: individual-level factors were of greatest relevance in Austria, of some relevance in France, and of least importance and often absent in Sweden. These findings raise the question as to why some individual-level factors are of greater relevance for second-generation Turks in some countries and cities but not in others, and point to interactions with institutional-level factors.

Institutional-level factors

Pre-school attendance and age at entering education

Among the most important generic institutional factors that might explain the differences across countries are *pre-school attendance* and the *age at entering education*. Entry into pre-school is the most common start for children's education careers. In France and Sweden, pre-school is optional and free for all children between the ages of two and six. It is also seen as an integral part of the education system. Municipalities are obliged to provide pre-school places for all children and pre-school services offer a full-day care system. Results for the French cities and for Stockholm indicate that almost all children in both groups had attended some sort of pre-school facility by the age of three – which is also the average age of entering pre-school in these countries. Although not statistically significant, second-generation Turks in Stockholm are found to be even more likely to attend pre-school, and start on average earlier than children in the comparison group.

By contrast with France and Sweden, pre-school education in Austria usually takes place in the kindergarten, which is not considered part of the education system and thus has the ethos of early childcare rather than early education. Kindergartens can be run by either local authorities or private organisations. In principle, children can go to kindergarten from age three, while the average starting age is four. As shown in this study, pre-school attendance for pupils from both groups in Austria is lower than in France or Sweden. Moreover, the attendance rate varies considerably between the groups. In both Austrian cities, second-generation Turks were less likely to attend kindergarten, and the majority of those who did go started later than age four, which meant that they had shorter pre-school careers.

The different institutional arrangements for pre-school attendance and start age result in remarkable differences in the time children have to prepare for compulsory education across the three countries. While second-generation Turks have already experienced, on average, three years of pre-schooling in France and Sweden before entering primary school, their counterparts in Austria predominantly start primary school with only one year of pre-school under their belts.

Timing of selection and tracking

A second important institutional arrangement that contributes to the explanation of cross-national variations in outcomes for the Turkish second generation is the *timing of selection* (or tracking). The first selection in Austria appears after primary school at the age of ten. Students are streamed into two separate types of school: vocational (*Hauptschule*) schools and academically orientated (*AHS-Unterstufe*) lower-secondary schools. *Hauptschule* represents the lower tier and is open to everybody after primary school. But the academically orientated track (*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* [AHS]) prepares students to continue on to upper-secondary schools leading to the *Matura*, the university entrance certificate. Admission to the academically orientated track depends on marks received at the end of primary school. Teachers can also give recommendations, but these do not have a binding character. Almost seven out of ten second-generation Turks are streamed onto the vocational track (*Hauptschule*), while the continuation rate among the comparison group is only four out of ten. This pattern is the same in each survey city. Moreover, as examined in this study, the early selection at age ten has profound consequences for the education careers of second-generation Turks in Austria. Young adults who are streamed into the academic track in lower-secondary education predominantly move on to the second academic level (*AHS-Oberstufe*), while the majority of the

students who were streamed into the vocational path in lower-secondary education continue on the vocational path.

Students in France and Sweden follow the same integrated track up to the age of fifteen or sixteen – five, or even six, years later than their Austrian counterparts. The first time they are allocated the academic or the vocational track is just before upper-secondary education. In the French education system, the selection process that links compulsory and non-compulsory education is called *orientation*, and it is then that parents first express their preferences for their child's education. Based on this information and on the grades achieved in the final certificate, the class council advises whether a student should attend academic or vocational *lycées*. The most common route for students in the comparison group is entry to the academic *lycée*. Around 80 per cent of the comparison group go on to the academic *lycée*, while only about 50 per cent of students of Turkish origin follow that track. Dissimilarities between the two French cities, Paris and Strasbourg, appear at the first selection point, with Turkish second-generation students in Paris continuing more often on the academic track than their age-mates in Strasbourg. The comparison group does not differ significantly between the two cities. Students who do not choose the academic track in upper-secondary education move on to vocational *lycées*.

Similar to the French education system, students in Sweden are first selected when they are fifteen or sixteen. At the first transition point between lower- and upper-secondary education, slightly more than 50 per cent of each group moves on to the academic track. The Turkish second generation does not differ significantly from the comparison group in their continuation rates at this first selection point in Sweden.

Overall, the far greater numbers of immigrant-origin children who are streamed into the vocational route at an early age in Austria explains some of the differences between Austria and the other two countries in terms of the under-representation of second-generation Turks in the academic schools and in tertiary education. Differences between the comprehensive systems in Sweden and France seem to be related to the selective character of the orientation process in the French education system, which differentiates the student population more than in the Swedish education system, in which a comparable process is absent.

The investigation of education pathways has brought up a number of *additional mechanisms of differentiation* that are relevant beyond formal mechanisms of differentiation such as early selection and the orientation process. These mechanisms of differentiation are most evident in the French education system. What seems to be of greater relevance in the French

education system is the informal hierarchy of disciplines and tracks in upper-secondary education. Second-generation Turks are more affected by this differentiation because they participate in higher numbers in these less prestigious *lycées*. The practice of differentiation seems to be a distinct marker between the comprehensive education systems in France and Sweden. While the institutional arrangements and the degree of formal differentiation remain almost similar, the actual practice of differentiation varies between the two comprehensive systems, with Sweden showing fewer means of differentiation.

Permeability and opportunities for upward transfers

Early selection and tracking might not be problematical institutional features of education systems if the *degree of permeability* were high at later stages and if *opportunities for upward transfers* were available to the students who were streamed downwards earlier in their education careers. Both the Austrian and the French education systems do provide such second chances for students in the lower and vocationally orientated tracks.

In Austria, students who have been streamed onto the vocational track (*Hauptschule*) at the age of ten have an opportunity to move up to the academically orientated tracks at the end of lower-secondary education (at the age of fifteen). But the empirical results for Austria show that the proportion of upward movers at the end of *Hauptschule* is relatively small. The stakes seem to be high against obtaining the marks required for entering one of the two academic tracks. This applies in particular to the Turkish second generation, since they are found to be upwardly mobile less often at this transition point, compared to the comparison group (23.2 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively).

In the French system, the possibility of moving from the vocational track to the academic track appears much later than the Austrian education system. Students who do not enter the academic track in upper-secondary education move on to vocational *lycées*. Students who obtain the *Brevet d'Études Professionnelles (BEP)* diploma at the end of this track (on average around age seventeen or eighteen) can attend an additional two-year course to obtain the professional *baccalauréat*. This *bacc prof* certificate allows students who followed the vocational path to enter tertiary education as well, and this route is used significantly more often by the Turkish second generation than by the comparison group (27.8 per cent and 22.1 per cent respectively) in both French cities. Thus, the possibility of entering post-secondary/tertiary education through the 'back door' is an important institutional arrangement that explains parts of the relatively

high participation rates of second-generation Turks in this academic level in France. But it takes those students on average two years longer than the comparison group, who overwhelmingly follow the straight academic route, to attain a similar level.

The Swedish education system does not really provide 'second chances' because the permeability between tracks at the end of each stage is always given. Students in lower and upper-secondary education can choose tracks without restrictions, while all upper-secondary tracks provide certificates that permit students to continue on to post-secondary/tertiary education.

8.4 Interactions between individual-level and institutional-level factors

While the previous two sections reviewed explanatory factors at the individual level and institutional level separately, I now turn to the *interactions* between both sets of factors to explain variations in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks in five cities in Austria, France and Sweden. Interactions were defined as the interplay between the institutional arrangements of education systems and the various individual and group-related resources that are relevant for second-generation Turks if they are to navigate successfully through the systems. The perspective on interactions provides a framework that helps us to understand why the relevance of individual-level factors and their related resources varies for second-generation Turks across education systems and at different points in time, and therefore contributes to the explanation of cross-national differences in educational mobility.

Some studies have emphasised the importance of interactions between single institutional arrangements and particular individual-level factors in understanding cross-national differences in educational mobility. One interaction that is often emphasised is the relationship between early selection and parents' education levels or 'social class origin'. Investigation of this interaction has shown that the earlier students are placed in different ability tracks, the greater the relevance of details such as parents' education levels. This finding is often contrasted with processes in comprehensive education systems that have late selection points, which show weaker interactions with parents' education. This interaction has also been stressed as an explanation for differences in the education outcomes of second-generation Turks across north-west European countries.

Although highly relevant, these studies do not investigate the importance of other institutional arrangements, and most often do not move beyond other important individual-level factors, such as the family of origin. In this study, I aimed to redress this research gap. As I have shown, it is important to consider the combination of a number of the institutional arrangements of different education systems which together form country-specific *institutional constellations*.

The main components of the *Austrian institutional constellation* are the late start age at pre-school, early selection into different ability tracks (at the age of ten) and a low degree of permeability between tracks after the early tracking and half-day training system in compulsory education.

An early start age at pre-school, full days of pre-school activities, assured pre-school places and a full-day comprehensive compulsory schooling system are among the most important components that constitute the *French institutional constellation*. The orientation process in which the selection into upper-secondary education is prepared is the most crucial institutional arrangement in the education careers of students in France. Moreover, the differentiation in upper-secondary academic tracks and the 'second chance' to enter post-secondary/tertiary education through the vocational upward-route are additional important features of this French institutional constellation.

The *Swedish institutional constellation* is composed of full-day pre-school activities that children can attend from age two and an integrated track from primary school up to the end of lower-secondary education with full-day teaching. The first allocation into different tracks appears at the transition into upper-secondary education at the age of fifteen or sixteen. Further important components are the high degree of permeability between tracks in upper-secondary education, and the possibility of entering post-secondary/tertiary education from all available tracks in upper-secondary education.

Interaction mechanisms in Austria

The combination of institutional arrangements in Austria makes the beginning of the school career an important period that sets the course for subsequent stages. Pupils spend an average of two years at pre-school before starting in primary school – the only common, integrated track in which children from different backgrounds attend the same school. After four years in primary education, pupils are streamed into different ability tracks in lower-secondary education at the age of ten.

The emphasis in this institutional constellation on making selection decisions early on leads to greater interaction with family resources. Parents

are important agents in this early period in supporting their children in the learning process and determining school choices. The results of this study confirm the great relevance of the parents' levels of education in the early selection process. Children whose parents have less education are frequently streamed into the less academic track (*Hauptschule*) at age ten. This is particularly true for second-generation Turks who are more often tracked into the lower stream because many of them come from less educated families. The Turkish first generation overwhelmingly migrated for work reasons and had relatively few education credentials and little experience of education. Thus, in this institutional constellation, larger inequalities in parents' educational attainment lead to larger differences in their children's opportunities at school.

This process is reinforced by the low participation rates in pre-schooling for second-generation Turks in the Austrian cities. Since children are not automatically entitled to a pre-school place, and Turkish parents may lack information about the workings of the Austrian pre-school system, second-generation Turks attend pre-school for, on average, one year less than the comparison group. This, too, goes some way towards explaining the greater downward streaming of second-generation Turks at the first transition point after primary school. To a large extent, the early selection determines the subsequent education pathway. The majority of second-generation Turks in both the academic and vocational streams continue to travel the path onto which they were tracked at the age of ten.

Second-generation Turks who were placed on the academic path after primary school are predominantly children of better-educated parents. They also benefit from greater support at home because parents' education levels and parental support are positively correlated. This support, along with the support of older siblings, enables these children to stay on the straight academic path in the Austrian education system.

Internal family resources become even more relevant in the light of the half-day school system in compulsory education. The responsibility for learning is shifted to the family home and to students' leisure time, which makes family involvement and support significantly more important for students, especially in terms of homework. Although the relevance of family support can be seen for all students in the Austrian education system, it is of greater importance for second-generation Turks than for the comparison group.

In order to navigate successfully to the top of the education ladder, access to resources provided by non-immigrant peer networks, as well as support from teachers, become crucial aspects for children of Turkish immigrants in Austria. In particular, the support of teachers in upper-secondary education

is of great relevance for second-generation Turks in ensuring they don't stop their academic careers before entering post-secondary/tertiary education. In other words, while family resources are especially important in the early phase of the academic career, outside-family agents and related resources gain importance at a later stage.

The Austrian education system offers students who were streamed into the vocational path after primary school the option of moving upwards at the end of lower-secondary education. Having non-immigrant peers at school becomes important at this stage because second-generation Turks on the vocational path come predominantly from less educated families that are barely equipped with the relevant knowledge and resources to support their children in the upward process. If the family of origin doesn't have enough knowledge of the Austrian education system and cannot provide the support children need to earn the marks that would permit them to move up, best friends outside the family home become the major source of information and support. But the percentage of second-generation Turks who finally move up at this stage is still low, indicating that not enough information and support are provided by the peer group in many cases. Moreover, as this study has shown, non-immigrant peer networks are rare among second-generation Turks in Austria who attend the vocational track in lower-secondary education.

While a small proportion of the Turkish second generation moves up from the vocational to the academic track, others do not meet the demands of their schools at all and drop out after compulsory education. More second-generation Turks drop out of vocational schools than out of academic schools. Parents and older siblings are important in providing the resources and support to prevent this. But since most of the potential early school leavers on the vocational path come from socio-economically disadvantaged families with limited resources to support their children, teachers become the most important agents for these students at this stage of the process. Solid student-teacher relationships and high levels of support are important factors in preventing early school leaving. The Austrian school system is, however, a half-day training system in which second-generation Turks who are at risk of dropping out may not get enough time with teachers to obtain the support they need. That is why the numbers of early school leavers are comparably high in the Austrian education system.

Interaction mechanisms in France

The French institutional constellation offers day-long education with students from different backgrounds attending the same tracks in compulsory

education. It starts early with a comprehensive full-day pre-school system and continues with primary education along an integrated track until the end of lower-secondary school. The system offers afternoon classes with homework tutorials, which leads to few interactions with family resources. In particular, additional help from family members is perceived as less important because this type of support is institutionalised within the comprehensive full-time education system.

The most crucial moment in the French education system is the orientation process at the end of lower-secondary education in which students are prepared for selection into the next stage. In this process, parents express their preferences for their child's education. Based on this information, and on the grades of the final certificate (*brevet des collèges*), teachers and officials evaluate each pupil's chances of success and advises whether a student should be assigned to an academic or a vocational *lycée*.

Although this first selection appears late, the orientation process in this transition period is highly interactive with a number of individual-level factors. Firstly, parents with more advanced education backgrounds improve their children's chances of being streamed into the academic tracks. The correlation between tracking and parents' education further explains a large part of the unequal continuation rates into the academic track between the comparison group and second-generation Turks. Similar to the selection moment in Austria, a large proportion of the inequalities observed between the two groups at this stage can be attributed to differences in parents' own levels of education.

Secondly, teachers and the support they provide are crucial in upward streaming at this stage. Teacher support is important to all students if they are to achieve excellent grades in the final exams at the end of compulsory education. These exams constitute a substantial part of the evaluation process leading to the academic tracks.

Finally, the ethnic composition of peers in schools matters for second-generation Turks at this stage. In the orientation process, students and their parents express their preferences for their future education pathways, a process that requires substantial knowledge of the French education system. If parents do not possess this knowledge, peers in the comparison group whose parents or older siblings have experience and knowledge of the workings of the system become crucial sources of information for second-generation Turks.

The selection into different types of upper-secondary tracks through the orientation process determines, to a large extent, the education pathways of students. Those entering the academic path continue in high numbers

beyond upper-secondary education into some form of post-secondary/tertiary education. Since the *bacc* certificate at the end of upper-secondary education became the education norm in France, specifications for the labour market have been shifted to the post-secondary and tertiary education sector. To manage the transition from the academic tracks into post-secondary/tertiary education, parents' education is an important mediating factor, although to a much lesser extent, as with the orientation process at the previous transition.

The majority of students streamed into the vocational track after lower-secondary education leave at the end of second-level education to take up jobs. But the French system offers a 'second chance' at the end of upper-secondary education to leave the vocational track in favour of post-secondary/tertiary education. This late opportunity for an upward transfer interacts less strongly with parents' education and family support. Instead, the number of native peers in the vocational school, and the support provided by teachers, are the most crucial factors for second-generation Turks if they are to acquire the *bacc prof* certificate and enter post-secondary/tertiary education by this route.

Overall, the most crucial period in the French institutional constellation that determines the process of educational mobility for second-generation Turks is the orientation process at the end of compulsory education. Although this differentiation process is delayed, family background characteristics such as their parents' education levels, as well as outside-family agents, such as non-immigrant peers and teachers, are still of great relevance in setting the course for upward educational mobility.

Interaction mechanisms in Sweden

Similarly to the comprehensive system in France, the Swedish institutional constellation provides full-day schooling from early pre-school through primary education until the end of the integrated track in compulsory education. The long and integrated full-day schooling phase makes family resources less relevant in the educational mobility process of both study groups. Even at the first transition point before entering different academic and vocational tracks in upper-secondary education, family characteristics such as parents' education or additional educational resources are unimportant factors in managing this transition period successfully, because the transition is not linked to a specific differentiation process. Consequently, second-generation Turks enter academically orientated tracks in similar proportions to the comparison group, irrespective of their family backgrounds.

Interactions with individual-level factors only appear at the highest end of the Swedish education system. Children whose parents have less education are more likely to leave the education system. This is particularly true of second-generation Turks because they originate in greater numbers from less educated families. In addition to parents' levels of education, peers are perceived as important agents by second-generation Turks in this schooling phase. The more support they receive from peers, the better their chances of managing the transition to post-secondary/tertiary education.

Students who follow the vocational track in upper-secondary education are less likely to enter any type of post-secondary/tertiary education afterwards. But this finding applies to all students in the Swedish education system, not just second-generation Turks. Most significantly, those who do want to continue to post-secondary/tertiary level do not perceive information or resources provided by agents outside the family as having any importance.

In short, the long, integrated schooling period in which pupils from different backgrounds learn together in a full-day system from early pre-school until the end of compulsory education leads to less interaction with individual-level factors. Moreover, the high degree of permeability between tracks and the fluid links between upper-secondary tracks and post-secondary/tertiary education make individual-level factors of minor relevance in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks in Sweden.

Cross-national differences

The empirical evidence available in this study highlighted the fact that cross-national differences in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks cannot be limited to a single set of explanatory factors. Two parties are involved in the process of educational mobility: children of Turkish immigrants, with their own characteristics, efforts, family backgrounds, and relationships with important agents such as peers and teachers; and the national education systems, with their differing institutional arrangements. It is, however, the interaction between the two that determines the direction and the ultimate outcome of the educational mobility process. But these two are unequal partners. Education systems, in terms of their institutional arrangements and the way they determine the relevance of individual-level factors, *matter more*. In all the interaction mechanisms I have observed, the power relationship between individual-level and institutional-level factors has always been in favour of the education systems' institutional arrangements. In particular, with increasing degrees of differentiation between education systems, the relevance of individual-level

characteristics for second-generation Turks increases as well. This unequal power relationship becomes most evident when comparing the outcomes of second-generation Turks across different education systems, as I have done in this study. Education systems that provide more favourable institutional arrangements make the educational mobility of second-generation Turks less dependent on individual-level factors and resources, leading to higher educational attainment.

The theoretical and empirical contribution of this study is therefore its focus on *interactions* between *individual-level characteristics* and the generic *institutional arrangements* of education systems in order to explain differences in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks across countries. The examination of these interactions throughout the entire education career highlighted favourable and unfavourable institutional settings that are relevant if one is to grasp the variations in educational mobility in a cross-national comparison. Whether and how the institutional arrangements of education systems really matter can only be answered once these *interactions* with individual-level characteristics are considered. Future research that aims to understand why children of immigrants show different levels of educational mobility across countries should adopt and elaborate this systematic *interaction approach* further.