

# Ethnic Diversity in Intergenerational Solidarity

Djamila Schans



# Ethnic Diversity in Intergenerational Solidarity

Etnische diversiteit in intergenerationale solidariteit

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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*Voor mijn ouders*

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# Chapter 1

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**Introduction**

## 1.1 Intergenerational solidarity in Dutch and immigrant families

In recent decades, the Netherlands has experienced a large influx of immigrants. As a result, the ethnic composition of the Dutch population changed significantly since the 1960's. Today, around 10% of the 16.4 million inhabitants of the Netherlands originate from non-Western backgrounds, mostly from labor exporting countries such as Turkey and Morocco and the former Dutch colonies Suriname and the Antilles (Statistics Netherlands, 2007). In the larger cities, this share is considerably larger and is set to grow in the future.

At the same time, the Dutch population is ageing as a consequence of both the falling birth rate and the rising life expectancy. This results in an increasing number and an increasing proportion of elderly persons. The number of people older than 55 years is now more than 4 million; in 2020 the number is expected to be 5.5 million (Statistics Netherlands, 2007).

Both demographic changes described above occurred not only in the Netherlands but in other Western European societies as well. Although both developments receive plenty of attention both on a scientific and societal level, they are rarely discussed together, except in the debate on whether immigration might or might not be the answer to the presumed labor shortages that will occur with the ageing of the population.

However, additional links between immigration and population ageing exist as well. Immigrants who moved to the Netherlands several decades ago are now ageing themselves. The number of elderly immigrants from non-Western descent will increase sharply in the coming years. Whereas in 2003 117 000 non-Western immigrants were older than 55 years, this number is expected to grow to 354 000 in 2020 (Statistics Netherlands, 2003). Elderly immigrants will make up more than six per cent of the total elderly population in the Netherlands by then and due to their concentration in the larger cities a significant proportion of the elderly population in these cities will have an immigrant background.

Immigrants might also have ageing parents in the country of origin whom they need to support. Sending remittances or arranging care for elderly parents is an important aspect of immigrants' transnational family life, especially since Dutch immigration law makes it almost impossible for immigrants to have their elderly parents join them in the Netherlands.

Along with demographic changes, political changes occurred as well. Under the influence of the so called crisis of the welfare state, responsibility is being increasingly moved into the private arena. The progressive withdrawal of public institutions in the matter of social assistance resulted in links between generations becoming more and more important. Combined, these demographic and political developments raise questions about intergenerational support in Dutch and immigrant families, both within

the Netherlands and on a transnational level. Immigrants in Western countries are likely to experience old age differently from native older people, and to have different beliefs and attitudes about their children's obligations, but little is known about ethnic-group variations in such attitudes and expectations (Seelbach & Die 1988).

A frequent assumption is that older immigrants are supported by families with strong interdependent ties and filial obligations that reflect the importance attached to kinship in the societies of origin. To what extent such family relationships continue after the migration and the passage of time is still largely unexplored, however. Obviously, immigrants do not exactly reproduce their old cultural patterns when they move to a new society but these patterns continue to have a powerful influence in shaping family values and norms as well as patterns of behavior that develop in the new setting.

To be sure, the cultures from which immigrants come are themselves the product of change so that it is misleading to assume a timeless past of family traditions there. Indeed, family patterns in the sending society may well have undergone significant transformations in the lifetimes of the immigrants or their parents (Foner, 1997; Baldock, 2000). Moreover, it is important to emphasize that patterns of intergenerational solidarity differ from one immigrant group to another despite common structural conditions in the host society. In the United States, for example, family patterns among Korean and Haitian immigrants diverge in many ways at least in part because of the cultural background of each group.

Given the growing ethno-cultural diversity of the Netherlands's ageing population and the increased emphasis placed by policy makers on the obligation of the family to take responsibility for its members' needs, it is important to explore both such felt obligations and the ways in which these obligations do or do not materialize within the context of the family. The aim of this study is therefore to provide a comparative perspective on felt obligations and actual support between adult children and their parents in Dutch and immigrant families.

## 1.2 Intergenerational solidarity: Theoretical approaches

From the 1960's onwards, in the industrialized world, a picture of the nuclear family emerged in which parents and their children were largely separated from their extended families. Modernization processes decreased the level of interdependency between parents and their children (e.g., Coleman, 1990) and the development of the welfare state decreased the practical need for family support. A higher labor force participation of women and higher geographic mobility decreased the practical ability to take care of relatives. Children were increasingly socialized to take care of their own lives while ageing parents preferred to fend for themselves or to rely on formal services rather than

on support from their adult children (Popenoe, 1993). This Western family model stood in sharp contrast with multi-generational family models in non-Western societies, in which extended family ties played an important role and where filial piety was one of the main guiding principles of life (Kagitçibasi, 1996).

Recently, however, the Western family model was challenged by family sociologists like Bengtson (2001) and Seltzer et al. (2005), who predicted an increasing importance of intergenerational bonds outside the nuclear family in the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to declining birth-rates together with an increase in life expectancy. Moreover, intergenerational support needs not only flow from adult children to parents. The low fertility rate and the longer dependence of children on parents combined with the increased resources of elderly parents resulted in a high level of support from parents to adult children. 'Boomerang kids', - children who return to their parents' house after divorce or after losing their job - are becoming more common. Banks nowadays offer special 'generational mortgages' that allow parents to help children purchase their own house, when they cannot afford this by themselves. Grandparents are often the main caretakers of grandchildren if both parents work.

The supposed new importance of intergenerational bonds has initiated much research and the study of intergenerational support between adult children and their parents has received ample attention in the literature across various disciplines. Economists have focused on intergenerational transfers, gerontologists investigated support networks of the elderly, psychologists studied the effect of intergenerational support on individual well-being, anthropologists described how intergenerational support varies between cultures and sociologists studied the norms underlying support exchange.

Three main theoretical approaches to intergenerational support can be distinguished, connected respectively to the disciplines of sociology, economics psychology. According to classical sociological theorists (Durkheim, 1933 [1893]; Tönnies, 1957 [1887]), the normative commitments and the extensive mutual obligations between group members in traditional societies create strong social bonds and highly cohesive relationships (mechanical solidarity/Gemeinschaft). Whereas Durkheim and Tönnies assumed that industrialization would change the bases of group solidarity from normative to contractual, the normative dimension of social bonds might still be important in ethnic groups which migrated from more traditional societies. More specifically, different cultural norms and values may account for differences in behavior. For instance, it is often claimed that Western cultures are more 'individualistic' - emphasizing self-sufficiency and the voluntary nature of kin relations - whereas non-Western cultures are assumed to be 'collectivistic', that is emphasizing familistic norms and family responsibilities (Triandis, 1995; Kagitçibasi, 1996). Cultural norms and values, whether or not internalized through socialization, are seen as orienting people's

behavior in this approach.

In spite of this, more economically based theories claim that it is not cultural norms that explain support behavior, but self-interest. Social exchange theory has its roots in classical economic and behavioral psychology theories and assumes that people try to minimize costs and maximize rewards in their interaction with others (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959; Nye, 1979). Rewards can be defined as material as well as nonmaterial and can include factors like assistance, property and affection. Costs are defined as the loss of any of these. Exchange theory assumes that people receive at least some benefit from the exchanges in their relationships, which is partly why they maintain and initiate relationships. Individuals rationally calculate the estimated costs and benefits of providing support in a relationship and expect assistance to be reciprocated over time. Gouldner (1960) has specified this as the norm of reciprocity: something received is assumed to require something to be given in return. From this perspective the more support parents have provided to their children, the more they will receive in return. Antonucci (1990) uses the metaphor of 'deposits' placed in a 'support bank' that can be drawn on in future times of need.

Although one might question whether the assumption of rational actors calculating their most profitable choices makes sense in the context of the family, various studies show the relevance of this approach in family research (White & Klein, 2002). The assumption of rational, self-interested, calculating individuals is sometimes nonetheless criticized for having a Western bias. It is a well-known fact that individuals coming from different cultural backgrounds have different perceptions and different standards for interpretation, judgment and action. Katzner (2000) therefore claims that in some cases, cultural imperatives such as conformity, loyalty, obligation or modesty may override self-interest and the pursuit of the most preferred course of action as the driving force in decision making. Even when self-interest is present, it can be secondary to, and constrained by, alternative and more significant cultural motivations.

Finally, more psychologically oriented theories point out the importance of the emotional bonds between generations within a family. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), for instance, states that there is, and always will be, a strong sense of responsibility and commitment between adult children and their (ageing) parents. Attachment of the individual to the group has an emotional basis and is achieved through the development of positive sentiments and interpersonal attraction. People have a need for close emotional ties and want to express this closeness in support as well (Georgas et al., 1997; Rajulton & Ravanera, 2001). In this perspective, intergenerational support is less economically or normatively motivated than guided by affective and individual concerns, as indicated by a rising emphasis on feelings and relationship quality (Lye, 1996). The bond between parents and adult children has been shown to be secondary only to that with the partner (Rossi & Rossi, 1990).

Bengtson and Roberts (1991) tried to combine these various dimensions of intergenerational support relations in their intergenerational solidarity model. In this model, intergenerational solidarity is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, including affectual, associational, consensual, functional, normative and structural solidarity. The model has generated much research but little comparative research exists on ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity among immigrant and native groups<sup>1</sup>. To date few studies have compared adult child–parent relations in different racial and ethnic groups because of the lack of nationally representative data sets with sufficient number of minorities to support comparisons (Markides et al., 1990).

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on intergenerational solidarity between adult children and their parents both theoretically and methodologically. Theoretically, by systematically comparing different aspects of intergenerational solidarity among immigrants and Dutch natives, common assumptions about family decline in Western families and collectivist family ideals in immigrant families will be investigated. In particular, the supposed dichotomy between interdependent (immigrant) and independent (Dutch native) families is critically examined. Moreover, by comparing different immigrant groups which differ with respect to their migration histories, current socioeconomic conditions and cultural norms, we gain further insight into how immigrants' intergenerational family ties are shaped by these different factors. Finally, by including a chapter on families in which generations are separated by national borders, we add a transnational perspective to the study of immigrant intergenerational solidarity.

Methodologically, by combining in-depth qualitative data and large-scale quantitative data, we are able to compare patterns of intergenerational solidarity and their correlates between and within ethnic groups as well as to offer an additional perspective focusing on the potential tensions and ambiguities in the way intergenerational solidarity is experienced, that is usually not captured in survey data only. Comparative research designs based on a mixed methods approach are still relatively rare in family research. This is unfortunate, not only since using different methods offer the possibility for triangulation of results but also since qualitative research often uses single case studies and rarely exhausts its comparative potential, while quantitative methods are well suited to statistically compare ties and characteristics across groups but rarely give insight into the meanings and possible tensions behind the group differences. The mixed method approach has proven useful in a variety of empirical social research topics, such as the labor market behavior of ethnic minorities (Nee, Sanders & Sernau, 1994), as well as the social influences on fertility (Bernardi, Keim & von der Lippe, 2007). To our knowledge

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1 Both 'immigrant' and 'ethnic group' are used in this thesis. 'Immigrant' refers to people who migrated to the Netherlands and their descendants (second generation). 'Ethnic group' is used when comparisons are made between the immigrant groups and/or the native Dutch.

no study so far has used a mixed methods design and a group comparative perspective simultaneously when studying intergenerational solidarity. The research questions posed in the five chapters of this thesis originate from five current scientific and societal debates described in more detail below.

### 1.2.1 Superintegration versus disintegration

The first debate, identified by Sarkisian and Gerstel (2004a) as the ‘superintegration versus disintegration’ debate, questions whether ethnic minority families are more or less integrated in their families than native families. On the one side scholars argue that ethnic minorities have abundant family ties, put more emphasis on these ties and therefore receive more kin support than Whites<sup>2</sup>. Often labeled ‘collectivistic’, such family systems are believed to differ from the individualistic and independent family found for example in Western societies like the Netherlands, where family members are expected to be self-reliant and are only weakly motivated to providing care for relatives. These stereotypical images can be questioned. For instance, the migration experience and the difficulties related to settling in a different culture might put such a pressure on immigrant families that strong bonds diminish and families might actually disintegrate. The generally lower social and economic position of minorities puts an additional strain on family ties in these groups. Moreover, although Dutch families might indeed feel they do not need to adhere to general norms of filial responsibility, research shows that actual contact and support exchange between family members is high. Komter and Vollebergh (2002), for instance, found that in the Netherlands a substantial part of the exchange of money, goods and services – an indicator of solidarity - continues to occur within the family. Finally, Kagitçibasi (1996) claims that the proposed shift from high levels of support in traditional societies to low levels of support in modern welfare states overlooks a third possibility: decreasing levels of instrumental support but increasing importance of emotional bonds between parents and children. Our first research question addresses this debate:

*(1) Are there differences in attitudes towards intergenerational support (filial obligations) and in actual intergenerational support behavior between immigrant groups and the native Dutch?*

### 1.2.2 Culture versus structure

To fully understand the dynamics of ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity, we need to move beyond the mere description of variation, and examine the social

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<sup>2</sup> Much research on this topic comes from the United States, where the term ‘White’ is used frequently. In the Dutch situation, I refer to native Dutch, but in comparative cases with the US the term ‘White’ is used.

conditions, both cultural and structural, that could explain these differences. This second, 'culture versus structure' debate concerns the relative importance of culture and structure in shaping intergenerational solidarity and differences therein between different ethnic and immigrant groups. The question is to what extent perceptions and behaviors concerning intergenerational relations are determined by ethnic background or attributable to socio-demographic factors.

Theories of cultural differences in 'family systems' suggest that family relations and the related expectations reflect the importance attached to kinship in a society. We can assume that many older immigrants in the Netherlands were socialized in kinship-oriented societies, where intergenerational interdependence was a prerequisite for a family's material well-being. In contrast, as in other Western countries, Dutch society is characterized by individualism and the independence or autonomy of parent and child. In such societies, support is mainly provided by the (welfare) state. From this perspective, cultural differences in familistic norms and family responsibilities are emphasized to explain differences in levels of intergenerational solidarity. Cultural norms and values are seen as orienting people's behavior in this approach.

Proponents of the structural approach on the other hand claim that cultural differences cannot fully account for all the ethnic variety in family life, and attribute differences to structural factors typically identified as constraints and opportunities. This line of research focuses on the differential structural positions that migrants hold in society and maintains that ethnicity yields little independent effect net of socioeconomic position. Furthermore, not only differences between groups are of importance when studying ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity, but also differences within groups. Kulis (1992), for example, showed the importance of class in determining the amount of and the type of support that was exchanged between parents and adult children. Kalmijn (2004) found that the level of education and also the difference in the level of education between parents and children affected the amount of contact they had. Many studies have documented gender differences in giving and receiving intergenerational support (Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Spitze & Logan, 1990). The structure of the family, as in being single or married, having no or many children, being an only daughter or one of five girls in the family, influences intergenerational support as does proximity between parents and adult children. Our second research question addresses this debate and tries to unravel the influence of both cultural and structural characteristics.

*(2) How do cultural and structural factors affect ethnic differences in attitudes towards filial obligations and actual intergenerational support?*

### 1.2.3 Generalized versus balanced reciprocity

The idea that reciprocity is the basic principle underlying forms of social organization, among which the family, is as old as classical anthropology and sociology. The essence of the principle is that giving prompts receiving, thereby creating forms of ongoing exchange and durable cooperation. Whereas the classical literature implies that exchange within the family is mainly characterized by generalized reciprocity – one-sided support provision –, modern views tend to assume ethnic variation in the nature of reciprocity. Western culture is believed to be more ‘individualistic’ and to put more emphasis on personal choice and voluntary kin relations than do non-Western cultures, where ‘collectivistic’ values stressing familism and filial obligation would be more salient (Triandis, 1995). Along these lines some authors have suggested that balanced reciprocal exchange would be less common among ethnic minorities than among members of the majority group; cultural norms of obligation and loyalty are supposed to override the ‘self-interest’ implied by balanced reciprocity (Katzner, 2000). The third research question addressed in this study therefore is:

*(3) To what extent is intergenerational exchange characterized by ‘generalized reciprocity’, as classical theory suggests, and are there any differences between ethnic groups in the nature of reciprocity?*

### 1.2.4 Independent versus interdependent families

Family members in Western, individualized societies are often described as independent. This is not to say that strong ties between for example parents and adult children cannot exist, but they are seen as voluntary and not based on culturally prescribed norms. Families originating from more collectivistic societies are more often depicted as interdependent, with strong material dependencies between members. These ideal types are not static though and this dichotomy might oversimplify reality. The family is a place where there is a dynamic interplay between structure, culture and agency, where family roles are negotiated in the context of external social and economic forces as well as immigrants’ cultural frameworks from the country of origin. There is a growing awareness that the family is not just a haven in a heartless world but a place where negotiation and conflict takes place, for immigrant and Dutch families alike. Family sociologists have become increasingly aware of the complexity of intergenerational relationships and recognize that intergenerational solidarity might be accompanied by ambivalent feelings under certain circumstances (van Gaalen, 2007). For example, it might be that high levels of intergenerational support come at a price for individual well-being. At the same time, not providing support might induce feelings of guilt. For immigrants, additional tensions may arise when over time they adjust their perceptions and orientations to the cultural patterns of the country of residence as acculturation

theories suggest (Alba & Nee 1997), or when they cannot bring their cultural ideals about intergenerational solidarity into practice under the conditions of migration. These complex systems of meaning, interpretation, motivation and legitimation that people use are usually not captured in survey research. We will therefore perform additional qualitative data analyses to answer our fourth research question:

*(4) How are filial obligations perceived and how is intergenerational support experienced by different ethnic groups and different generations?*

### 1.2.5 Assimilation versus transnationalism

The final debate addressed in the present study is the one between ‘assimilation’ versus ‘transnationalism’. This debate questions whether the process of assimilation, conventionally described as the gradual learning and adoption of the language, culture, and behavioral patterns of the receiving society, necessarily leads to a corresponding abandonment of those of the countries of origin. In other words, the transnational perspective on migration specifically explores the relationships immigrants have with people and institutions in the countries of origin.

A substantial percentage of immigrants leave their parents behind in the country of origin or have parents who migrated back to the country of origin after retirement. Such transnational intergenerational ties are an important addition to the study of intergenerational solidarity. Transnational ties are clearly different from ties between family members living in the same country. Nevertheless, they may be very strong. In many cultures, there are clear expectations that family members will send remittances to relatives who remained in the home country. The family may even see supporting a family member to emigrate, as an investment through which economic benefits will be gained by receiving remittances (Haas & Plug, 2006). In this sense, migration can be seen as an implicit contract between the younger and older generations, in which the latter provide capital to enable the migration of the former in exchange for security in one’s old age. The family back home often consists of parents and grandparents who in their old age eventually need help in paying medical and hospital bills, financing private care, or simply paying for their daily needs.

Moreover, recent technological innovations (along with the even more recent drop in prices of such innovations) such as mobile phones, international telephone cards and e-mail have made it much easier for family members to stay in touch across borders. Whereas assimilation theory argues that such transnational ties will diminish when immigrants integrate into the new society, the transnational perspective on migration does not expect that such ties will disappear as integration processes continue. Our fifth research question addresses these conflicting perspectives:

*(5) How are transnational family exchange practices among different immigrant groups in the Netherlands associated with integration into the host community?*

### 1.3 Ethnic groups in the Netherlands

Since the 1960s the ethnic composition of the Netherlands has changed significantly. Approximately 19% of the total population of 16.4 million inhabitants of the Netherlands were born abroad or have at least one parent who was born abroad. About half of these non-native Dutch are of non-Western origin with the majority coming from the former Dutch colonies of Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles, or as guest workers from Turkey and Morocco (Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000). Together, these four groups make up around 7 per cent of the Dutch population and 66 per cent of the approximately 1.7 million non-Western migrants in the Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands, 2007). Nowadays, a substantial percentage of the 369 000 Turks, 330 000 Moroccans, 333 000 Surinamese and 129 000 Antilleans belong to the second generation, who were born in or migrated at a very young age (<6) to the Netherlands.

The initial guest workers from Turkey and Morocco who entered the Netherlands in the 1960's were mostly unskilled male laborers who arrived without their family, did not speak the Dutch language, and planned on returning to their country of origin after some years. Many were recruited from the rural areas of their countries of origin where Islam played an important role in life. In the Netherlands, these immigrants settled mainly in the four largest cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and the Hague) and in the industrial areas in the Southern and Eastern part of the country. When it became clear to many of the immigrants that they would not return home after a few years, as they had initially expected, many of them brought their wives and children to the Netherlands in the 1980's and 90's. Today, family reunification has become much harder due to stricter Dutch immigration rules, but family formation through marriage with a partner from the country of origin is still a common practice, even for the second generation Turks and Moroccans (De Valk et al., 2004).

First generation Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands have a low socio-economic status compared to Dutch natives. Low educational levels and a lack of Dutch language proficiency led them to be incorporated in the lower segments of the labor market. Due to economic recession and disability resulting from the physical work they performed, many of them became dependent on state benefits. The second generation is much more diversified but even among second generation Turks and Moroccans unemployment and state dependency are much higher than among the native Dutch, while educational levels are lower.

The immigration history of immigrants from Surinam and the Dutch Antilles

shows a much more diverse picture, although this picture is predominantly influenced by Dutch colonial history. Whereas Surinam is a former colony of the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles are still part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands even today. This means that people from the Dutch Antilles have Dutch citizenship and people from Surinam did so until five years after independence in 1975. Moreover, due to the colonial ties with the Netherlands inhabitants from Surinam and the Dutch Antilles spoke the Dutch language and were considered to be more culturally similar to the Dutch than, for example, the guest workers from Turkey and Morocco (Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000). Especially the first waves of immigration from the former colonies were led by elites who came to the Netherlands for educational purposes.

The deteriorating economic situation in Surinam in the 1980's led a more socio-economically and ethnically diverse population to migrate to the Netherlands. Nowadays, the Surinamese population in the Netherlands is very heterogeneous and consists of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The immigration pattern from the Antilles followed a somewhat comparable path in the sense that initial immigrants mainly came for educational purposes. The worsening economic situation that prompted many young low educated Antilleans to try their luck in the Netherlands is more recent, however. The Surinamese and Antillean immigrants mainly live in the larger cities in the Netherlands. Their socio-economic position is very diverse, but in general lies between the position of the native Dutch, on the one hand, and that of the Turks and Moroccans on the other.

Where family characteristics are concerned, large differences exist. For Turks and Moroccans, marriage is very common, the mean ages for marriage and childbirth are low, and the number of children is high compared to the Dutch. On the whole, Turkish and Moroccan culture is more strongly delineated along patriarchal lines than Dutch society. Women's role is centered around the home whereas men are more involved in activities outside the house. In the Surinamese and Antillean group however, the matrifocal Caribbean family system (Shaw, 2003) results in a high percentage of female headed households, in which mothers and adult daughters often live together. Unmarried cohabitation goes together with a relative young age at first childbirth and women often combine motherhood and paid employment. Surinamese and Antillean women show even higher rates of economic participation than native Dutch women.

Where intergenerational relationships are concerned, and especially elderly care, differences exist between the Netherlands and the countries immigrants originate from. Whereas in developing countries elderly care is often a family activity based on implicit norms of intergenerational reciprocity, in industrialized countries like the Netherlands care for the elderly is organized by the state in the form of welfare provisions and pensions, and is thus of an impersonal nature, based on explicit contracts between working and elderly generations. This arrangement does not eliminate the possibility of

implicit expectations between generations, but does constitute a fundamental difference compared to the way in which care of the elderly is organized in the countries from which migrants come.

## 1.4 Data

This study is based on data from two related large scale surveys and one in-depth qualitative study, especially designed to study family support and to facilitate comparisons between ethnic minority and Dutch families. The Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Komter, Knijn, Liefbroer & Mulder, 2005) is a nationally representative survey among about 8100 respondents from 18-79 years of age in which the largest ethnic minority groups are oversampled. The NKPS main sample was supplemented with a migrant sample, drawn from 13 Dutch cities in which half the migrants from the four largest migrant groups live. This resulted in additional data on migrants of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean origin (N=1402). All respondents were interviewed at home, usually by an interviewer from the same ethnic background, in either Dutch or the respondent's native language. During the survey, detailed questions were asked about the relationships of the respondents with several of their family members.

Along with the NKPS migrant sample, another survey was conducted in cooperation with the NKPS. This survey, *Sociale Positie en Voorzieningengebruik Allochtonen* (Social Position and Use of Provisions by Migrants, SPVA 2002), furthermore includes highly comparable data on 4199 heads of households from the same 13 cities and of the same ethnic backgrounds (Groeneveld & Weijers-Martens, 2003). The migrant respondents in both cases were approached in person. The interview followed a structured, paper and pencil questionnaire that was available in Turkish, Arabic and Dutch.

After a non-response follow-up the NKPS yielded an overall response rate of 45% for the main sample respondents. In general the response rates in the Netherlands are low as compared to the US, for example, but this response rate is comparable to that of other large-scale family surveys in the Netherlands (De Leeuw & De Heer, 2001). The response rate among migrants is comparable to that of the Dutch, ranging from 41% among the Surinamese to 52% among Turks (Groeneveld & Weijers-Martens, 2003).

While the survey part of the NKPS can show differences in the (quantitative) level of intergenerational solidarity between groups, and provides information on which groups provide more support than others and which factors account for this, it fails to provide information about how intergenerational support is experienced, which tensions and ambivalences might emerge, what the meaning of this support is for parents and children in different ethnic groups or about the way parents and children from the same

family negotiate this support. A qualitative research approach is better suited to capture these aspects of intergenerational solidarity. In addition, qualitative methods have the advantage that they are sufficiently open and flexible to go along with unexpected turns in an interview that may have been missed in a survey (Memorandum minipanel, 2003). Therefore, a qualitative study was included in this thesis.

The qualitative part of this chapter is based on interviews conducted in 2005 with 40 Surinamese, Dutch and Turkish respondents who already participated in the quantitative part of the NKPS. Respondents answered questions about intergenerational support practices and expectations. A Dutch, Turkish and Surinamese interviewer recruited and interviewed the respondents in the respective ethnic groups. Interviews in the Turkish group were held either in Dutch or Turkish, depending on the respondents' preference. The informal interviews, lasting 1-2 hours, followed a guideline of open-ended questions. Finally, the multi-actor aspect of the NKPS was incorporated in the mini-panel as well, by interviewing a number of parents and adult children from the same family.

The quantitative and qualitative analyses should be seen as complementing each other so as to achieve a more comprehensive insight into different aspects of intergenerational solidarity. The combined quantitative and qualitative analyses provide a unique opportunity to investigate not only the general quantitative patterns but also the qualitative mechanisms underlying the provision of intergenerational support by different ethnic groups in the Netherlands.

## 1.5 Outline of the book

This study consists of five chapters focusing on different aspects of intergenerational solidarity and ethnic differences therein. In chapter 2 we look specifically at the expectations elderly parents have of their adult children. We investigate whether filial responsibility expectations differ between immigrant and native elderly, and we try to unravel the characteristics underlying these differences. In the following chapter (chapter 3), the filial obligations as felt by the adult children are investigated in combination with the actual intergenerational support provided by adult children towards their parents. Chapter 4 combines data from both adult children and parents to have a closer look at the concept of reciprocity. In the fifth chapter we investigate from a qualitative point of view how filial obligations are perceived and how intergenerational support is experienced by different ethnic groups and different generations, and we question the proposed dichotomy between independent and interdependent intergenerational ties. Chapter 6 studies intergenerational ties across borders and puts intergenerational solidarity in a transnational perspective. Chapter 7 contains the conclusions, discussion, and directions for future research.

# Chapter 2

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## Perceptions of filial obligations among immigrant and Dutch older people<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter was co-authored with dr. Helga de Valk. A slightly different version of this paper is forthcoming in *Ageing and Society*.

## 2.1 Introduction

Population ageing and international migration are generally studied separately. Although the number of immigrants in many Western countries has risen substantially in the last decades, until recently immigrant older people were expected to return to their home-countries (Warnes et al., 2004). It is, however, becoming increasingly apparent that the majority of immigrant older people in host countries like the Netherlands will stay. In the near future, a rising proportion of older people in many Western societies will be of immigrant origin, with several implications for care and family relations. This chapter focuses on one aspect of the immigrant older person's experience and situation, their perceptions about filial obligations. It is often assumed that older immigrants are supported by families with strong interdependent ties and filial obligations (Bolzman et al., 2004). To what extent such family relationships continue after the migration and the passage of time is still largely unexplored.

In most studies, filial obligation norms are examined from the point of view of the younger generation. Studies on changes in family relations and related perceptions of filial obligations have mainly focused on how and to what extent immigrant youth adapt to the host society, while attitudes and beliefs from the perspective of older people have received less attention. Immigrants in Western countries are likely to experience old age differently from native older people, and to have different beliefs and attitudes about their children's obligations, but little is known about ethnic-group variations in either family forms of attitudes and expectations (Seelbach & Die, 1988). North-American studies have found that parents' expectations of their children differ by ethnic group (Burr & Mutchler, 1999; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Lee, Peek, & Coward, 1998; Rosenthal, 1986). Immigrant families are thought to adhere to the traditions in their countries of origin, in particular in the private domain, but it remains unclear how and to what extent cultural factors account for inter-ethnic differences. Previous studies have suggested that differences arise from the contrasting demographic and socio-economic characteristics of natives and immigrants (Glick & Van Hook, 2002; Mitchell, Wister & Gee, 2004), and that ethnic differences in family relations are subject to the migration experience itself and may not be as large as assumed (Silverstein & Waite, 1993; Schans & Komter, 2006).

In this chapter, we examine the relative influence of migration history and socio-demographic factors on the perceptions of filial obligation among native Dutch and four immigrant groups of older people in the Netherlands. A large comparative survey included the native Dutch, Turkish and Moroccan respondents, and immigrants from the (former) Dutch colonies of Surinam and the Dutch Antilles. In this study, the four latter groups are described as 'immigrants' because the majority migrated to the Netherlands as young adults. The current population of the Netherlands includes many

different immigrant groups and their descendants. Most immigrant groups apart from those included in the survey have a young age structure, however, and do not yet include many older people. The objectives of this chapter are therefore threefold: to provide evidence of the perceptions of filial obligation among older people with different ethnic backgrounds in the Netherlands; to investigate if and how these attitudes differ among the various ethnic groups; and to examine whether differences in attitudes towards filial obligation are attributable to ethnic background or other factors including socio-demographic background and acculturation.

## **2.2 Background and hypotheses**

### **2.2.1 Research on filial obligations**

Filial obligation refers to a societal attitude towards the duty of (adult) children to meet the needs of their ageing parents (Seelbach & Die, 1988; Walker et al., 1990). Rossi and Rossi (1990) defined norms of filial responsibility as culturally-defined rights and duties that specify both the ways in which family members are expected to behave toward each other and the obligations to exchange and provide support to one another. It is argued that an individual's expectations of and attitudes toward filial obligation develop during socialization, by personal experiences as well as by observing relationships between family members of different generations (Goldscheider & Lawton, 1998; Burr & Mutchler, 1999). Most research has examined filial obligations from the point of view of the young generation. The few studies that focus on the beliefs and attitudes of older people have found relationships between various socio-demographic characteristics and levels of adherence to filial obligations. Lee, Netzer and Coward (1994) and Lee, Peek and Coward (1998) found that elderly parents of low socioeconomic status expected to receive more help from their adult children than from those in higher status groups: the same applied to unmarried and unhealthy parents. Likewise, Seelbach (1981) found that, as parents age and grow poorer, they expect to receive more support from their children.

There is little empirical research on the influence of ethnic background on attitudes to filial obligations. Most of the available studies have been of a single minority group or have methodological limitations, such as small unrepresentative samples (Burr & Mutchler, 1999; Gans & Silverstein, 2006). Their findings nevertheless indicate that norms of filial responsibility vary by cultural background, although they are inconclusive about the direction of causation. Lee and Aytac (1998) found that Black elderly parents in the United States had higher expectations of filial obligations than Whites, but Seelbach (1981) and Hanson, Sauer and Seelbach (1983) did not corroborate the difference. Lee, Peek and Coward (1998) argued that among Blacks, extensive support

networks developed between generations to combat the negative effects of prejudice and discrimination, and that they have a 'cultural aversion' to formal services, seeing them as exploitative rather than supportive. In the case of Hispanics in the United States, it is also argued that the immigration experience creates strong links to traditional family-oriented cultures in the countries of origin (Bean & Tienda, 1987). As Arjouch (2005) reports in her study on Arab-American older persons, many immigrated before experiencing the burden of caring for their own older parents, therefore keeping more to the traditional norms than to lived experiences.

Burr and Mutchler (1999) suggested that ethnic beliefs and attitudes differ depending on the specific norm. They showed that older Blacks and Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to agree that parents and adult children should co-reside if necessary. At the same time, few group differences were found when attitudes towards financial aid were considered. Rossi and Rossi (1990) found that Blacks reported less filial obligation than Whites to primary kin including parents, but showed greater commitment to norms of filial obligation towards distant kin. In the Netherlands, we are not aware of any previous quantitative studies on ethnic differences in filial responsibility expectations except the NKPS (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Knijn, Komter, Liefbroer & Mulder, 2006). Qualitative research among some immigrant groups (Niekerk, 1991; Yerden, 2000) has suggested, however, that levels of filial obligations among immigrants are higher than among the native Dutch.

### 2.2.2 The backgrounds of immigrants in the Netherlands

Large-scale immigration to the Netherlands started in the 1960s since when there have been distinct successive flows. The earliest immigrants were from former Dutch colonies, like Surinam and the Antilles in the Caribbean. Many older people in the Netherlands of Surinamese and Antillean origin either came for higher education or immigrated to join their adult children already resident in the country (Schellingerhout, 2004a; Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000). Many Surinamese and Antillean immigrants were familiar with Dutch society and had some command of the language. The second large flow, as in many other Western European countries, was of (predominantly male) unskilled labor migrants from southern Europe and the Mediterranean (particularly Turkey and Morocco). Many of their families (wife and children) came to the Netherlands during the 1980s and 1990s (Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000; De Valk et al., 2004). The third migration phase, of asylum seekers from very many countries, became substantial during the 1990s and comprised mainly young people (and therefore does not concern this study).

Among the Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans and Surinamese, a substantial number are now reaching old age. In 2005, around 12 per cent of the 1.1 million persons with a Turkish, Moroccan, Antillean, and Surinamese background were aged 50 or more years, but few are yet over 65 years-of-age (Schellingerhout, 2004a; Statline, 2005).

Recent studies of elderly immigrants and their use of welfare and health-care provision have established that they have lower socioeconomic status than native Dutch older people - the Turkish and Moroccan having the lowest education and income (Ament & Lautenbach, 2002; Nationaal Instituut voor Budgetvoorlichting, 2004). This is no surprise if one takes into account their employment history, for many had low status unskilled jobs in the Netherlands, and many were unable to work for extended periods through enforced unemployment and sickness and became dependent on social welfare. Almost one-half of Turkish and Moroccan men between aged 55-64 years claim to be unable to work because of health problems (Schellingerhout, 2004a). The socioeconomic position of the elderly Surinamese is closer to the Dutch; on average they had more education and have higher mean incomes than the Turks or Moroccans. The socioeconomic position of Antilleans lies in between the Surinamese and the Turks or Moroccans (Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000). Rates of employment among both men and women of Surinamese and Antillean origin are higher than in the other two immigrant groups. Although immigrant older people make less use of the formal care provided by the Dutch welfare state, those from Surinam and the Antilles are more aware of their entitlements than other groups, which has been attributed to their greater knowledge of Dutch society and the language (Dagevos, Gijsberts & van Praag, 2003). The Turks and Moroccans are least knowledgeable about formal welfare provision (Schellingerhout, 2004b).

### 2.2.3 Hypotheses

#### *Ethnicity and family relations*

Theories of differences in 'family systems' suggest that family relations and the related expectations reflect the importance attached to kinship in a society. Several authors have argued that in more collectivistic societies, kinship ties take a centre stage (Todd, 1985; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Kagitçibasi, 1996; Nauck, 2007; Reher, 1998). Kagitçibasi (1996) referred to these societies as *cultures of relatedness*. The description applies to Turkey and Morocco, especially in the more remote rural areas. In Surinam and the Antilles also, the family is of great importance and intergenerational ties are strong. It can be assumed that many immigrant older people in the Netherlands grew up in kinship-oriented societies, where intergenerational interdependence was a prerequisite for a family's material well-being. In such societies, children contribute to the family well-being both while young (as by working in the fields and contributing to the family economy), and when adult by providing old-age support and financial security for their parents.

As in many Western countries, Dutch society is characterized by individualism and the independence or autonomy of parent and child. According to Kagitçibasi (1996), family relations in the Netherlands exemplify a *culture of separateness*. In these

societies, support is mainly provided by the (welfare) state although the emotional bonds between parents and children are generally strong. Some Dutch older people even experience support from their children as a form of control (Komter & Vollebergh, 2002). We therefore hypothesized that immigrant elders would agree more strongly than Dutch elders that children should support their parents (H1).

Acculturation theories suggest that over time immigrants adjust their perceptions and orientations to the cultural patterns of the country of residence (Alba & Nee, 1997). This does not imply that norms and values from the country of origin are totally abandoned but rather that the immigration experience prompts their revision (Kagitçibasi, 1996). Living in the host society for a long period increases exposure to new values. Besides the effect of duration of residence in the new society, orientation (or receptiveness) to change is influential (Berry, 1980). Acculturation studies have shown the importance of language proficiency as an indicator of orientation to the host culture (Van Tubergen, 2006; Chiswick & Miller, 2002). Based on these notions, we expect that immigrant elders, who had been resident in the Netherlands for a longer period, and those who are proficient in the Dutch language, will be less of the opinion that children should support their parents, than those with short residence and little language proficiency (H2).

### *Socio-demographic characteristics and the need for support*

Previous research has shown that variations in socio-demographic profile and well-being account for different filial norms. In order to distinguish between the ethnic influence and other factors, it is important to control for socio-demographic position and the need for support (Lee, Netzer & Coward, 1994; Lee, Peak & Coward, 1998). Educational attainment, marital status, and having children influence opinions and perceptions regarding the family (Kalmijn, 2004; Roschelle, 1997; Rossi & Rossi 1990; Spitze & Logan, 1990). The highly educated can more readily purchase private care, which might reduce their sense of filial obligations. Co-resident married people can provide care to each other rather than depend on others, which again might reduce the expectation of filial obligation. Conversely, those who have children have the option to depend on them to provide help and care. This reasoning leads to the hypothesis that those who are (a) married, (b) childless or (c) highly educated will be less of the opinion that children should support parents than among the unmarried, those with children and the lower educated (H3a-c).

We have also studied the impact of current physical health on perceptions of filial obligations (De Jong Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 1999; Gierveld, 2003). It can be assumed that the current need for support is related to a person's views about filial obligation. A current need may raise expectations of filial obligation, whereas those without care and support needs may not be aware of the importance of children helping out. We expect that older people who have physical health problems will be more of the opinion that

children should support their parents than those who do not (H4). All hypotheses have been examined after controlling for gender, age and level of urbanization.

## 2.3 Data and methods

### 2.3.1 Data

The data for the analysis are from the first round of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS) (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Komter, Knijn, Liefbroer & Mulder, 2005). The main sample (Dutch respondents) and the migrant sample (including Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Antillean respondents) were used. The main sample is a nationally representative sample of about 8,100 Dutch respondents. The migrant sample was drawn from 13 Dutch cities in which 50 per cent of the migrants from the four main ethnic groups live. It includes 1,402 migrants with a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillean origin. The topics covered in the main and the migrant questionnaires were similar, and provide comparable data. The respondents were interviewed in their homes, in most cases by an interviewer of the same ethnic background. All interviews followed a structured questionnaire in Dutch that was available in Turkish and Arabic as well. The response rate among the migrants was in the same range as that of the Dutch, from 41 per cent for the Surinamese, to 52 per cent for the Turks. In our study immigrants were compared with Dutch respondents living in the 13 cities in which the immigrants were sampled. The present analysis is confined to the respondents aged 50-80 years. After the exclusions, the sample comprised 70 Turkish, 73 Moroccan, 125 Surinamese, 59 Antillean, and 469 Dutch respondents.

### 2.3.2 Measures

#### *Dependent variables*

The first analysis compares the levels of agreement with three views about filial obligation among the Dutch and the immigrant elders. The respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statements that: 'children who live nearby should visit their parents at least once a week', 'children should care for their sick parents', and 'if parents are old, children should provide co-residence for them'. The answers were requested on a five-point Likert scale, from '1' for 'fully agree' (group oriented) to '5' for 'fully disagree' (individualistic). A later multivariate analysis tries to disentangle immigrant group-specific effects on perceived filial obligations. The average scores of agreement on the three statements were calculated, and a continuous scale was constructed. Higher scores on the scale indicate a more individualistic orientation.

*Independent variables*

*Immigrant group.* The ethnic background of the respondents was defined according to country of birth and that of the respondent's parents. Those born abroad or with at least one parent born abroad were assigned to one of the four ethnic minority or immigrant groups. For each group, a separate dummy variable was created to compare them to the Dutch.

*Physical health.* Respondents were asked to rate their general physical health on a five-point scale that ranged from '1' for 'very well' to '5' for 'very bad'. This variable was entered into the analyses as a continuous variable.

*Educational level.* The educational level of the respondent was measured as the highest educational level to which the respondent had been enrolled (with or without completion or accreditation) and three levels were distinguished, from low '1' to high '3'.

*Marital status.* Respondents who are married at the time of the interview (coded '1') were compared with those who were divorced, widowed or never married (coded '0').

*Children.* Respondents who had one or more surviving children (own or adopted) (coded '1') were compared with those without children (coded '0'). Given that childlessness is much less common among the older cohorts of immigrants than among their Dutch counterparts, a measure was designed of the effects of acculturation on the perceptions of immigrant elders. The dichotomy distinguishes those who had no more than the average number of children for their group of origin ('0') from those who had more than the average ('1').

*Gender* A dichotomous variable (men '0', women '1').

*Age.* The respondents' age (in years) at the time of the interview.

*Urbanization* Respondents who lived in one of the four major cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague and Utrecht) were coded '1' and compared with those who lived elsewhere in the Netherlands (coded '0').

In the second part of the analyses, on the immigrant-group specific effects on perceived filial obligations, two additional variables were included.

*Years of residence in the Netherlands.* Respondents with an immigrant background were asked to report the year in which they migrated to The Netherlands, from which the duration of residence in The Netherlands was calculated and used as a continuous variable in the analyses.

*Ability in the Dutch language.* Fluency in the Dutch language was assessed by the language in which the interview was conducted. Respondents for whom the interview was primarily conducted in Dutch (coded '1') were compared to those who had limited or no Dutch language command and were interviewed in their mother tongue (coded '0').

### 2.3.3 Methods

Bivariate analyses provided the first insight into the variations in the respondents' perceptions of filial obligations. The replies to each of the three statements about filial obligations were analyzed separately, and differences between ethnic groups tested with Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) *post hoc* test (Fisher, 1966; Prochan, 1997). Secondly, ordinal logistic regression was used to study the effects of ethnic origin, socio-demographic variables and need for support on perceived filial obligations. Finally, ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression was used to study the effects of acculturation on the perceptions of the respondents with Mediterranean (Turkish and Moroccan) and Caribbean (Surinamese and Antillean) origins.

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic profile of the respondents by ethnic group

Variable	Range SD	Ethnic or immigrant group									
		Dutch		Turkish		Moroccan		Surinamese		Antillean	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Socio-demographics and support necessity</b>											
Physical health	1-5 <sup>1</sup>	2.2	0.9	3.2	1.1	3.0	1.0	2.7	1.1	2.5	1.1
Marital status	0/1 <sup>2</sup>	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.4
Having children	0/1 <sup>3</sup>	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.2	0.9	0.3	0.9	0.4
Educational level	1-3 <sup>4</sup>	2.1	0.9	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.8	0.8	1.7	0.9
Age (years)	50-79	62.4	9.2	57.9	6.6	60.3	5.8	59.4	7.5	58.4	7.0
Gender (1 = woman)	0/1	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
Urbanization	0/1 <sup>5</sup>	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.5
<b>Migrant characteristics</b>											
Above average # kids <sup>6</sup>	0/1			0.3	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Years resident in NL	1-72			29.0	7.7	29.2	7.5	29.8	10.2	22.7	15.1
Dutch-language ability	0/1			0.0	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4
Sample size		469		70		73		125		59	

Notes: SD: standard deviation. 1. 1 = 'good' to 5 = 'bad'. 2. 1 = married. 3. 1 = yes. 4. 1 = 'low' to 3 = 'high'. 5. 1 = G4. 6. Dichotomy for above average number of children.

Source: Netherlands Kinship Panel Study 2002-03 (main and migrant sample).

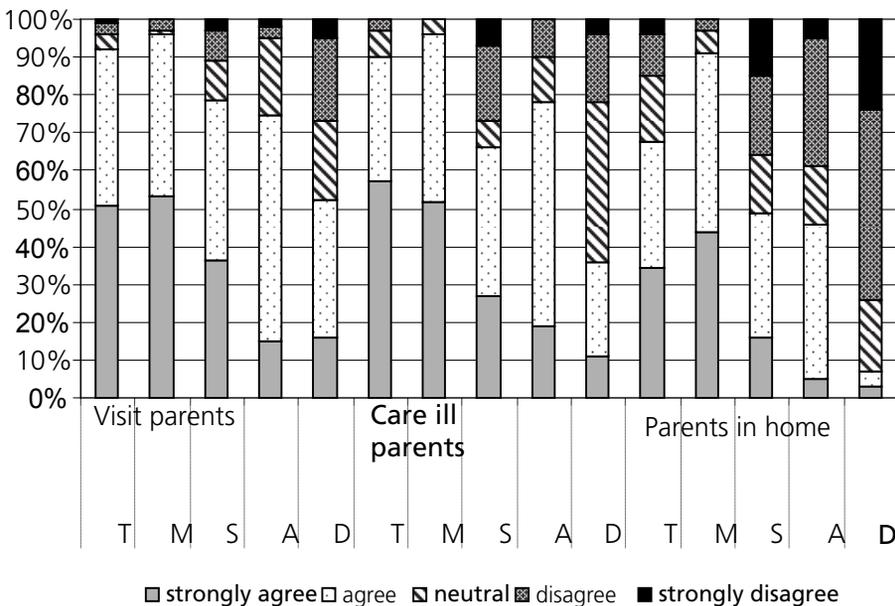
## 2.4 Results

### 2.4.1 Perceptions of filial obligations: an impression

The socio-demographic profiles of the respondents are presented in Table 1, and Figure 1 summarizes the level of agreement with the three statements of filial obligation. Around one-half of the Turkish and Moroccan elders agreed with the statement that

children who live nearby should visit their parents at least once a week, that 36 per cent of the Surinamese agreed with this statement, as did 16 per cent of the Antilleans and the Dutch. By contrast, three to four per cent of Turks and Moroccans did not agree with the statement as against 26 per cent of the Dutch. Testing these group differences shows that the opinions of the Turks and Moroccans differed significantly from the other three groups but not from each other. The Surinamese and Antillean did not differ from each other but their opinion differed from all other groups. Finally, the Dutch agreed least with this statement and their views differed from each of the immigrant groups.

Figure 1. Level of agreement regarding three items of filial obligation by (immigrant) group of origin



Notes: T: Turkish, M: Moroccan, S: Surinamese, A: Antillean and D: Dutch.  
 Source: Netherlands Kinship Panel Study 2002-03 (main and migrant sample).

The levels of agreement with the statement that children ‘should care for sick parents’ showed similar patterns of responses. More than one-half of the Turks (57%) and Moroccans (51%) agreed, compared to 11 per cent of the Dutch. Again the Surinamese and Antilleans took an intermediate position: 27 and 19 per cent respectively did not think this is the children’s duty. The results of an Analysis of Variance test showed that three groups could be distinguished in level of agreement: the Turks and Moroccans, the Surinamese and Antilleans, and the native Dutch differed from each other. Finally, 44 per cent of the Moroccans and 34 per cent of the Turks held the opinion that children should co-reside with elderly parents, but only 16 per cent of the Surinamese had this opinion,

and only three per cent of the Dutch. The LSD comparisons showed that, except for the Surinamese and Antilleans, all the groups' level of agreement differed significantly from one another. The Moroccans agreed most with the statement, followed by the Turks, the Surinamese and Antilleans, and lastly the Dutch.

*Filial obligations: variations by ethnic groups and socio-demographic factors*

Table 2 shows the results of the ordinal logistic regressions for each of the three dependent variables. A larger proportion of the Turks, Moroccans and Surinamese than the Dutch believed that children should visit their parents at least once a week. Furthermore, it was shown that level of education influenced the level of agreement with the statement. In line with our hypothesis, the more highly educated were less in agreement, but controlling for educational attainment did not explain the differences between the immigrant groups and the Dutch. Contrary to expectation (H3), none of the other socio-demographic characteristics were significantly associated with level of agreement with children's duty of visiting parents.

**Table 2.** Level of acceptance of three statements of filial obligation by ethnic group

Ethnic group or variable	Filial obligations assertion					
	Children should visit parents at least once a week		Children should care for ill parents		Parents should be able to live with children when old	
	B	s.e.	B	s.e.	B	s.e.
<b>Immigrant group</b>						
Turkish	-1.39***	0.29	-2.30***	0.30	-2.33***	0.29
Moroccan	-1.55***	0.29	-2.25***	0.29	-3.24***	0.30
Surinamese	-1.08***	0.21	-0.91***	0.21	-1.56***	0.21
Antillean	-0.46~	0.27	-1.10***	0.26	-1.40***	0.27
<b>Socio-demographics and support necessity</b>						
Physical health	-0.09	0.08	-0.08	0.07	-0.04	0.07
Marital status	0.04	0.18	0.22	0.17	0.01	0.18
Having children	0.25	0.19	0.28	0.18	-0.03	0.19
Educational level	0.58***	0.09	0.31***	0.09	0.46***	0.09
Age	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.02*	0.01
Gender	0.06	0.16	0.41**	0.16	0.43**	0.16
Urbanisation	0.04	0.15	-0.21	0.15	-0.44**	0.15
Sample size	738		739		740	
Nagelkerke pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.21		0.25		0.39	

Notes: B: Ordinal logistic regression coefficients; negative coefficients indicate stronger agreement. s.e. standard error.

Significance levels: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

Source: Netherlands Kinship Panel Study 2002-03 (main and migrant sample).

With regard to the obligation to provide care to older people, the analyses show that all immigrant groups (the Turks and Moroccans most obviously) more strongly agreed that children should care for ill parents than the Dutch, in line with the first hypothesis. Again educational level was associated with the level of agreement, with the highly educated holding a more liberal view. Contrary to hypotheses H3 and H4, however, none of the other socio-demographic characteristics nor need-for-support related to upholding this filial obligation. Of the control variables, only gender had an effect, with women being less of the opinion that children should care than men.

For the third filial obligation statement, on providing co-residence to parents in old age, there were again differences between Dutch and immigrant older people. The immigrants more often agreed with the view than the Dutch, and educational level again had a liberalizing effect. Although the other socio-demographic and support factors were not of importance, all three control variables were. Greater age and being a woman were associated with less agreement with this filial obligation. Those living in the largest cities more often agreed with the statement than those living elsewhere.

The possible effects of self-reported overall well-being and disabilities were examined in separate analyses, but neither factor associated with the level of agreement with the three filial obligations (analysis not shown). We also tested whether the effects of the socio-demographic factors and need-for-support had similar strengths among the immigrant groups and the Dutch by examining the interaction terms separately for each group. The findings gave no indication that the variables operated differently for particular migrant groups or for the Dutch.

#### 2.4.2 Filial obligations: acculturation

The second part of the analyses examined the effects of acculturation, more specifically the duration of residence in the Netherlands and variations in Dutch language ability. Given the similarity in the levels of agreement with the three filial obligation statements and the small samples, two groups of immigrants were studied: those with Mediterranean origins (Turks and Moroccans), and those with Caribbean origins (Surinamese and Antilleans). The results of the OLS regression, which controlled for background characteristics, are shown in Table 3. Although we expected that a longer period of residence would change perceptions of filial obligations (H2), no such effect was found. Incidentally, those whose period of residence was unknown were less of the opinion that children should support elderly parents. The second indicator of acculturation, Dutch language ability, was significantly associated with the perception of filial obligations, but only among those of Mediterranean origin. Among those from the Caribbean, however, level of urbanization was a significant influence, with those living in the larger cities much more assertive of filial obligation. Finally, it should be noted that those from the Mediterranean with an above-average number of children

more strongly agreed with the statements than those with smaller families.

**Table 3.** Regression coefficients for filial obligations by immigrant origin

	Mediterranean		Caribbean	
	B	s.e.	B	s.e.
Intercept	1.84**	0.74	1.20*	0.79
<b>Migrant characteristics</b>				
Period of residence	-0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Period of residence missing	0.63**	0.25	0.61**	0.21
Dutch language ability	0.33*	0.16	0.31	0.20
<b>Socio-demographics and support necessity</b>				
Physical health	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.07
Marital status	0.19	0.16	-0.20	0.15
Having children	-0.25*	0.12	0.06	0.14
Educational level	0.23~	0.12	0.17*	0.10
Age	-0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Gender	0.17	0.15	-0.10	0.14
Urbanisation	-0.15	0.24	-0.34*	0.16
Sample size	141		180	
$R^2$	0.18		0.14	

Source: Netherlands Kinship Panel Study 2002-03 (main and migrant sample).

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## 2.5 Conclusions and discussion

The first aim of this study was to determine the relative importance of ethnic origin and other socio-demographic background characteristics on the strength of older people's normative views about filial obligations. It was found, in line with hypothesis H1, that ethnic background was the principal influence. Turks and Moroccans most strongly adhered to the opinion that children have obligations towards their aged parents. Whereas all immigrant groups expressed stronger filial obligations than the Dutch, the extent of the differences varied with the statement or aspect, and was greatest with reference to the prescription that elderly parents should be able to share an adult child's home. These findings suggest that the respondents' views about filial obligations were rooted in the opinions and norms into which they were socialized. Opinions on intergenerational relations and support are core values that, contrary to more practical domains of life, are not easily adjusted in a different society. Today's older immigrants in the Netherlands are the 'first generation', and most grew up in their countries of

origin. We can expect that in the second generation, more will have been socialized in the Netherlands, and will hold more similar views to the Dutch.

There was only limited support for the hypotheses of the influence of socio-demographic background and the need for support (H3 and H4). Only educational attainment had clear and consistent effects on normative views. The more highly educated were less of the opinion that children have an obligation to care for elderly parents. This finding suggests that, as the educational level of immigrants rises, their opinions and perceptions will change and perhaps diversify. Women agreed less than men that children have caring obligations, including caring for ill parents and providing co-residence for older parents. Separate analyses for the individual ethnic groups, however, did not find gender differences among the immigrant groups. It appears that the effect was principally caused by the fact that Dutch women agreed less with the norms than men, as found by Schans and Komter (2006). Finally, those living in the largest cities most strongly supported the norm of co-residence with children, which might be associated with big-city housing costs and shortages or the unfavorable reputation of nursing homes in these areas.

The second aim of our study was to assess the role of acculturation on filial obligation norms. It was hypothesized (H2) that longer residence in the Netherlands would weaken the adherence to filial norms, but no such effects were found among the immigrant groups. On the other hand, in accordance with hypothesis H2, the Mediterranean respondents who were fluent in the Dutch language had a relatively low level of agreement with the filial obligation norms. Among the Caribbean-origin respondents, this effect was not found, possibly because of their high level of language competence, a legacy of their countries' colonial past. It seemed that for the Caribbeans, Dutch language ability was not an indicator of acculturation, although living in the largest cities associated with relatively strong agreement with traditional filial obligation norms, which may be interpreted as an acculturation and selection effect. The more acculturated Caribbean middle-class tend to leave the largest cities for the suburbs, and therefore to live in neighborhoods dominated by the native Dutch. The effects of acculturation are probably better measured by studying actual contacts in the host society rather than the duration of residence. Furthermore, we can conclude that acculturation processes vary by the immigrant group. Future studies should be aware of the diversity of immigrant groups and take the different acculturation pathways into account.

Although this study has provided new insights into the filial norms of immigrant older people, some limitations should be noted. First, it has examined exclusively the perceptions of the children's obligations. It is yet unclear whether the actual behavior differs as much by ethnic group (Pyke, 1999). Children's actual support may depend on various factors – attributes of the elderly parent and of the child as well as the availability

of formal, subsidized (or welfare state) support. Conflicts may arise between the support expectations and the actual conditions as was reported by Ajrouch (2005) for Arab-American older people. Future research should further explore the link between filial responsibility norms and actualities. Second, the causal relationship between the filial obligation norms and the current situation of the older person is difficult to disentangle (Gans & Silverstein, 2006). Cognitive dissonance theory (Finley, Roberts & Banahan, 1988) suggests that filial expectations may be adjusted in an attempt to reconcile the gap between the ideal and revealed practice. More understanding of these causal relationships requires longitudinal data that traces the ways in which filial obligations change. Third, it should be remembered that, as Pyke (1999) has shown, asserting a norm of filial responsibility does not itself empower aged parents in their intergenerational relations nor provide an entitlement to care from their children, at least not without a loss of regard or power. The associations between filial responsibilities, the quality of intergenerational relations and within-family power dynamics were beyond the scope of this study. More research is needed to develop our understanding of the interplay of these factors among immigrant families. Finally, this study has only examined the older generations' views, and future work should examine those of the children and grandchildren.



# Chapter 3

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## Ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity in the Netherlands<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter was co-authored with prof. dr. Aafke Komter. A slightly different version of this paper is currently under review. An earlier version of the paper was presented at the UCLA/SSRC Summer Institute on International Migration, Los Angeles, June 2004. An earlier Dutch version of this article was published in *Migrantenstudies* (2006), 22, 1, 2-21.

### 3.1 Introduction

Intergenerational support from adult children to parents is an important aspect of the intergenerational solidarity framework as developed by Bengtson and Roberts (1991) and many studies have applied this framework in order to understand relationships between adult children and their elderly parents (Mancini & Blieszner, 1989; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997). Intergenerational solidarity is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct including affectual, associational, consensual, normative, functional and structural solidarity.

Although the framework is presented as a general model, few studies compare various ethnic groups on multiple intergenerational solidarity dimensions simultaneously, and little is known therefore about how ethnic groups might differ in patterns of intergenerational solidarity over the different dimensions. Such differences might be of importance, though, now that an increasing percentage of elderly in Western societies belong to a minority group. In general, elderly minorities are disproportionately more likely to be poor, to have poorer health, and to experience more functional limitation, yet they are less likely to rely on institutions for long-term care (Treas & Mazumdar, 2002). Previous research suggests that minority elders are partially sheltered from the worst outcomes of these risks because they are immersed in strong family support networks based on cultural norms of filial obligations (Choi, 1991; Clark & Huttlinger, 1998; Ishii-Kuntz, 1997). More recent studies, however, show that differences between minority and majority groups with respect to the actual exchanges of aid and services between family members may not be as large as previously assumed due to structural constraints minorities face (Hogan et al., 1993; Eggebeen, 1992; Wong et al., 1999; Berry, 2001).

In the present study, we aim to compare adult children from five different ethnic groups on three dimensions of the intergenerational solidarity framework. Firstly, normative solidarity defined as the obligations adult children feel towards their parents will be examined. Secondly, associational solidarity, measured as the frequency of contact between adult children and parents will be investigated, and thirdly, functional solidarity defined as the degree of assistance provided by adult children to parents will be studied. In a second analysis, we investigate the latter behavioral aspects of intergenerational solidarity and question the importance of the formerly mentioned normative solidarity for such behavior. This way, we use norms of filial obligations as an indicator of cultural differences and aim to show how ethnic background and cultural norms compare to structural features that could be of influence. Our study focuses on the Netherlands and includes adult children with a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean as well as a native Dutch background.

## 3.2 Theoretical background and hypotheses

### *Cultural values*

Some empirical evidence exists that minorities have strong norms of family obligations. For instance, Burr and Mutchler (1999) found that Hispanic immigrants have stronger preferences for filial obligations (normative solidarity) than non-Hispanic White Americans, and in a similar fashion, Lee, Peek and Coward (1998) found that Blacks in the United States possess a stronger sense of filial responsibility than do Whites. In the Netherlands, de Valk and Schans (2007) found that elderly parents with an immigrant background have higher expectations of their children regarding filial obligations than do native Dutch elderly.

It can be assumed that many elderly immigrants in the Netherlands were socialized in kinship-oriented societies, where intergenerational interdependence was a prerequisite for a family's material well-being. It is unclear, though, what happens to the norms and behavior related to assisting elderly parents after the immigration of adult children to an advanced welfare state like the Netherlands, where different norms prevail and where the welfare state offers an alternative form of support. Nevertheless, it is likely that parents will have tried to socialize their children into having the same preferences for high levels of filial obligations they have themselves. Socialization theory assumes that parents transmit their norms and values to their children by means of instruction, confirmation and role-modeling (Bandura, 1977). In addition, the literature on the role of ethnic orientation in the lives of immigrants suggests that immigrants orient themselves to the culture and customs of their country of origin, because these offer a sense of security and identity in the new environment that immigrants are faced with in the host country.

We therefore hypothesize that adult children with an immigrant background will have stronger preferences for filial obligations than do native Dutch adult children (H1). Moreover, cultural norms and values can be seen as orienting people's behavior (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; Rossi & Rossi, 1991; Klein Ikkink et al., 1999). Therefore, although we cannot establish a causal link with our cross-sectional data, we assume that different cultural norms and values may account for differences in behavior, and we expect strong levels of filial obligation to be positively associated with both the frequency of contact between adult children and parents, and with the support provided to parents by their adult children (H2).

### *Structural constraints and opportunities*

Some North-American studies point to the fact that interethnic differences in intergenerational ties are not so much due to cultural differences but rather the result of differences in demographic characteristics and socio-economic position factors,

referred to as constraints and opportunities, between natives and immigrants (Glick & Hook, 2002; Mitchell, Wister & Gee, 2004; Sarkisian et al., 2006). Empirical results from the structural perspective on familial support are mixed. Traditionally it was claimed that families from lower social economic classes not only have more traditional attitudes towards family values, but also maintain higher levels of family support in order to make ends meet (Mutran, 1985). From this perspective, ethnic minorities rely more on family support precisely because of their lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Stack, 1974; Scott & Black, 1999). Recently, however, it has been argued that this approach romanticizes 'poor' families, even glorifying the survival strategies of the poor, while several studies found that resource constraints actually prevent minority groups from participating in family networks (Eggebeen, 1992; Lee & Aytac, 1998; Roschelle, 1997). Educational accomplishments and economic resources can be seen as factors that facilitate and increase the likelihood of support (Hogan, Eggebeen, & Clogg, 1993; Silverstein & Waite, 1993; Berry, 2006).

We assume that ethnic differences in different domains of intergenerational support can be partly explained by differences socio-economic resources. We hypothesize that a higher level of education results in weaker preferences for filial obligations (H3). The underlying assumption is that those with higher education have a different value orientation toward family issues, based on the frequently made claim that the more highly educated are more individualistic in their outlook: they would be more strongly oriented to individual autonomy, less likely to follow conventional norms, and more likely to use a rational rather than a normative line of reasoning about their relationships (Kalmijn, 2006; Inglehart, 1997). However, considering the indecisive results on the effect of socio-economic variables on the behavioral component of intergenerational support, we propose two contrasting hypotheses. On the one hand, we hypothesize that lower educational levels and fewer economic resources (operationalized as income) will lead to higher levels of intergenerational support (H4a) while, alternatively, we hypothesize that higher levels of education together with higher economic resources have a positive effect on the behavioral components of intergenerational support (H4b).

#### *Demographic characteristics of the adult child*

Research results from family sociology show the significance of several characteristics of the family structure for family ties. One important independent variable in explaining variation in intergenerational relations, for example, is gender. A great deal of attention has been paid to the centrality of women in kin-keeping. Whether this has to do with biological differences, cultural socialization or structural differences between men and women is another issue, and beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is well known that daughters are more likely than sons to be in close contact with, and provide support to, their parents. Women are found to have less traditional attitudes than men where

family obligations are concerned but they are nevertheless more likely to provide different kinds of support to family members than men (Komter & Vollebergh, 2002; Gerstel & Gallagher, 2001; Roschelle, 1997; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Spitze & Logan, 1990). We hypothesize therefore that, although women will be less likely to express normative solidarity (H5a), they will be more likely to stay in touch with, and provide support to their parents (H5b). Furthermore Sarkisian and Gerstel (2004a) draw attention to the fact that gender is also crucial for understanding ethnic and racial differences in kin support. Whereas Black men are very similar to White men in their support behavior, Black women are more likely than White women to be involved in exchanges of practical help, but less likely to be involved in balanced exchanges of emotional support. Therefore, we will include interaction terms of gender and ethnic background in our models.

Other characteristics of the respondent might also influence preferences for filial obligations and behavioral ties like frequency of contact and support. Respondents who are married can be expected to have more traditional values (H6a) as do respondents who have children (H6b). Whether this holds for behavior remains to be seen, though; some claim that marriage is a greedy institution which takes away time and resources that might otherwise be spent on helping family (Sarkisian et al., 2004b; Kelly Raley, 1995). A similar debate exists concerning the effects of children; whereas some argue that children consume their parents' time and resources, reducing their availability for support involvement, others claim that children increase the need for support as well as connect parents and grandparents.

### *Characteristics of the dyad*

Various studies point to the importance of the strength of family ties for support behavior and show, for example, that a higher quality of the relationship between parents and adult children is positively related to the exchange of support (Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Roschelle, 1997). Although it is difficult to determine the direction of causality between the two, it is likely that a good relationship between parent and child coincides with more contact and support between the generations. (Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Roschelle, 1997). Moreover, the quality of the parent-child relationship can facilitate or inhibit the intergenerational transmission of norms and values, and children might be less willing to adopt the filial obligation preferences of their parents when the relationship with their parents is problematic. We therefore hypothesize that a good relationship quality is positively related with stronger levels of filial obligations (H7a). Furthermore, a good relationship quality heightens the likelihood that parents and children want to stay in contact and provide support to each other and we expect relationship quality to be positively related to the frequency of contact and the provision of support (H7b).

Geographical proximity is found to be of utmost importance for the provision of support since if children and parents live close to each other the costs involved in

providing practical support are low (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). We therefore expect adult children who live close to their parents to provide more support and have more contact (H8a). Strong filial obligations can also lead children to live close to their parents precisely to be able to provide support (Hank, 2007). Living closely together might therefore be associated with higher levels of filial obligations (H8b)

Finally, we included age of the respondent, age of the parent and gender of the parent as control variables in our models.

### 3.3 Immigrants in the Netherlands

The Dutch population consists of around 16.3 million people. Of the non-Western population, the four largest groups are the Turks (351 648), the Surinamese (325 281), the Moroccans (306 219) and the Antilleans (130 722). Together, these four groups make up around 7 per cent of the Dutch population, although due to spatial concentration they make up much larger percentages of the major cities in the Netherlands (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Unlike in the United States, where a considerable proportion of immigrants arrived when already old (Treas & Mazumdar, 2002), in the Netherlands most elderly immigrants arrived at a much younger age. Many of them expected to return to the country of origin when old, but recently it became clear that for many of them this is not a feasible option due to ties with children and grandchildren in the Netherlands and/or lack of facilities such as good hospitals in the country of origin.

One reason this growth of elderly immigrants is important is that the minority aged appear to experience increased vulnerability with age, compared with their Dutch counterparts. For example, older Turkish and Moroccan immigrants are disproportionately more likely than older Dutch persons to be poor, to have poorer health, and to experience more functional limitation, yet they are less likely to rely on institutions for long-term care (Schellingerhout, 2004a,b).

Immigrant groups have different histories of migration to the Netherlands. The Turks and Moroccans started coming to the Netherlands from the 1960's onwards as labor migrants, to fill labor shortages occurring in the Netherlands at that time. They were mostly unskilled male laborers who arrived without their family and who did not speak the Dutch language. Although initially both the Dutch government and the labor migrants themselves envisioned the migration as temporary, it soon became clear many migrants would stay in the Netherlands and the process of family reunification started.

Surinam and the Dutch Antilles were former Dutch colonies and immigrants from these countries to the Netherlands had very diverse backgrounds. Especially the first waves of immigrants were often students or more highly educated people,

who held Dutch citizenship. Many immigrants convinced their families to come to the Netherlands as well. More recently, lower educated immigrants, especially from the Antilles, migrated to the Netherlands in search of better lives. In general, due to the colonial ties with the Netherlands immigrants from these countries speak the Dutch language well and are considered to be more culturally similar to the Dutch than the Turks and Moroccans of whom the vast majority has an Islamic background (Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000).

Although large quantitative studies comparing ethnic minorities on family support are lacking in the Netherlands, small-scale qualitative studies on elderly care and informal support provided by ethnic minority families show that elderly immigrants in the Netherlands originate from societies where family ties are important, not only from an emotional perspective but also for individual survival (Abraham, 1996; van Niekerk, 1991; Yerden, 2000). These studies, however, use small non-representative samples and rely on data from minority groups only, therefore not providing a framework to compare these with the Dutch natives. It is assumed, though, that in the societies from which the immigrants in the Netherlands originate, people depend on their families in times of crisis and strong norms prevail that family members should support each other in such events. Having children is often considered as an insurance for old age by parents, and cultural and religious norms underscore children's duty to assist their parents (Kagitçibasi, 1996; Nauck, 2007).

Turkish and Moroccan societies are traditionally predominantly Islamic, patrilineally organized and gender segregated. Family is important and strong interdependent relations between family members exist that are prescribed by social norms. People from a Surinamese and Antillean background are considered to be more culturally similar to the Dutch due to their former colonial ties to the Netherlands. The 'Caribbean family system', as opposed to the Turkish and Moroccan family system, is often described as matrifocal, with a relative absence of cultural norms promoting marriage and a tolerance for non-marital childbearing. It is not unusual for households to be headed by women with male partners who are not, or only occasionally present.

## **3.4 Data and methods**

### **3.4.1 Sample**

This study is based on data from three related surveys designed to study family relations and to facilitate comparisons between ethnic minority and Dutch families. These data provide a unique opportunity to compare patterns in intergenerational support between different ethnic groups in the Netherlands.

The first dataset is the sample of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS,

2002/2003). The NKPS main sample is a random sample of individuals ( $N = 8155$ ) living in private households in the Netherlands (aged 18-79). Potential respondents were approached either by phone or in person and computer-assisted personal interviews were supplemented with a self-administered questionnaire (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Knijn, Komter, Liefbroer & Mulder, 2005). The NKPS main sample was supplemented with an immigrant sample, drawn from 13 Dutch cities in which half the immigrants from the four largest immigrant groups live. This resulted in additional data on immigrants of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean origin ( $N = 1402$ ).

In cooperation with the NKPS, another survey was conducted. This survey, *Sociale Positie en Voorzieningengebruik Allochtonen* (Social Position and Use of Provisions by Immigrants, SPVA 2002), furthermore includes highly comparable data on 4199 heads of households from the same 13 cities and the same ethnic backgrounds (Groeneveld & Weijers-Martens, 2003). The immigrant respondents in both surveys were approached at home by an interviewer of the same ethnic background. The interview followed a structured, paper and pencil questionnaire that was available in Turkish, Arabic and Dutch.

After a non-response follow-up the NKPS yielded an overall response rate of 45% for the main sample respondents. In general the response rates in the Netherlands are low as compared to the US, but this response rate is comparable to that of other large-scale family surveys in the Netherlands (De Leeuw & De Heer, 2001). The response rate among immigrants is comparable to that of the Dutch, ranging from 41% among the Surinamese to 52% among Turks (Groeneveld & Weijers-Martens, 2003). Combining the NKPS main and immigrant sample (only respondents from the same 13 cities as where the immigrant surveys were conducted were included) and the SPVA sample, we created a dataset of 6 970 respondents. We excluded the respondents for whom neither biological parent was alive ( $N = 1 700$ ). We also excluded the respondents whose parents lived in the country of origin ( $N = 2 339$ ) since, especially where the behavioral component of intergenerational ties is concerned, comparisons including these parent-child dyads are not within the topic of this chapter. To make sure that we would not select respondents on the dependent variable of filial responsibility, we conducted separate analyses (not reported) to see whether respondents whose parents lived abroad differ on this variable from respondents whose parents live in the Netherlands. Our findings show this was not the case. Furthermore, respondents with parents living abroad were almost equally divided over the four immigrant groups.

Finally, we excluded the data on adult children living with their parents ( $N = 65$ ) for various reasons. First, sharing a household with a parent may involve helping of a different quality and quantity of support and care relative to adult children who do not live with their parents. Therefore, co-residers may measure and report help differently from those who do not co-reside (Hogan et al., 1993; Laditka & Laditka,

2001). Second there were only a very small number of respondents who shared a home with their parents. Our final sample consists of 2 833 respondents (420 Turkish, 411 Moroccans, 647 Surinamese, 383 Antilleans, and 972 Dutch). Each respondent was asked questions about one of their parents. In case both parents were still alive, one parent was randomly selected.

### 3.4.2 Measures

Table 1 presents means and standard deviations of both dependent and independent variables used in the analyses, both separately by ethnic group category and totaled across categories. The correlation matrix of the independent variables does not reveal problems of multicollinearity.

#### *Dependent variables*

##### *Normative solidarity*

Filial obligations refer to the expectations of adult children to provide support for their ageing parents. Our scale consists of three items on the importance of intergenerational support. The respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statements that: 'children who live nearby should visit their parents at least once a week', 'children should care for their sick parents', and 'if parents are old, children should provide co-residence for them'. The answers were requested on a five-point Likert scale, from '1' for 'fully disagree' (individualistic) to '5' for 'fully agree' (group oriented) (after recoding). The items are phrased in universal rather than in particular terms in order to measure cultural norms rather than personal norms. The overall reliability of the scale is  $\alpha = .72$ . Among separate ethnic groups this scale also shows good reliability (lowest for Turks  $\alpha = .59$  and highest for Antilleans and Dutch  $\alpha = .73$ ).

##### *Associational solidarity*

Respondents were asked how often they met their parent in person in the last year and how often they had contact with their parent by (e-)mail or phone in the previous year. Response categories ranged from 1 (never) to 7 (daily). For the explanatory analyses, these are recoded into a numeric scale indicating the approximate number of times parents and children had been in touch in the past 12 months (0 - 365).

##### *Functional solidarity*

We use two items that relate to practical help provided to parents in the past three months. The first item indicates whether the respondent provided practical support to his parent, like for example helping with chores in and around the house, lending things or providing transportation, while the second item asks whether the respondent has given counsel or advice to his/her parent. Response categories vary from 1) not at all, 2) once or twice and 3) several times. For the analysis, answers are recoded into 0 (no) and 1 (yes).

*Independent variables*

*Ethnic background.* The ethnic background of the respondents (adult children) is defined according to his/her country of birth and that of their parents. Respondents born abroad or with at least one parent born abroad were assigned to one of the four ethnic minority groups. For each group, a separate dummy variable was created to compare them to the Dutch.

*Gender.* A dichotomous variable indicating if the child was male (0) or female (1).

*Age.* The child's age in years as reported at the time of the interview is included as a continuous variable. Preliminary analyses (not reported) also included age squared to check for potential curvilinear relations between age and dependent variables, but no significant results were found.

*Marital status.* Respondents who are married at the time of the interview are compared with those who have a different marital status (divorced, widowed or never married). The latter are the reference group in the analyses.

*Number of children.* Respondents were asked for the total number of (own or adopted) children they have had in their life. We compare those who have children (1) with those who do not (reference category) (0).

*Education.* The educational level of the respondent is the indicated highest level enrolled in (either with or without a certificate). Among immigrants, the educational enrolment can have been in the country of origin or in the Netherlands. For the regression analyses, the original detailed categories were recoded into the approximate number of years of schooling required for completing the level.

*Income.* Respondents were asked to indicate their own net monthly income (from work or social benefits). This information was combined with the partners' income in order to calculate the total net household income per month. Missing values (19% of total sample) are replaced by the mean of the ethnic group. A separate dummy variable indicating when answers to the income question were missing was included in the analyses to check for differences. No dissimilarity was found between those who did and did not report their income.

*Relationship quality of parent and child.* The parent-child relationship quality was determined based on a 4-point Likert scale from 1) not so good to 4) very good. Missing values (21% of total sample) are replaced by the mean of the ethnic group. A separate dummy variable indicating relationship quality missing was included in the analyses to check for differences. No dissimilarity was found between those who did and did not report the quality of their relation with their parent.

*Geographical proximity.* A dichotomous variable was constructed indicating whether or not the parent lives in the same municipality as the adult child.

Finally, age of the respondent, age of the parent and gender of the parent were added as control variables to the model.

### 3.4.3 Analytical approach

To test our hypothesis concerning levels of filial obligations, three OLS regression models of increasing complexity were estimated. Because of the complex relation among the variables, in addition to the full models including all three groups of variables simultaneously, we also estimated additional partial models in which the groups of independent variables are introduced separately. In the first model, only ethnic background was incorporated. In the second model, structural and demographic variables were entered. To test the hypotheses on the characteristics of the parent-child dyad, in the final model we enter the quality of the relation between parent and child, and proximity.

Next, we estimate three OLS regression models to analyze ethnic differences in the frequency of contact between parent and child. The models follow the same logic as in the previous set of analyses, only now filial obligations are included as an independent variable, to test if higher levels of filial obligations are associated with more frequent contact.

Finally, we turn to support. Since our response variable is dichotomous, we use logistic regression models. Moreover, we analyze both items (*practical support* and *giving counsel or advice*) separately since preliminary analyses indicated that practical help and giving advice show different patterns for different ethnic groups. Moreover, since Sarkisian et. al. (2004a) draw attention to the fact that interactions exist between ethnicity and gender when comparing behavioral support between ethnic groups, we performed preliminary analyses separately by gender. Results indicated that when practical support is considered, ethnic comparisons differ by gender but giving advice does not. Therefore, we present our results on practical support separately for men and women but when turning to advice we present joint results.

## 3.5 Results

The socio-demographic profiles of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

### *Normative solidarity*

Descriptive results (not shown) indicate large differences in adult children's preferences for filial obligation between ethnic groups. The majority of the Turks and Moroccans (strongly) agree with all of the items measuring filial obligations against approximately half of the Surinamese and Antilleans, and a minority of the native Dutch. For example, 84% of the Turkish and 90% of the Moroccan respondents agree with the statement that children should take care of their parents when they are sick, against 66% and 58% of the Surinamese and Antillean respondents and only 40% of the Dutch. 87% of

the Turks and Moroccans feel that children who live close by should visit their parents at least once a week, while only 38% of the Dutch agree with this statement. The Surinamese and Antilleans hold a middle position.

**Table 1.** Description of dependent and independent variables by ethnic group (Mean and SD).

	Range	Turks (n = 420)	Moroccans (n = 410)	Surinamese (n = 647)	Antilleans (n = 383)	Dutch (n = 972)	Total (n = 2.833)
<b>Structural and demographic characteristics</b>							
Gender (1= female)	0/1	.35	.41	.51	.52	.50	.46
Age		31.98 (7.25)	30.73 (7.02)	36.30 (9.06)	34.14 (9.24)	38.15 (10.54)	35.00 (9.46)
Education (years)	6-16	9.89 (3.33)	10.02 (3.55)	11.39 (3.09)	12.17 (3.36)	13.58 (2.71)	11.70 (3.46)
Household income (1000 Euros)	0-6	1.68 (0.87)	1.60 (0.88)	1.83 (1.09)	1.74 (1.08)	2.66 (4.61)	2.01 (2.73)
Married (1=married)	0/1	.78	.67	.32	.19	.40	.46
Having child (ren) (1=child)	0/1	.70	.58	.61	.44	.38	.53
<b>Characteristics of the dyad</b>							
Quality of relationship	1/4	3.46 (0.78)	3.59 (0.63)	3.10 (0.88)	3.15 (1.00)	3.13 (1.02)	3.39 (0.89)
Geographical proximity (1=same municipality)	0/1	.85	.85	.61	.47	.34	.57
<i>Parent's characteristics</i>							
Gender (1=mother)	0/1	.51	.50	.68	.63	.62	.60
Age		59.22 (8.48)	59.10 (8.26)	63.28 (11.20)	62.37 (11.10)	66.81 (11.76)	62.98 (11.00)
<b>Dependent variables</b>							
Filial obligations	1-5	3.81 (0.68)	4.11 (0.65)	3.42 (0.84)	3.25 (0.86)	2.97 (0.75)	3.43 (0.86)
Instrumental help (1=yes)	0/1	.61	.67	.68	.64	.61	.65
Amount of contact	0-365	185 (126)	160 (109)	126 (121)	127 (127)	64 (74)	118 (116)

Source: NKPS and SPVA 2002/2003

To determine if these differences in attitudes between the ethnic groups are statistically significant and to see if these differences hold after we introduce other explanatory variables, the results of several OLS regression models are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Unstandardized coefficients for OLS Regression Analyses of attitudes towards filial obligation (n = 2,833).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Dutch (reference category)			
Turkish	.87(.05)***	.62(.06)***	.50(.05)***
Moroccan	1.15(.05)***	.92(.05)***	.80(.05)***
Surinamese	.48(.04)***	.34(.04)***	.26(.04)***
Antillean	.32(.05)***	.20(.05)***	.14(.05)**
<b>Structural an demographic characteristics</b>			
Female		-.11(.03)**	-.13(.03)***
Age (in years)		-.02(.01)	-.01(.01)
Education (in years)		-.05(.01)***	-.05(.01)***
Married (unmarried)		-.07(.04)	-.07(.04)
Having child(ren) (no child)		.09(.04)*	.05(.04)
Household income (1000 Euros)		.00(.01)	.00(.01)
<b>Characteristics of the dyad</b>			
Quality of relationship			.23(.02)***
Geographical proximity			.14(.04)**
<b>Intercept</b>	2.95(.03)***	4.10(.21)***	3.20(.22)***
R <sup>2</sup>	.22	.26	.31

Note: Variables Filial Obligations and Quality of relationship range is 1 = low 5 = high.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001.

Source: NKPS and SPVA 2002/2003

Results from Model 1 with just a constant and ethnic group status confirm our hypothesis that all immigrant groups are significantly more likely than the Dutch to prefer high levels of filial obligations from adult children to parents (H1). As we expected (H3), the more highly educated were less of the opinion that children have an obligation to care for elderly parents compared to those with lower levels of education. The same is true for women; women agree less with filial responsibility attitudes than do men (H5a). Separate interactions (not shown) indicate that only in the Moroccan case opinions between men and women did not differ. Contrary to our expectations, marital and parental status did not have any effect in the final model (H6a-b). We did find evidence,

though, that higher relationship quality (H7a) and closer proximity (H8b) are positively associated with higher preferences for filial obligations.

**Table 3.** Unstandardized coefficients for OLS Regression Analyses of frequency of contact ( $n = 2.833$ ).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Dutch (reference category)			
Turkish	118.29 (9.76)***	92.79 (10.61)***	53.69 (9.83)***
Moroccan	114.88(11.19)***	89.22(11.77)***	38.65(11.03)***
Surinamese	54.73(8.22)***	37.36 (8.33)***	25.45 (7.54)**
Antillean	60.21(8.93)***	48.47 (8.89)***	41.41 (7.91)***
<b>Structural an demographic characteristics</b>			
Female		21.52(5.17)***	26.26 (4.61)***
Age (in years)		-.76(.52)	-.61 (.46)
Education (in years)		-4.30 (.90)***	-2.26 (.83)**
Married (unmarried)		-5.49 (6.03)	-4.47 (5.48)
Having child(ren) (no child)		19.66(5.59)***	16.53 (4.96)**
Household income (1000 Euros)		-.18(.69)	-.78 (.61)
Age parent		.10 (.42)	.09 (.39)
Gender parent		28.73 (5.4)***	21.26 (4.83)***
<b>Characteristics of the dyad</b>			
Quality of relationship			33.95 (2.59)***
Geographical proximity			46.80(5.17)***
Filial obligations			12.89(2.94)***
<b>Intercept</b>			
$R^2$	.17	.22	.39

Note: Variables Filial Obligations and Quality of relationship range is 1 = low 5 = high.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Source: NKPS and SPVA 2002/2003

### Associational solidarity

As the mean frequency of contact presented in Table 1 indicates, Turkish adult children report the most frequent contact with their parents ( $M = 185$ ) followed by the Moroccans ( $M = 160$ ), the Surinamese and Antilleans ( $M = 126/127$ ) and the Dutch ( $M = 64$ ). Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) *post hoc* test (Fisher, 1966; not shown) indicates that all group means differ significantly ( $p < .05$ ) from each other, except for the Surinamese and the Antillean groups. To see if these differences hold after we

introduce other explanatory variables, the results of several OLS regression models are presented in Table 3.

Results show that all adult children with an immigrant background have significantly more contact with their parents than do Dutch adult children. From the structural perspective, alternative hypotheses were formulated for the effect of socio-economic resources on intergenerational support (H4a and 4b). In the case of contact, a higher level of education leads to less contact. Income does not have any effect in our models. Women report higher levels of contact than do men (H5b) and the frequency of contact is higher with mothers than with fathers. Separate analyses (not shown) indicate this pattern is the same in all ethnic groups alike. Marital status does not affect the frequency of contact, but when adult children have children themselves, this does lead to more contact between them and their parents. In line with our hypotheses, strong levels of filial obligations (H2), a higher relationship quality (H7b) and closer proximity (H8a) are positively associated with the frequency of contact between adult children and parents.

#### *Functional solidarity*

Table 4 shows the ethnic differences in the likelihood of provision of practical support by adult children to parents. The analyses are shown separately by gender. Coefficients appear as odds ratios, with odds ratios greater than 1 indicating positive effects, and odds ratios smaller than 1 indicating negative effects.

Where support is concerned, although women in the Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese group are much more likely to provide practical support to their parents than their Dutch counterparts, this pattern does not show for men. Socio-economic resources (H4a and 4b) do not have an effect except that for men, those with higher levels of education are more likely to provide support. Demographic controls for marital and parental status do not show any effects, neither for men nor women. Again, strong levels of filial obligations (H2), a higher relationship quality (H7b) and closer proximity (H8a) are positively associated with the occurrence of practical support to parents for both men and women.

When we consider another form of support - giving counsel or advice - we see few ethnic differences. Table 5 shows whether ethnic differences in the likelihood of provision of counsel and advice by adult children to parents exist. Patterns for men and women were similar and therefore the combined model is shown.

Table 4. Logistic regression model for providing practical help to parent ( $n = 2,833$ ).

		Women ( $n = 1,479$ )															
		Men ( $n = 1,354$ )			Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			
		B(SE)	Odds ratio	B(SE)	Odds ratio	B(SE)	Odds ratio	B(SE)	Odds ratio	B(SE)	Odds ratio	B(SE)	Odds ratio	B(SE)	Odds ratio		
<b>Ethnicity</b>																	
Dutch (reference category)																	
	Turkish	-.16 (.18)	.85	-.03 (.22)	.97	.03 (.23)	1.03	-.41 (.24)	.67	1.02 (.22)	2.76***	1.27 (.25)	3.56***	1.39 (.26)	3.99***	1.11 (.26)	3.05***
	Moroccan	.41 (.21)	1.50*	.51 (.24)	1.66*	.60 (.24)	1.82*	.13 (.26)	1.14	1.14 (.21)	3.14***	1.41 (.24)	4.08***	1.38 (.25)	3.98***	1.05 (.26)	2.86***
	Surinamese	.15 (.18)	1.16	.29 (.19)	1.33	.30 (.19)	1.35	.05 (.20)	1.05	.84 (.15)	2.31***	.94 (.17)	2.57***	.95 (.17)	2.53***	.78 (.18)	2.19***
	Antillean	.03 (.21)	1.03	.08 (.21)	1.08	.11 (.21)	1.12	-.02 (.22)	.98	.34 (.17)	1.40*	.46 (.19)	1.58*	.40 (.20)	1.49*	.25 (.20)	1.28
<b>Structural and demographic characteristics</b>																	
	Age			-.03 (.05)	.97	-.04 (.05)	.96	-.02 (.05)	.98			-.06 (.04)	.94	-.08 (.04)	.92	-.08 (.04)	.92
	Education(years)			.06 (.02)	1.06**	.06 (.02)	1.06**	.07 (.02)	1.07**			.03 (.02)	1.03	.02 (.02)	1.02	.03 (.02)	1.03
	Married			.05 (.18)	1.05	.06 (.18)	1.06	.08 (.18)	1.08			-.13 (.15)	.88	-.09 (.16)	.91	-.08 (.16)	.92
	Having child(ren)			.07 (.18)	1.07	.08 (.18)	1.08	.01(.18)	1.00			.16 (.15)	1.18	.13 (.15)	1.14	.03 (.15)	1.03
	Household income (1000 Euros)			.01 (.02)	1.01	.01 (.02)	1.01	.01 (.02)	1.01			.07 (.05)	1.07	.07 (.05)	1.07	.06 (.05)	1.07
<b>Parent's characteristics</b>																	
	Mother (father)			.46 (.14)	1.58**	.46 (.14)	1.58**	.43 (.14)	1.54**			.85 (.13)	2.34***	.85 (.13)	2.34***	.89 (.13)	2.44***
	Age			.02 (.01)	1.02	.02 (.01)	1.02	.02 (.01)	1.02			.03 (.01)	1.03**	.03 (.01)	1.03**	.03 (.01)	1.03**
<b>Characteristics of the dyad</b>																	
	Quality of relationship			.37 (.09)	1.45***											.40 (.08)	1.50***
	Geographical proximity			.52 (.11)	1.67***											.55 (.15)	1.74***
	Filial obligations			.26 (.09)	1.29**											.21 (.08)	1.23*
	-2 Log likelihood	1416.8		1403.2		1389.8		1354.0		1659.7		1647.3		1603.2		1560.8	

Note: independent variables Quality of family ties and Filial Obligations range is 1 = low 5 = high. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Table 5.** Logistic regression model for providing counsel or advise to parent (n = 2.833).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B (SE)	Odds ratio						
<b>Ethnicity</b>								
Dutch.(reference. Category)								
Turkish	-.35 (.14)	.70*	.18 (.17)	1.19	.24 (.17)	1.27	-.09 (.18)	.91
Moroccan	-.17 (.14)	.84	.31 (.17)	1.37	.36(.17)	1.43*	-.02(.19)	.98
Surinamese	.10 (.12)	1.10	.37 (.13)	1.45**	.35 (.14)	1.42*	.17 (.14)	1.18
Antillean	.06 (.14)	1.07	.28 (.16)	1.32	.26 (.16)	1.30	.14(.16)	1.15
<b>Structural and demographic characteristics</b>								
Gender			.31 (.10)	1.36**	.30(.10)	1.35**	.30(.10)	1.35**
Age			-.01 (.03)	.99	-.02 (.03)	.98	-.01(.03)	.99
Education (years)			.09 (.02)	1.09***	.09 (.02)	1.09***	.10(.02)	1.10***
Married			-.09 (.12)	.92	-.07 (.12)	.93	-.05 (.12)	.95
Having child(ren)			-.02 (.12)	.98	-.04 (.12)	.97	-.12(.12)	.89
Household income (1000 Euros).			.08 (.04)	1.09	.09 (.04)	1.09*	.09(.04)	1.10*
<b>Parent's characteristics</b>								
Mother (father)					.68 (.10)	1.98***	.69 (.10)	1.99***
Age					.02 (.01)	1.02*	.02 (.01)	1.02*
<b>Characteristics of the dyad</b>								
Quality of relationship							.34 (.06)	1.40***
Geographical proximity							-.12(.16)	.88
Filial obligation							.26 (.06)	1.24**
-2 Log likelihood	2865.0		2809.4		2759.2		2703.0	

Note: independent variables Quality of relationship and Filial Obligation range is 1 = low 4(5) = high.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001.

Source: NKPS and SPVA 2002/2003

Model 1 indicates that only Turks differ from the native Dutch in the likelihood of providing counsel or advice to their parents, and they are less likely to provide such support. The coefficient for the Moroccans – though not significant - is negative as well. In general, more highly educated respondents are more likely to provide this type of support than lower educated respondents (H4b) and women are more likely to provide

counsel and advice than are men (H5b). Mothers are more likely to receive advice than fathers and older parents are more likely to receive counsel or advice from their children. Providing advice is furthermore associated with higher levels of filial obligation (H2) and higher levels of relationship quality (H7b) but not with geographical proximity (H8a). Immigrants are no more likely than the Dutch to provide counsel and advice to their parents once these controls are introduced. We also tested whether the effects of the socio-demographic factors had similar strengths among the immigrant groups and the Dutch by examining the interaction terms separately for each group. The findings gave no indication that the variables operated differently for particular migrant groups or for the Dutch.

### 3.6 Conclusions and discussion

Using data from a representative sample of families especially designed to facilitate comparisons between ethnic minority and Dutch families, this chapter contributes to clarifying how cultural and structural factors affect ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity in the Netherlands. Our empirical analyses were based on a sample of adult children belonging to the Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean or Dutch ethnic group, who had at least one parent living in the Netherlands. These five different ethnic groups were compared on three dimensions of the intergenerational solidarity framework (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). First, normative solidarity defined as the obligations adult children feel towards their parents was examined. Secondly, associational solidarity, measured as the frequency of contact between adult children and parents was investigated, and finally, functional solidarity defined as support provided by adult children to parents was analyzed. After describing differences in patterns of intergenerational solidarity, we explored how cultural and structural characteristics were of influence on these ethnic differences. We used norms of filial obligations as an indicator of cultural differences and aimed to show how ethnic background and cultural norms compare to structural features that could be of influence.

Educational attainment had clear and consistent effects on normative views. The more highly educated were less of the opinion that children have an obligation to care for their elderly parents. This is consistent with previous research that suggests that the more highly educated are more individualistic in their outlook, are more strongly oriented to individual autonomy and less likely to follow conventional norms (Kalmijn, 2006; Inglehart, 1997). This finding suggests that, as the educational level of immigrants rises, their opinions and perceptions might change and perhaps diversify.

However, controlling for educational levels did not eliminate ethnic differences. Turks and Moroccans most strongly adhered to the opinion that children have obligations

towards their aged parents even when models were controlled for structural and demographic background characteristics. This finding suggests that the respondents' views about filial obligations are rooted in the opinions and norms into which they were socialized.

Overall, women agreed less than men with the statements measuring filial obligations. Possibly, women assume that the actual caring work implied in the statements on filial obligations will become their responsibility, not their brother's or husband's, and are therefore more careful in their answers.

Secondly, we analyzed behavior and questioned the importance of preferences regarding filial obligations for behavior. Results showed that all immigrant groups have significantly more contact with their parents than do the Dutch adult children. In general, women report having more contact with their parents and adult children more often have contact with mothers than with fathers; this pattern was the same in all ethnic groups. This result underlines the importance of gender for kin-keeping (Spitze & Logan, 1990), irrespective of ethnic background. Our results also point to the importance of grandchildren in the frequency of contact between adult children and their parents. When adult children have children themselves, they are in contact more often with their parents. Grandchildren act as a tie between parents and grandparents. This might have some implications for future inter-generational ties since an increasing percentage of Dutch adults remain childless (CBS, 2004). Although the number of children immigrants have is decreasing, childlessness remains rare.

In the case of support, the importance of separating men and women when examining ethnic differences in intergenerational support (see also Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004a) became clear. Although women in the Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese group were much more likely to provide practical support to their parents than their female Dutch counterparts, this ethnic pattern did not show in the case of men. The overall finding that immigrant children provide more practical support is due to the fact that immigrant women provide more support, not men. This is an interesting finding, since especially in the Turkish and Moroccan groups women were traditionally expected to care for their parents-in-law, not their own parents. Unfortunately, our data does not permit us to take into consideration support to parents in law, but it might be that immigrant women are supporting both their own parents and their parents-in-law after migration. This double burden was also found for Turkish women in Germany by Lorenz-Meyer and Grotheer (2000).

Socio-economic resources do not seem to have a positive effect on the support provided as was suggested by previous research from the United States (Eggebeen, 1992; Hogan et al., 1993). Only in the case of men, higher educational levels lead to a greater likelihood of providing support. It might be that in an advanced welfare state like the Netherlands, with relatively high levels of social security, socio-economic

resources are of less importance for intergenerational support than in the United States where the state offers much less assistance.

When we consider a qualitatively different form of support, giving counsel or advice, we see few ethnic differences, both for men and women. In general, more highly educated respondents were more likely to provide this type of support than respondents with lower educational levels. It could be that more highly educated respondents feel more entitled to offer advice, especially if their parents are lower educated. This finding suggests that, as the educational level of immigrants rises, giving advice to their parents will become a more common type of support.

Both giving practical support and advice are positively associated with higher levels of filial obligation. The causal relationships between these filial obligation norms and the actual intergenerational ties are difficult to disentangle (Gans & Silverstein, 2006). A better understanding of these causal relationships requires longitudinal data that traces the ways in which filial obligations may change.

When parents and children live in the same municipality, practical support was more likely to occur, but this was not the case for giving advice. This indicates that geographical proximity is important for some forms of support, but not for others. New technological developments, like video conversation, and the drop in prices of long distance calls make it feasible for parents and children to stay in touch over greater distances and offer various forms of support that do not necessarily need close proximity. Moreover, distance in a small country like the Netherlands is of course of a different nature than distance in the United States, where most research on intergenerational solidarity comes from.

An important issue not addressed in this study is whether cultural differences in family ties will remain resilient if people are longer subjected to the culture of the new society (Foner, 1997). Acculturation theories suggest that immigrants adapt more to the host society as they live longer in their new surroundings. However, family values, as part of the private domain, might be less prone to change than more public domains of adaptation like language proficiency. On the other hand, it is known that differential rates of acculturation between first and second generation immigrants can lead to tensions between parents and children, which in turn might affect the quality of the relationship, a factor that was proven to be very important for the provision of support in our study.

# Chapter 4

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**Reciprocity revisited:**

**Give and take in Dutch and immigrant families<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter was co-authored with prof. dr. Aafke Komter. A slightly different version of this paper is forthcoming in the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. Earlier versions of the paper were presented at the *Population Association of America* conference, March 2006, Los Angeles, and the *American Sociological Association* Annual Meeting, August 10-14, 2007, New York.

## 4.1 Introduction

The idea that reciprocity is the basic principle underlying forms of social organization, among which the family, is as old as classical anthropology and sociology. The essence of the principle is that giving prompts receiving, thereby creating forms of ongoing exchange and durable cooperation. Reciprocity has been studied both as a factor affecting family life and as an outcome of family life (e.g. Dwyer & Miller, 1990; Dwyer, Lee & Jankowski, 1994). Only a few studies focus on reciprocity itself by investigating the various forms reciprocal exchanges among kin can take (Hogan et al., 1993; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004a). As yet it is unclear to what extent giving support in families is 'answered' by receiving support or remains one-sided. Who are the main givers within families and who are the principal receivers? Are there any cultural differences in patterns of reciprocity within the family, as the work of Kagitçibasi (1996) suggests? These questions will be addressed in this chapter. Prior to discussing some modern views and findings about reciprocity in families we will pay attention to classical theory on reciprocity, since it contains the building blocks on which all later work on reciprocity is based (Komter, 2005).

## 4.2 Background and hypotheses

### 4.2.1 Classical theory on reciprocity

Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski described in detail how 'the principle of give and take' structured the exchange in archaic society (1950 [1922]). He differentiated gifts – both material and nonmaterial ones – according to the underlying feelings: gifts to close kin, which he called 'pure gifts', are more often given disinterestedly, whereas more or less direct expectations of returns and elements of barter are more characteristic of gifts given to persons farther away in the kinship hierarchy. Also Marcel Mauss (1990 [1923]) argued that social ties are created, sustained and strengthened by means of gift exchange.

Lévi-Strauss (1949) emphasized the structural character of reciprocity and argued that the principle of reciprocity is universal, and not restricted to so-called primitive societies. Sociologist Georg Simmel (1950 [1908]) called gift exchange 'one of the strongest sociological functions': without it society would not come about, and Gouldner (1960) explored the 'norm of reciprocity' as a mechanism to start social relationships. He argued that reciprocal exchange relationships may be very asymmetrical, one party giving much while the other does scarcely reciprocate, and the reverse. In addition to the norm of reciprocity, Gouldner (1973b) distinguished the 'norm of beneficence' (Malinowski's 'pure gift'): the expression of real altruism. This kind of

giving is not a reaction to gifts received from others; examples are gifts to people in need of care or help, for instance children or frail elderly.

The connection between reciprocity and family relationships returns in the work of anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (1972). Sahlins considers giving to near kin and loved ones as mainly disinterested and not based on any definite expectations of returns, and calls it 'generalized reciprocity'. 'Balanced reciprocity', a form of direct and equivalent exchange, is more likely in relationships that are emotionally more distant. 'Negative reciprocity' – the unsociable extreme – is the 'attempt to get something for nothing'. According to Sahlins 'kindred goes with kindness'.

These various insights converge in their emphasis of the specific nature of reciprocity in the context of family relationships. The 'pure' gift or 'generalized exchange' – support given without clear expectations of return and without actual returns of help and care – will be a common pattern within families, in particular when caring for the needs of children or elderly parents is concerned. However, this pattern may not be the only, or even the main reciprocity pattern existing within families; factors like age, partner status, proximity, but also cultural norms and values are likely to affect the type of reciprocity. For instance, when the parents of adult men and women are not completely dependent on their children and still able to offer support themselves, reciprocity with respect to their adult children may be more symmetrical than the 'pure gift' suggests: adult children will not only give to, but also receive from their parents. Whereas the classical literature implies that exchange within the family is mainly characterized by generalized reciprocity – one-sided support provision –, modern views tend to assume ethnic variation in the nature of reciprocity. Western culture is believed to be more 'individualistic' and to put more emphasis on personal choice and voluntary kin relations than do non-Western cultures, where 'collectivistic' values stressing familism and filial obligation would be more salient (Kagitçibasi, 1996). Along these lines some authors have suggested that balanced reciprocal exchange would be less common among ethnic minorities than among members of the majority group; cultural norms of obligation and loyalty are supposed to override the 'self-interest' implied by balanced reciprocity (Katzner, 2000). Sarkisian and Gerstel (2004a), however, found indications of the contrary: black women were more involved in reciprocal support exchanges than white women. Similarly, a Dutch study comparing Surinamese and Antillean poor single mothers with their Dutch counterparts, found balanced reciprocity among the first two groups to be more self-evident than among the Dutch women (Ypeij & Steenbeek, 2001). Existing research evidence concerning reciprocity among families belonging to various ethnic groups seems to be mixed.

#### **4.2.2 Modern views and findings about reciprocity in families**

Exchange patterns appear to change over the life course (Antonucci & Jackson, 1989,

1990). Some researchers find that both very young and very old people receive the most (Hill 1970). In a study on gift giving in the Netherlands – among which giving help and care – young adults were found to be the greatest receivers of help and care whereas people over fifty years of age received the least; young and middle aged people gave more help and care than people over fifty (Komter; 1996). Rossi and Rossi (1990) demonstrated that parental help to children declines over time, but children's help to parents continues at the same level. Other researchers suggest that both giving and receiving decline with age overall (Eggebeen, 1992; Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1992).

Gender is consistently found to be related to both norms of obligation towards elderly parents and to giving concrete assistance (Silverstein, Parrott, & Bengtson, 1995; Dwyer and Coward, 1992; Stein, Wemmerius et al., 1998). In a Dutch study on gift exchange women were not only found to be the greatest givers (of material as well as nonmaterial gifts like help and care) but also the biggest receivers, regardless of who the givers were (Komter, 1996). This is consistent with other evidence showing that women are both giving and receiving more familial help (Brody, 1990; Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Women's role as caregivers has been explained by their centrality in kin-keeping (Roschelle, 1997; Marks & McLanahan, 1993). Daughters are more likely to provide key assistance to their elderly parents than sons (Rossi & Rossi, 1990), and mothers have been found to receive more emotional and other support than fathers (Marks & McLanahan, 1993; Silverstein, Conroy, Wang, Giarrusso, & Bengtson, 2002).

Ethnic differences in cultural norms with respect to reciprocity in intergenerational exchange have been demonstrated in a study by Lee, Peek and Coward (1998). They found that Blacks had higher filial responsibility expectations than Whites, even when socio-demographic, health and support factors were controlled. Research also suggests that Blacks in America have stronger kin networks, emphasize informal support systems more than Whites and maintain higher levels of actual family support (Lee, Peek & Coward, 1998). Similarly, Burr and Mutchler (1999) found that Blacks and Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to agree that each generation should provide co-residence assistance when needed. In a study by Schans and Komter (2006) migrant groups in the Netherlands were found to adhere more to traditional family values than the native Dutch.

Although religion is rarely included in research on reciprocity, it is not far-fetched to assume that religious beliefs have an impact on attitudes toward intergenerational exchange (Tarakeshwar et al., 2003). Partner status of both caregiver and recipient as well as the presence of children have been found to be of influence (Marks & McLanahan, 1993; Hogan et al., 1993). Hogan, Eggebeen and Clogg (1993) demonstrated that having young children was associated with being mainly a receiver of support as well as with being involved in high levels of both giving and receiving. Geographical distance reduces help between generations (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Health conditions and marital

status of parents are important need-related reasons for support in old age (Silverstein, Parrott & Bengtson, 1995; Lawton, Silverstein & Bengtson, 1994).

Sarkisian and Gerstel (2004a), in their study on kin support among American Blacks and Whites, focus directly on specific forms of reciprocal exchange among kin. They distinguished between balanced and generalized forms of exchange, and one-way transfers. Similarly, Hogan et al. (1993) took the structure of intergenerational exchanges of help and care as their main focus. They attempted to explain various patterns of reciprocity, and found intergenerational assistance to be constrained by family structure and the needs and resources of each generation. Those in poverty were more often low exchangers (low on both giving and receiving) and receivers (high on receiving and low on giving) than those with higher incomes. Similarly, other researchers argue that structural positions, in particular socio-economic resources, rather than cultural norms account for ethnic variations in intergenerational exchange (Lee, Netzer & Coward, 1994; Lee & Aytac, 1998; Berry, 2001; Sarkisian et al., 2006).

Previous research on ethnic variation in intergenerational exchange has generated mixed results. Part of the explanation may be that structural explanations of reciprocity have received more attention than cultural ones, and that cultural norms are often not included as predictors of exchange (e.g. Hogan et al., 1993). Moreover, a systematic comparison of the relative impact on reciprocity of structural and cultural factors, and factors associated with the relationship is not yet available. It is our assumption that the nature of reciprocity in families is varied and that this variety is conditional on socio-structural and cultural factors, and factors associated with the relationship. We want to contribute to the literature by putting both classical theory and modern theoretical assumptions about ethnic differences in the nature of reciprocity to test. Our research questions are:

1. To what extent is intergenerational exchange characterized by 'generalized reciprocity', as classical theory suggests?
2. Are there any differences between ethnic groups in the nature of reciprocity?
3. How is the nature of reciprocity affected by socio-structural and cultural factors, and the quality of the relationship between parents and their adult children?

## **4.3 Data and methods**

### **4.3.1 Sample**

The data used for this study are from a recent, large-scale study of family relations: the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Komter, Knijn, Liefbroer & Mulder, 2005). Between 2002 and 2004 computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI) were held with 8,155 men and women aged 18-79, who form a random sample of adults

residing in private households in the Netherlands. Families of migrants formed one of the foci of the NKPS program. Given the relative size of these groups, over-sampling was deemed necessary to arrive at sufficient numbers for purposes of comparison. Therefore, a stratified random sample of members of the four largest migrant groups in the Netherlands was added ( $N = 1,392$ ). Whenever this was possible, members of ethnic minorities were interviewed by an interviewer of the same ethnic background. After a non-response follow-up the response rate in all samples was around 45 per cent which is comparable to that of other large-scale family surveys in the Netherlands, where response rates tend to be lower than elsewhere (De Leeuw & De Heer, 2001). The tendency of the Dutch to be hesitant or unwilling to participate in scientific research has been attributed to their sensitivity to privacy issues and individualistic attitudes (Dykstra et al., 2005). It should be added that the Netherlands are a small country with a relatively large number of universities, which is part of the explanation of the high frequency of requests to participate in research.

In this chapter we will compare three ethnic groups: the native Dutch, the Turks and Moroccans whom we will call 'Mediterraneans', and the Surinamese and Antillean migrants, the 'Caribbeans'. Since the 1960s migrants from former Dutch colonies like Surinam and the Dutch Antilles settled in the Netherlands predominantly for educational purposes. In addition, like many other Western European countries, the Netherlands recruited labor migrants from southern Europe and the Mediterranean (like Turkey and Morocco) to carry out mostly unskilled labor. Nowadays, the Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean population form the larger part of the non-Western population in the Netherlands. They predominantly reside in the major urban areas, where they account for up to 30 per cent of the population. Turkish and Moroccan societies are traditionally predominantly Islamic, patrilineally organized and gender segregated. Family is important and it is assumed that relations between family members are strongly interdependent, and are prescribed by social norms. People from a Surinamese and Antillean background are considered to be more culturally similar to the Dutch due to their former colonial ties to the Netherlands. As opposed to the Turkish and Moroccan family system, the Caribbean family system is often described as matrifocal, with a relative absence of cultural norms promoting marriage and the tolerance for non-marital childbearing.

The majority of the migrants arrived in the Netherlands in the sixties and seventies, when they were in their early twenties. Their children are among the adult respondents included in the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study. For this chapter we created a dataset of respondents who belong to either the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, or the Dutch group; who have at least one living parent who is also living in the Netherlands, but not together with the respondent; whose parents are seventy-five years of age or younger; and for whom there was no missing information on the questions used

to create the dependent variable. These restrictions were necessary for the following reasons. Quite a large proportion of the ethnic minority groups (N = 786) have parents who live in their country of origin so that information about the exchange of support in these cases cannot be compared to reports on support exchange with parents who do live in the Netherlands. We excluded the data on adult children living with their parents for various reasons. First, adult children sharing a household with a parent may involve a different quality and quantity of support and care compared to those who do not live with their parents. Therefore, co-residers may measure and report help differently from those who do not co-reside (Hogan et al., 1993). Second, there were only a small number of respondents who shared a home with their parents (N = 302).

Since the average age of immigrant parents is considerably lower than that of the Dutch respondents, reports about the support exchange with their parents would not be comparable to those of the Dutch adults, who are presumably more frail due to their higher age. The – mainly Dutch – respondents older than 75 years of age (N=1685) were therefore excluded from the research. Finally, each respondent was asked a number of questions about the support exchange with their parents. In case both parents were still alive, one parent was randomly selected. Our final sample consisted of N = 3,520 respondents (241 Mediterraneans, 250 Caribbeans, and 3,029 Dutch). The characteristics of our sample are given in Appendix 1.

As in the overall sample women are slightly overrepresented in our sample, especially in the Caribbean and Dutch group. Family is usually seen as the domain of women, who therefore might feel more inclined to participate as respondents in research on family issues. As far as some main socio-demographic characteristics are concerned, our sample can be considered to be representative of the general immigrant population in Dutch society: Mediterraneans have much lower educational levels than the Dutch, while the Caribbeans hold a middle position. All immigrant groups have significantly lower incomes than the Dutch, and especially the Mediterranean group is characterized by a very high level of religiosity (cf. Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000).

#### **4.3.2 Measures**

##### *Dependent variable*

For the construction of our dependent variable, 'types of reciprocity', we used in total eight questions about the exchange of support, both instrumental and emotional, between adult children and their parents. The perspective of the adult respondent on help exchange with his/her parent is taken as our starting point. A first question about giving practical support concerned helping the parent with chores in and around the house, lending things, transportation, or moving things; a second question measured helping the parent with housework, such as preparing meals, cleaning, fetching groceries, or

doing the laundry. The questions about giving emotional support concerned giving council or good advice to the parent, and having shown interest in the personal life of the parent. Identical questions about receiving support from parents were posed. In order to cover both support given/received on a regular basis and support given/received less frequently, the questions were posed about 'the past three months'. The answering categories were 1 (never), 2 (sometimes), 3 (several times). Unfortunately, it was not possible to control for the need for support of the elderly parents, since information on their health status was not available for the minority groups.

The various types of support are clearly of a different nature, and some forms of support such as showing interest are exchanged much more often than others. Nevertheless, response patterns of the support variables were very similar, and correlations between the different forms of support given and received were all positive and significant, varying between  $r = .13$  ( $p < .01$ ) and  $r = .60$  ( $p < .01$ ). Since our main objective is to investigate the determinants of the types of reciprocity – patterns in the amounts of total support given and received – rather than the determinants of the specific types of support, we decided to combine the different types of support given and received. We constructed the variable 'types of reciprocity' in the following way. First, the answers to the questions about giving support were combined into a scale measuring the total support given to parents; the same was done for the questions about the support received from parents. The alpha-reliability coefficients of both scales were  $\alpha = .68$  and  $\alpha = .62$  respectively (the alpha-reliability of the combination of all giving and receiving items was  $.75$ ). Next, both measures were split into two by defining scores below the median as low, and scores above the median as high (median 'total support given' = 8, median 'total support received' = 7). Finally, the variable 'types of reciprocity' was created by distinguishing the four possible combinations: (1) high exchangers (high on both giving and receiving); (2) receivers (high on receiving and low on giving); (3) givers (high on giving and low on receiving); and (4) low exchangers (low on both giving and receiving).

#### *Independent and control variables*

A dummy variable was created for the three ethnic groups with the native Dutch as reference category. Dummies were also constructed for gender, being religious or not, and proximity, operationalized as 'living in the same place as the parent' (unfortunately, a more sophisticated measure of 'distance' was not available for the migrant sample). Educational level was measured in years of schooling. Household income was measured by a variable consisting of 11 income categories, combining the sources of income of both the respondent and his or her partner, if present. A scale of 'Family solidarity' was constructed by combining 7 statements measuring the respondents' general norms about how supportive one should be towards family, including their own parents. The

answering categories ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Examples are: 'One should always be able to count on family'; 'If one is troubled, family should be there to provide support'; 'Children should look after their sick parents'. The reliability of this scale is  $\alpha = .80$ . Parental age was included, as well as a dummy for gender of the parent. The quality of the relationship was measured by the following question: 'Over all, how would you describe you relation with your father/mother?' Answering categories ranged from 1 (not so well) to 4 (very well).

Age, gender, marital status, and the presence of children were used as control variables. Dummies were created for gender, being married or not, and having children or not.

#### 4.3.3 Analyses

Because our dependent variable is composed of four categorical outcomes, we use multinomial logistic regression analysis to generate maximum likelihood estimates of the effects of gender, ethnicity, socio-structural and cultural variables, and aspects of the relationship between adult children and their parents. The multinomial regression model shows how the probability of being in a particular outcome category (in our case: high exchanger, receiver, giver) versus the likelihood of being in the reference group (in our case: low exchanger) is modified by particular independent and control variables. We compare two models, the first one only including ethnic group membership, the second adding the independent and control variables. This allows us to determine whether ethnicity as such has an impact on reciprocity, and to what extent this impact still holds after controlling for the other variables.

## 4.4 Results

### *Descriptive results*

The descriptive characteristics of the sample variables are presented in Appendix 1. It appears that the Mediterraneans are the youngest of all three groups, and are more often married than the other groups; both the Mediterraneans and the Caribbeans have more often children than the Dutch group. The parents of the Dutch are the oldest of all groups, followed by the Caribbean and the Mediterranean parents. The Mediterraneans have the lowest level of education, followed by the Caribbeans and the Dutch. The Mediterraneans display higher levels of family solidarity than the other two groups, with the Dutch showing the lowest level. Mediterraneans are more often religious (even 98 per cent indicates that they are religious), they report a higher relationship quality, and they more often live in the same place as their parents than the other two groups. As stated previously, our main interest is in the reciprocity patterns that manifest

themselves in the total amounts of help given and received by our respondents, rather than in the specific forms of support given and received. Which ‘types of reciprocity’ can be discerned among our respondents? We found that from all our respondents 36.6 per cent fall into the category of the low exchangers: those who give little and also receive little in return. The next category in terms of magnitude are the receivers: those who receive much while giving little; they consist of 28.2 per cent of the sample. Those who both give and receive much, the high exchangers, form 26.5 per cent of all respondents. The givers, those who give much but receive little in return, are the smallest group, consisting of 8.7 per cent of the respondents. These results generally confirm those of Hogan et al. (1993): the two largest categories in the USA are also the largest in the Netherlands, and have the same ranking.

Table 1 compares the percentages of the various types of support exchange between adult children and their parents for the three ethnic groups, by gender and overall.

The table shows that with the exception of advice, which is more often received than given, all forms of support are more often given than received. Although in general differences between ethnic groups are small, a few patterns are worth mentioning. Overall, the Dutch give somewhat less household help to their parents than the other two ethnic groups, and tend also to receive less in return. The Dutch and the Caribbeans give less practical support to their parents compared to the Mediterraneans, but the Dutch receive more practical support in return compared to the other two groups. The majority of all three groups show interest to their parents but the Dutch tend to receive more interest in return, compared to the other two groups. The Dutch tend to give as well as receive less advice to their parents than the other two groups. Compared to Dutch men, Dutch women give as well as receive more help of all kinds with the exception of practical help, which is more often given by men. Mediterranean women give more household and practical help to their parents and receive more in return, whereas Mediterranean men give their parents more advice but receive less in return than their female counterparts. Caribbean women give and receive more household help than Caribbean men, like in the other two groups. However, like the Dutch women they give less but receive more practical help from their parents than Caribbean men. There are no clear differences between Caribbean women and men with respect to the interest they show to their parents and receive in return. Like among the Mediterraneans Caribbean men give more advice to their parents than women, but receive less in return.

**Table 1.** Response Distribution for Giving and Receiving Household Help, Practical Help, Interest and Advice by Gender and Ethnic Group (N = 3,520)

Types of help	Men (%)			Women (%)			All (%)		
	Mediterr.	Caribbean	Dutch	Mediterr.	Caribbean	Dutch	Mediterr.	Caribbean	Dutch
Household help given									
Not at all	51.6	54.5	65.2	42	48.7	57.8	46.9	50.8	60.6
Once or twice	26.2	16.8	22.4	30.3	32.2	25.7	28.2	26	24.4
Several times	22.1	28.7	12.5	27.7	19.5	16.5	24.9	23.2	14.9
Household help received									
Not at all	63.9	71.3	76.3	58	66.4	67.7	61	68.4	71
Once or twice	22.1	11.9	14.8	29.4	18.8	17.9	25.7	16	16.7
Several times	13.9	16.8	9	12.6	14.8	14.3	13.3	15.6	12.2
Practical help given									
Not at all	44.3	48.5	38.4	42.9	53.7	55.9	43.6	51.6	49.1
Once or twice	34.4	28.7	39.5	31.1	26.8	28.9	32.8	27.6	33
Several times	21.3	22.8	22.1	26.1	19.5	15.2	23.7	20.8	17.9
Practical help received									
Not at all	67.2	67.3	59.6	59.7	61.7	50.8	63.5	64	54.2
Once or twice	23	12.9	26.6	29.4	25.5	29.7	26.1	20.4	28.5
Several times	9.8	19.8	13.8	10.9	12.8	19.4	10.4	15.6	17.3
Interest given									
Not at all	9.8	9.9	9.6	10.1	13.4	5.4	10	12	7
Once or twice	24.6	23.8	30.7	11.8	19.5	21	18.3	21.2	24.8
Several times	65.6	66.3	59.6	78.2	67.1	73.6	71.8	66.8	68.2
Interest received									
Not at all	12.8	14.9	8.7	10.1	14.8	6.9	11.2	14.8	7.6
Once or twice	27.9	21.8	24	17.6	14.1	18.6	22.8	17.2	20.7
Several times	59.8	63.4	67.3	72.3	71.1	74.4	66	68	71.7
Advice given									
Not at all	26.2	21.8	35.3	33.6	30.2	29.4	29.9	26.8	31.7
Once or twice	35.2	41.6	44.6	31.1	24.2	45.7	33.2	31.2	45.3
Several times	38.5	36.6	20.1	35.3	45.6	24.9	36.9	42	23
Advice received									
Not at all	23.8	29.7	29.6	19.3	24.8	24.9	21.6	26.8	26.7
Once or twice	32	32.7	41.7	30.3	25.5	41.2	31.1	28.4	41.4
Several times	44.3	37.6	28.7	50.4	49.7	33.9	47.3	44.8	31.9

*Multivariate results*

Our multivariate models enable us to determine if these differences hold after we introduce our independent and control variables.

**Table 2.** Multinomial logistic regression models of types of reciprocity ( $N = 3,520$ )

Independent Variable	High exchanger		Receiver		Giver	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
<b>Ethnic Group<sup>b</sup></b>						
Mediterranean	1.647**	.977	.969	.888	1.303	1.671
Caribbean	1.387*	1.381	.932	.955	1.051	1.486
<b>Child Characteristics</b>						
Gender (male = 0)		1.784***		1.818***		1.008
Education in years		1.128***		1.100***		1.074*
Household income		.962*		.961*		.952
Family solidarity		1.038**		1.005		1.004
Religious		1.184		1.022		1.109
<b>Parent Characteristics</b>						
Age		1.013		1.005		1.085***
Gender (father = 0)		2.341***		1.123		2.511***
<b>Relational</b>						
Quality relationship		4.254***		2.910***		1.893***
Living in the same place		2.217***		1.080		1.687**
<b>Control variables</b>						
Age		.937***		.934***		.994
Married		.942		.782		1.307
Having children		.760		1.086		.524**
<b>Constant</b>						
-2 Log Likelihood	-387	-6.937	-.256	-3.024	-1.460	-9.789
Model X <sup>2</sup> (df)	55.529	6771				
	17.119**	1128***				
	(6)	(42)				
Nagelkerke's Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.005	.33				

<sup>a</sup>Low Exchangers = reference category

<sup>b</sup>Dutch = reference category

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Model 1 in Table 2 shows that ethnicity significantly affects the likelihood of being a high versus a low exchanger. Both Mediterraneans and Caribbeans are more likely than the Dutch to be involved in an intensive intergenerational exchange. No significant ethnic differences are found with respect to being a receiver or a giver. After entering

the other independent and control variables in Model 2, however, ethnicity loses its impact on the likelihood of being a high exchanger. Apparently, ethnicity in itself is not enough to account for the variations in reciprocity among our respondents. In line with previous research, we found gender to be a particularly strong predictor of both being a high exchanger and being a receiver: women are more likely than men to fall into either of these categories. A higher educational level increases the likelihood of being involved in all three types of reciprocity. Compared to those with less education, adult children with more years of education are not only significantly more likely to have an intensive exchange of support with their parents, but also to receive one-sided support from them, and to give them one-sided support. Interestingly and contrary to previous research findings, income has an effect opposite to education; a higher income significantly decreases the likelihood of being a high exchanger and a receiver. Unlike Hogan et al. (1993) we found that those with lower incomes are more often high exchangers and also more often receivers, relative to the reference category of the low exchangers. Apparently, intergenerational exchange in the Netherlands is not constrained by family resources in the same way as it is in the USA. A possible explanation is the higher level of caring arrangements provided by the Dutch welfare state; those with higher incomes might be more free to outsource their needs for help and care, whereas the less wealthy would be forced by financial constraints to fall back on their family more often.

Family solidarity is significantly affecting the likelihood of being a high exchanger but does not influence the likelihood of belonging to either of the other reciprocity types. Religion has no significant effect on the nature of the reciprocity between adult children and their parents. The older the parents, the more likely they are to receive help from their adult children. Mothers, like their daughters, are more likely to be involved in high exchange. In addition, they more often than fathers receive support from their adult children. Relationship quality positively affects all three reciprocity types but the association is strongest with the high exchangers. When parents and children live in the same place, the likelihood of being involved either in intensive support exchange or in giving one-sided support to their parents is significantly higher than when they live at a greater distance from each other. Younger people are significantly more often involved in intensive reciprocal exchange compared to older people. They are also most often at the receiving end of the reciprocity relationship. No significant differences in the type of reciprocity are found between those who are married or not. Finally, those who have children are less likely to give support to their parents than those without children.

In Table 2 the likelihood of being a high exchanger, a receiver or a giver versus the likelihood of being a low exchanger was depicted. Theoretically, the category receivers is particularly interesting since they are, so to speak, the 'most unlikely category' among adult children. As sociological and anthropological literature suggests, they are supposed to be involved in either one-sided giving or in intensive reciprocal exchange

rather than in the role of one-sided receiving. In order to obtain a clearer insight into the characteristics of the group of receivers we changed the reference category into the high exchangers, and re-estimated the multinomial regression models for the entire sample. In Table 3 the results for the receivers relative to the high exchangers are presented.

**Table 3.** Multinomial Logistic regression models of types of reciprocity ( $N = 3,520$ )

Independent Variable	Receiver	
	Model 1	Model 2
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
<b>Ethnic Group<sup>b</sup></b>		
Mediterranean	.588**	.909
Caribbean	.672*	.692
<b>Child Characteristics</b>		
Gender (male = 0)		1.019
Education in years		.975
Household income		.999
Family solidarity		.968**
Religious		.863
<b>Parent Characteristics</b>		
Age		.992
Gender (father = 0)		.480***
<b>Relational Characteristics</b>		
Quality relationship		.684***
Living in the same place		.487***
<b>Control variables</b>		
Age		.996
Married		.830
Having children		1.430*
<b>Constant</b>	.131	3.913
-2 Log Likelihood	55.53	6771
Model $\chi^2$ (df)	17.12** (6)	1127*** (42)
Nagelkerke's Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.005	.33

<sup>a</sup>High exchangers = reference category

<sup>b</sup>Dutch = reference category

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

What factors condition the likelihood to be a receiver relative to a high exchanger? Like in the previous analysis (Table 2), Mediterraneans and Caribbeans prove to be less likely than the Dutch to be receivers, as can be seen in Model 1 of table 3; however, ethnicity is no longer significant after entering the other independent variables. Different from

our previous analysis where the low exchangers were the reference category, family solidarity and gender of the parent have a significant effect. Those who feel not very strongly committed to their family are more likely to be at the receiving end of family support, relative to the high exchangers; this holds in particular when their parent is a father instead of a mother. With the high exchangers as reference category, being a receiver is also significantly related to having a lower relationship quality and to not living in the same place as the parent. Finally, having children increases the likelihood of being a receiver relative to a high exchanger.

## 4.5 Conclusions and discussion

Families are assumed to act upon shared values and a common core of felt obligations, and to reflect altruism in the way support is exchanged. No wonder that Emile Durkheim regarded the family as the example of mechanical solidarity par excellence. Classical anthropologists (Malinowski, 1922; Sahlins, 1972) assumed that 'generalized exchange' – support given without any well-defined expectations of returns – would be the prototype of support exchange within the family. Modern views such as have been propagated by Kagitçibasi (1996) suggest that family values and filial obligation are more pronounced among non-Western migrants than among native Western-born people, presumably leading to ethnic variation in patterns of reciprocity. In this study we put these theoretical assumptions to an empirical test by exploring patterns of reciprocity among various ethnic groups in the Netherlands.

Contrary to the assumption of classical anthropologists and sociologists, we found that 'generalized reciprocity', giving without receiving much in return, is in fact the most exceptional pattern of all within the family (research question 1). In fact, the reciprocity pattern where a low level of giving is paired with a low level of receiving is the most common pattern – more than one third of all respondents fall into this category –, despite the fact that in several European studies the level of intergenerational solidarity and support has been found to be still substantial (Komter & Vollebergh 2002; Knijn & Komter 2004). This finding is in line with the results of Hogan et al. (1993), who also found this category to be the largest in the USA. The reciprocity pattern of receiving much while giving little is the next most important category: more than one quarter of all are found to be receivers. Apparently, parents give their adult children a lot of support that is not necessarily immediately reciprocated. This was also the second largest category in the study by Hogan and his colleagues. A slightly smaller group of adult children are involved in an intensive mutual exchange of support with their parents: the high exchangers. As we have seen, the givers, consisting of less than one tenth of all respondents, are the smallest category. 'Generalized reciprocity' is definitely

not the prototype of family support exchange.

Contrary to what modern theory on cultural differences in the nature of reciprocity suggests, our data show that the similarities in intergenerational exchange patterns between ethnic groups are greater than the differences (research question 2). This finding is important in view of the persistent tendency in Western European countries to exaggerate differences between ethnic minorities and the original population, or to think in stereotyped ways about them. Although we found some differences between ethnic groups in patterns of support exchange, these are predominantly attributable to the structural, cultural and relational variables we included in our analysis. Gender, both of the respondents and of their parents, stands out as one of the strongest predictors of the type of reciprocity, regardless of ethnic group membership. Ethnic group membership does affect reciprocity type in the sense that the Dutch are less often found among the high exchangers, but the effect disappears when specific characteristics of the adult children, their parents, and their relationship are taken into account. This finding supports our previous research results, which showed that although ethnic group status may have an impact on norms and values, it does not always affect the actual exchange of support (Schans & Komter, 2006). The migration experience and acculturation process may have reduced the intensity of habitual patterns of intergenerational support and feelings of family solidarity, and have created more similarity between migrants and the native Dutch.

How is reciprocity affected by socio-structural and cultural factors, and relational characteristics (research question 3)? Low exchangers, the largest category, tend to be lower educated and male; they are of a higher than average age and have a higher than average income; they tend not to feel very committed to their family, they often have a male parent with whom they do not have a particularly good relationship and tend not to live in the same place as their parent. Receivers of support are mostly young and female; they tend to have a higher level of education, a lower income, and a good relationship with their parent. High exchangers are generally young, female, highly educated, and have a less than average income; they feel highly committed to their family and have a female parent with whom they have a very good relationship. Givers are mostly found among the more highly educated and older respondents who don't have children themselves, who have an elderly female parent who lives in the same place, and with whom they have a good relationship.

Some limitations of this study should be mentioned. First, our focus was on the amounts of total support given and received, and not on other potentially interesting dimensions of reciprocity such as the time stretch between giving and receiving, or the potentially different meanings of what has to be given or received in the various ethnic groups. 'Delayed reciprocity' is assumed to be a general characteristic of support exchange between parents and children: as a child you receive your parents' care and

help, which is later returned when the parents are needy themselves. Our research does not provide information about the time stretch between giving and receiving between adult children and their parents. Similarly, possible differences in cultural norms concerning the desirability of certain types of exchange were not investigated in our research. Both the 'time' dimension and cultural differences in family-related norms about support exchange constitute interesting areas for future research. Second, we were not able to include financial help in the construction of our dependent variable because questions on financial support were phrased differently for the Dutch and the minority groups. Third, we did not include childcare because it is a one-sided form of help (only given by parents to their adult children). We felt that the distribution of giving and receiving between parents and adult children might become artificially skewed as a consequence. It can also be argued, however, that parents who do provide childcare to their adult children receive more practical and emotional help in return. The question whether adults with children reciprocate the help with childcare they receive from their parents by giving them comparatively more practical and emotional help deserves attention in future research. Finally, measuring the actual support exchange between parents and their adult children is not necessarily a proper reflection of their real needs. For instance, support can be received but not asked for and not needed; conversely, support that is needed will not always be actually provided. Due to data limitations we were not able to include variables indicating need such as the health situation of the parent. The same applies to education and partner status of the parent.

Nevertheless, this study allows us to draw some conclusions about the nature of reciprocity in intergenerational exchange. A first conclusion is that, since various types of reciprocity are found to exist in the relationship between adult children and their parents, it does no longer make sense to talk about reciprocity as such. Both a high and a low level of reciprocation can occur in response to, respectively, giving much and giving little support. In addition, there are patterns of one-sided giving and of one-sided receiving. A second conclusion is that reciprocity is not predominantly a socio-structural characteristic as the family literature suggests, but is influenced by cultural and relational factors as well. We found cultural factors to significantly affect the type of reciprocity. The more strongly people adhere to norms of family solidarity; the more likely they are to be involved in intensive reciprocal exchange with their parents. Gouldner's (1960) idea that reciprocity has normative connotations has been proven true. Finally, it can be concluded that different types of reciprocity are associated with distinctive patterns of background factors. Young people are more often receivers, whereas people with aged parents are more often givers. High exchangers are more highly educated than low exchangers, and are more often female. Low exchangers are more likely to be male, and to have a higher income. Family solidarity has a positive effect on the likelihood of being a high exchanger, and is negatively associated with being a low exchanger. Having a

good relationship with one's parents positively affects all varieties of reciprocity except being a low exchanger, which is more often associated with a bad relationship.

All human relationships, whether inside or outside the family, are based on the varieties of reciprocity researched and discussed in this chapter. Inside the family, it is likely that the pattern of reciprocity will vary according to the specific nature of the family relationship involved. Among siblings, for instance, low exchange will be a more common pattern than among adult children and their parents, whereas between parents and their small children a pattern of one-sided giving will be more prevalent. Couple relationships constitute another interesting domain for research on reciprocity. One might wonder, for instance, to what extent marital power is influenced by patterns of reciprocity between spouses (Komter, 1989).

Among friends high exchange will be the most common type, whereas among business partners sponsoring and bribery represent yet different forms of reciprocity. In specific types of social relationship specific types of reciprocity will prevail. Even within the context of the family it will be clear that there is not one type of reciprocity. Within a particular relationship, in our case adult children and their parents, reciprocity can take various forms as our research has demonstrated. Whereas our study focused on reciprocity patterns between generations, future research could investigate whether different reciprocity types exist within different types of family relationships.

# Chapter 5

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**Independent or interdependent intergenerational ties:**

**A comparative qualitative approach<sup>1</sup>**

## 5.1 Introduction

Immigrants live out much of their lives in the context of families (Foner, 1997). Various research has looked at how family networks facilitate migration itself, and several studies have addressed the role of family ties in helping immigrants get jobs in the host country. Kibria (1993), for example, argues in her study of Vietnamese families in Philadelphia that the Vietnamese ideology of family collectivism promoted cooperative kin-based economic practices that helped families cope and survive in the immigrant setting. Other studies have shown that the absence of immigrants' close kin in a new setting creates the need to improvise new arrangements, a reason why 'fictive kin' –non-family members considered as kin- are common in (recent) immigrant groups. However, although family assistance is supposed to facilitate immigrant survival, dependence on kin can also lead to conflict, for example because of dissatisfaction with the amount of help that was received (Mui, 1998).

In general, the family is seen as a place where there is a dynamic interplay between structure, culture and agency, where family roles are negotiated in the context of external social and economic forces as well as immigrants' cultural frameworks from the country of origin. In addition, immigrants are inevitably influenced by dominant cultural beliefs and values concerning family ties that are disseminated by the mass media, schools and other institutions in the host country. Some family members are more enthusiastic about these new norms and values than others. Typically, women are more eager than men to endorse values that enhance women's position whereas young people generally support new norms that give them greater freedom which their parents may resist (Foner, 1997). Indeed, parents may modify their demands in fear of alienating their children. Alternatively, serious conflicts may develop when young people (or women), motivated by changed expectations and increased economic opportunities are more assertive in challenging parental (marital) authority (see; Min, 1998).

Immigrants are not passive individuals who are acted upon by external forces. They play an active role in reconstructing and redefining family life. Different family members have different interests and try to reconstruct family patterns in ways that improve their position within the family. Kibria (1993) observes in this context that immigrants walk a delicate tightrope challenging certain aspects of traditional family systems while retaining others. This mix of new and old was found by Foner (1994) in her research on Jamaican family life in New York. As in Jamaica, the household was primarily women's domain and illegitimacy or common-law practices were still widely accepted. Yet Jamaican women in New York were less tolerant of men's outside sexual exploits and more likely to demand that men helped out and spend time at home. These changes did not only occur due to women's greater financial independence in New York but also they were also influenced by dominant American values extolling the ideal of marital fidelity and 'family togetherness'.

## 5.2 Intergenerational family ties

Recently, attention has been directed towards the position of elderly immigrants within the family (Treas & Mazumdar, 2002; Arjouch, 2005). Studies on elderly immigrants show some mixed outcomes. Among certain groups, older people have suffered a decline in status in the United States because, among other things, they no longer controlled valued resources such as land (Chan, 1994; Oxfeld, 1993). On the other hand, access to government welfare programs has allowed many elderly to become more independent of their children – economically and residentially – than they would have been in their countries of origin. Pyong Gap Min (1998) explains that for example Korean elderly welcome such changes and are pleased to not have to ask their children for money or to be involved in frequent conflicts that come with living with sons and daughters-in-law. Treas and Mazumdar (2002), however, found that feelings of isolation and dissatisfaction with family life were common among the elderly immigrants they interviewed.

Children of immigrants on the other hand, often struggle with their need to uphold cultural ideals of filial responsibilities while being faced with circumstances that prevent them from realizing these obligations, such as participation of women in the labor market and housing not being facilitated for multi-generational households. Research evidence showed that adult children experienced stress about anticipating taking care of their parents when they became old and dependent and did not consider institutionalized elderly care an option (Groger & Mayberry, 2001).

Most studies in this field, however, focus on only one immigrant group and a comparative perspective is missing. At the same time, possible differences between immigrant and native elderly are assumed but not empirically studied, while similarities between them, due to for example comparable positions within the life course, are ignored. Moreover, most studies focus only on one age group, showing the perspective of either elderly parents or of adult children. The purposes of this chapter are (1) to examine the attitudes and beliefs about intergenerational relations held by two immigrant groups and the native Dutch, (2) to describe the dynamics of actual support between generations within these groups, and (3) to investigate how people define their expectations about elderly care. We take into account the perspectives of elderly, middle and younger generations and specifically look at the ways they interpret, redefine and negotiate intergenerational relations. The findings reported in this chapter are based on an in-depth qualitative study among Creole-Surinamese, Turkish and Dutch respondents designed to describe various aspects of intergenerational solidarity and differences therein between ethnic groups and generations.

It can be assumed that many first generation immigrants in the Netherlands grew up in kinship-oriented societies, where intergenerational interdependence was a

prerequisite for a family's material well-being. In such societies, like Turkey and Surinam, children contributed to the family well-being both while young (as by working in the fields and contributing to the family economy), and when adult by providing old-age support and financial security for their parents. Kagitçibasi (1996) refers to this as the family model of total interdependence.

In contrast, Dutch families are characterized by Kagitçibasi as representing the family model of independence. Here, intergenerational independence is valued, and child rearing is oriented toward engendering self-reliance and autonomy in the child. Individuation-separation is considered a requisite for healthy human development in such a context where objective conditions of social welfare and affluence render family interdependence unnecessary, if not dysfunctional. Old people have their own income, insurance benefits, and social networks independent from their children.

There is a general modernization assumption of a shift from the former model of family interdependence to the latter model of family independence with socio-economic development. However, recent evidence is questioning this assumption in showing continuities in closely-knit interaction patterns despite increased urbanization and industrialization in collectivistic cultures (Kagitçibasi, 1990, 1996). What appears to happen is that material interdependencies weaken with increased affluence and urban life styles, but emotional (psychological) interdependencies continue, since they are not incompatible with changing lifestyles.

### 5.3 Data

Forty randomly selected Surinamese, Dutch and Turkish respondents who already participated in the quantitative survey of the NKPS were interviewed in-depth about specifically intergenerational ties, practices and expectations. A Dutch, Turkish and Surinamese interviewer recruited and interviewed the respondents in the respective ethnic groups. Interviews in the Turkish group were held either in Dutch or Turkish, depending on the respondents' preference. Although language was not a concern in the Surinamese case, we chose an interviewer from the same ethnic background as well so that all interviewers were able to interpret interviews in light of their knowledge of the culture. The informal interviews, lasting 1-2 hours, followed a guideline of semi-structured questions. Corresponding to the research question, topics included the (comparative) importance of family, filial obligations and intergenerational support. Interviews took place in the home of either the informant or, in a few cases, a restaurant. The interviews were taped with the informants' permission and then transcribed into Dutch by the interviewers themselves. No real names are used throughout this chapter in order to protect informants' privacy.

### *Respondents' characteristics*

Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 75. Females make up 68 per cent of the group. Thirteen informants have a Turkish background, 11 a Surinamese, and 16 are Dutch natives. Of the immigrant groups, 35 per cent belongs to the second generation. In the Turkish group, the majority of the respondents is married and has children. Although most people in the Surinamese group have children, few are married. Among the Dutch, quite some respondents are single, but only one of these singles has a child.

### *Analyses*

The first author compiled interview summaries covering demographic characteristics and reviewed the interviews for general content. Tentative categories related to the results from the quantitative analyses in this study were then developed and the categories were restudied. Themes within these categories were established from the data based on either the frequency with which they were mentioned by participants or their impact on participants.

## **5.4 Results**

### *Attitudes and beliefs on intergenerational relations*

Quantitative analyses in previous chapters showed that both Turkish and Surinamese respondents were significantly more likely than the Dutch to agree with statements measuring attitudes towards filial obligations. Adding controls for gender, age, education, marital status, parental status and income did not eliminate the ethnic differences in these preferences, although the effect of ethnicity is slightly reduced (see chapter 2 and 3). This result seems to confirm the widespread idea that immigrants feel more responsible for their families than do native Dutch. Our qualitative data shows that this idea prevails also within immigrant communities. With few exceptions, our immigrant informants needed little time to point out the superior family relationships in their own culture compared to those in the Dutch culture. This was especially true in the Turkish group. Generalizations between the Turkish family and the Dutch family were easily made. The Turkish family was described as closer, with stronger bonds between its members than the Dutch family. Many respondents referred to the larger willingness of Turks to help out family members in need and several pointed out 'they would never kick their children out of the house when they turn 18' or 'put their parents in an elderly home like the Dutch do'. Interestingly, having actual experience or even contact with Dutch families did not appear to be a necessary prerequisite for such judgments since most respondents mentioned they had few Dutch acquaintances and got their information mainly through the television and from hearsay.

The Surinamese in general were more cautious in making such generalizations. Although many of the informants believed that Surinamese families were warmer and closer than Dutch families, some stated that this was changing under the influence of processes of individualization both in the Netherlands as well as in Surinam. At the same time, several informants gave examples of Dutch families in which they knew family ties were strong. Especially the single mothers in the Surinamese group expressed the view that Dutch fathers were much more involved with the lives of their children than were Surinamese fathers. The involvement of Dutch fathers with their children was seen as very positive.

The Dutch informants themselves were very hesitant to speak about the Dutch family or the Dutch family culture in general terms and claimed that all families are different, and whether ties are strong or not depends on the particular family. Nevertheless, some commented that they thought Dutch families to be quite individualized and that they expected family ties in immigrant families to be stronger. At the same time, they mostly assured interviewers that ties in their own family were also strong and that they felt they could always count on their own family.

A few Turkish informants however, were critical of the rosy picture that is often painted about Turkish families. According to them, strong family ties come at a price; they are expected to show conformity to the ideals and wishes of the family, leaving little room for individual choice. Ayse, a 32 year old Turkish woman and mother of a son who is now married with a Dutch husband says:

*'Family ties are only strong if you have the same ideas. If you hold a different opinion from your family, family ties turn out to be not as strong as you imagined. My mother always told me to marry a Turkish man. Well, I married a Dutch one and I noticed relations in my family became very strained. My mother and my brother told me they didn't want to have contact with me anymore; didn't want to see me anymore. No matter what I said, what arguments I brought forward, this was unacceptable to them. Not for my sister by the way, she always supported me. Oh well, life goes on. In Turkish families, you always remain the child. You always have to do as your parents tell you, even when you are 30 or 40 years old! If they tell you to go right and you turn left, then you are wrong. They cannot try to objectively look which way is better for you.'*

Various studies have brought forward the idea that in more collectivistic cultures, intergenerational relations are based on feelings of obligation whereas in individualized cultures like the Netherlands intergenerational relations are voluntary based. An analysis of our qualitative data shows this dichotomy does not capture the complexity of intergenerational ties, neither in Dutch nor in immigrant families. Various Dutch informants mentioned taking care of an elderly parent out of some form of obligation.

Petra, a middle-aged woman with three children of her own explained how she takes care of her 84-year old stepmother now that the latter's health is becoming problematic:

*'I go there almost every day now, to make lunch, or do some shopping for her. It's quite a heavy burden for me, especially since I've never gotten along well with my stepmother. She doesn't even really seem to appreciate what I am doing, but I feel I should support her. If I won't do it, who will?'*

At the same time, a Turkish female respondent explained that she does not have a strong relationship with her father, who has returned to Turkey a couple of years ago. According to her, her father would like her to come visit more often, or to call him occasionally but she says:

*'He has never supported me or anything I did. When I was a child, I rarely saw him. Now, when I take my children to see him, he only complains about their behavior or their clothes. I don't have a desire for much contact'.*

In general, Turkish respondents might uphold strong norms of filial obligations where Dutch respondents do agree less strongly with general norms on this topic but individual circumstances influence the actual intergenerational behaviors in both groups.

#### *Dynamics of intergenerational support*

Many elderly parents support their adult children by baby sitting for them and taking care of their grandchildren in all groups alike, although Dutch parents occasionally indicated that they did not think this 'service' should be taken for granted. Immigrant children, though, provide different types of help than do Dutch children. For example, Turkish elderly more often receive assistance from their adult children related to practical issues like making or accompanying them to doctor's appointments, dealing with formal institutions and administrative matters. The limited language proficiency many Turkish elderly have causes this need for help in these areas. Although in general, Turkish adult children claimed to be very willing to offer this help, some parents found it difficult to be dependent on their children this way and the (un)willingness of children to help led to tensions in their relationship. For example, Ali, a 43 - year old Turkish married man who migrated to the Netherlands in 1980 and has three daughters, says:

*'Of course I am glad if they help me. If they don't want to help me, like if they say they have exams, then I feel like, you could briefly make that call, or translate that note, couldn't you? . It takes only a short amount of time, so if they don't want to help me, I do get upset with them, just because it only would take a minute! (...) Moreover, they*

*never voluntarily offer their help. We always have to ask them. (...) What also makes me angry is that they don't show any initiative themselves, they don't try to consider my situation. For example, the other day my daughter made an appointment for me with the doctor for nine o'clock in the morning, even though I was working the night shift that week! I can't go to the doctor that early in that case now, can I? I wonder why my daughter cannot figure out by herself that appointment is too early. I got angry at her and told her to make another appointment, but she told me the assistant gave her that time-slot since no other was available on that day.'*

A limited fluency in Dutch makes parents dependent on their children and this changes the hierarchical power relations in Turkish families. Parents have to rely on their children to be able to make an appointment and cannot influence the process themselves. Moreover, the lack of skills in Dutch language that the older generation might experience is in some cases complemented with a low proficiency in Turkish for the younger generation. This lack of proficiency in the mother tongue can be a source of frustration to parents, not only because of the practical implications, but also since they interpret it as a sign that their children become 'Dutchified' and estranged from Turkish culture, and eventually from their family.

In Dutch and Surinamese families, parents provide much practical support to their adult children. Taking care of small children was already mentioned in this respect, but also helping out with practical jobs around the house, help with household chores and sometimes financial help are mentioned. In return, adult children offer companionship and emotional support and to a lesser extent practical support, like taking care of the garden or installing technical equipment.

A Dutch 61-year old married woman, mother of three adult children, and grandmother of six says:

*'We really see our children a lot, especially my oldest son and his wife. We share a hobby (long-distance-running) and practice together. Last year, we even went on a holiday all together and shared one house, well that must mean something! Our daughter lives close and drops by regularly. My other son is now on a holiday, so we take care of his garden and water the plants. My husband and I are retired, so we actually do quite a lot of hand on jobs for our children. Last year, my son was rebuilding his house, and then we went to help six weekends in a row. They ask us for a lot, but we enjoy doing it. For example, we will baby-sit our new grandson once a week from July onwards. Our other grandchildren just recently stayed with us for two or three nights'.*

When asked if her children support her and her husband as well, she says:

*'Not so much, cause they need much more help than we do! (laughing). Well (...) recently (...) they helped to sort something out with the computer (...) but other than that (...). You see, they are very busy of course, their careers, the children (...) and we don't need that much help'.*

This pattern, where the flow of support is directed from parents to adult children, is especially common when parents are in good health and adult children are busy with both their career and their own young children

In the Surinamese group, co-residence between parents and adult children is quite common. It is often not the adult child who offers co-residence to an elderly parent, though -the way it was phrased in the statement concerning filial obligations in our quantitative survey - but adult children living in or moving back in with their parents (the 'boomerang generation' mentioned in the introduction). Due to the more limited resources in many Surinamese families compared to the Dutch, this type of support is mentioned more frequently in this group. Shania, a 26-year old Surinamese woman born in the Netherlands, moved back in with her mother with her small daughter after breaking up with her boyfriend, the father of the child. Her mother takes care of the girl while she is at work. Her 30-year old brother is also living in with his mother. She realizes her mother is a very important source of support for her but she emphasizes that she also reciprocates this support:

*'Even though you are a grandmother, you have your own life as well. And I do want to reward her now and then. For example, if the TV is broken, I'll work really hard for a while and buy her a new one. Or if she wants to go to Surinam, I'll work my ass off for three months so I can buy her a ticket. Yes, you know, if I wouldn't have her, I would be in big trouble!'*

Turkish parents in our sample put much emphasis on their children doing well in school. Although they are often not able to provide actual help with the schoolwork due to language difficulties, they try to provide an environment in which the children can study, for example by excusing their daughters from doing household chores. Various parents also mention giving moral guidance to their children as a form of practical support. One Turkish father gives the following example concerning his daughters:

*'What I do expect is respect. As parents, we make sure they dress properly. I know it's hard for children; they grow up between two cultures. Before, I wanted them to wear a headscarf, but my daughters refused to go to school like that, claimed they couldn't*

*meet their friends like that (...). But I do interfere with what they wear. I don't want anyone to say my daughters are not dressed properly. I want them to look decent. If people would gossip about them that would kill me'.*

For our Dutch informants, in addition to practical support, emotional support was often mentioned as an important aspect of intergenerational ties. Frequent telephone calls, sharing problems or emotions, discussing future plans were an important aspect of the parent-child relationship. Dutch informants also often mentioned both their fathers and mothers as sources and recipients of emotional support; within the immigrant groups mostly emotional support from and towards mothers was mentioned whereas relations with fathers were described as more distant. While in Surinamese families the father was often absent, in some Turkish families the migration experience itself, through which families sometimes were separated for extended periods of time, contributed to the distant relation as well.

These qualitative results provide further insight into an at first sight straightforward comparison of the amount of practical help exchanged between generations from our quantitative results (see chapter 3 and 4). The additional in-depth interviews show that not only the types of help exchanged, but also the feelings that accompany the support exchange differ. For example, Turkish parents indicate more often a felt dependence on their children due to language difficulties. Such dependence might be especially difficult for people originating from cultures where elderly people are usually the more powerful ones in a family.

#### *Expectations about elderly care*

Results from previous chapters (2 and 3) indicated that Surinamese and especially Turkish respondents were much more likely to agree that 'if parents are old, children should provide co-residence for them' than were the Dutch. The topic of living in with children in old age came up frequently in the qualitative interviews as well, although in most cases the discussion about providing care for ageing parents was still speculative since no actual care was yet needed.

The preference of most interviewed parents, was, regardless of ethnicity, was to live out their retirement as independently and autonomously as possible, with a focus on participating in the family life of their children and grandchildren. If assisted living would be required, most would prefer to be supported by their family but only few would like to live in with their children. Dutch parents in general were more willing to live in an elderly home than were immigrant parents, but Dutch children were almost as reluctant to see their parents move into such an institution as were immigrant children.

The most preferred pattern of informal care would be daily visits, but parents realize

this is only possible if they live in close proximity to their children. One Dutch mother was thinking about moving closer to her daughter in anticipation of this required care. On the other hand, a Turkish father who expected daily visits and care but who only saw his children once every couple of weeks, rationalized this behavior by explaining their children's job demands, their nuclear family commitments and the long commute to their houses.

In general, older respondents tended to temper their ideals of filial responsibility with their observed or experienced realities of the demands of support and care giving. In contrast, it were the middle aged and younger respondents who were the farthest removed from actually having to give care that were the most vehement in their insistence on strict norms of filial obligations. Respondents in all ethnic groups considered nursing home placement as undesirable but varied in their ability to consider it acceptable depending on the circumstances. Leyla, a 34-year old married woman with two small children, discussed the future once with her siblings at their parents' house (all living in the Netherlands):

*'One of my sisters said that nowadays in the Netherlands there are elderly homes that cater specifically to Muslim elderly. My sister said it would be nice for my parents to live there when they get old, to be among people of their own age and religious background. My mother found that very difficult, she was quite hurt by this and even cried. She said: 'Are you already thinking of sending me there?'(...) I think in the end, one of us will take care of them. Probably they would stay with me; my brother couldn't do it and they don't like my sister's husband (laughing). However, my mother took care of her own mother and knows how hard that can be. If therefore she would decide to go to an elderly home, I would support her in that decision'.*

On the other hand, a 46-year old married Turkish man with three adolescent children takes a different view:

*'My parents will never go to an elderly home. Dutch people do that though! They put their parents in such a place (...) Actually, nowadays you also sometimes hear that Turkish people have to go to an elderly home. Terrible, isn't it? Children don't take care of their parents anymore! That is not the way it is supposed to be in our culture; our parents gave life to us and we should be grateful for that and we are supposed to take care of hem lovingly!'*

Interestingly, although Dutch survey respondents were rarely of the opinion that elderly parents should be able to live with their adult children in old age, many of our informants claimed in the qualitative part of our study that, although they did not agree with such

a statement in general, they would provide such co-residence for their own parents if needed. Adult children held mostly negative opinions on institutionalized elderly care and some adult children claimed 'they would never send their parents to such a place', much in line with the comments concerning such institutions some Turkish children provided.

Moreover, although most Turkish respondents agreed with the statement that 'if parents are old, children should provide co-residence for them', our qualitative data show that they do have some concerns about the practicality of it.

Hakan, a 26-year old single Turkish man born in the Netherlands who is currently living with his mother puts it this way:

*'Of course, it would be best for a mother to live with her son, but these days, you have to take the feelings of the son's partner into consideration as well. To what extent will she be willing to accept that a son wants to support his mother in that way?'*

Social scientists have long explored the tension between the cultural ideal of what should be and the constraints that limit actual behavior to what can be (Grogger & Mayberry, 2001). This tension is often recognized, especially in times of rapid social change as exemplary for the experience of immigrants. In general, informants, both children and parents, seem to have ambivalent feelings about the future and the intergenerational care that might be needed. Especially in the Turkish group, cultural ideals about elderly care are important, yet respondents do see some possible problems if such ideals would need to be put into practice<sup>3</sup>. In the Surinamese group, quite some elderly parents expressed the wish to return to Surinam, to enjoy their old days in the sun and comfort of their home country. Yet here as well, practical considerations interfered with these images. The better health care in the Netherlands, as well as the fact that many Surinamese elderly had children and grandchildren in the Netherlands, made returning an unlikely option in real life. Both Surinamese elderly parents and adult children held somewhat more positive opinions about elderly homes. This might be explained by the fact that a relatively large proportion of Surinamese (women) have experience with working in such institutions and might have a more realistic view.

## 5.5 Conclusions and discussion

As Kagitçibasi (1996) has pointed out, the traditional dichotomy between family models of interdependence and independence is not adequate anymore now that most Western

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<sup>3</sup> This contradiction is described in much more detail by Yerden (2000) who interviewed Turkish parents in need of care and their children.

societies are confronted with a large influx of immigrants from more collectivistic cultures. Kagitçibasi therefore offered a third option, the family model of emotional interdependence, to describe family relations of immigrant families in individualized societies. Immigrants originating from kinship-centered societies might experience a decline in the necessity of family support when migrating to an advanced welfare state, while parents and children in such welfare states might not depend on each other anymore for physical survival but do forge strong emotional bonds.

Our research shows that this third model might be applicable to some native Dutch families as well. To categorize immigrant families as interdependent and Dutch families as independent oversimplifies reality. Although quantitative results on attitudes towards family responsibility and filial obligation do seem to support such a distinction, our qualitative results show a more diverse picture. The strong normative emphasis on the importance of family in the Turkish group can prevent individual members from following their own path, or can lead to a breakdown of family ties in case of pursuing one's own path. The limited importance of family that the quantitative results show for Dutch respondents does indicate a family culture of separateness and independence, but qualitative results show that although the Dutch seem reluctant to agree with statements phrased as general norms, they do often feel very close to and responsible for their own family. At the same time, although parents and children might not be financially dependent on each other in a welfare state such as the Netherlands, support between parents and children is not just based on emotional interdependencies. Practical support between parents and children is often high, although the direction of the support differs by age and ethnic group. Whereas in Dutch families, especially support from middle-aged parents to adult children is high, in Turkish families middle-aged parents often have to look to their children for various types of practical support. In the Surinamese group, especially mothers benefit from their children's support – fathers receive less support. Mothers however are the main providers of support as well in this group.

Moreover, the findings of this study demonstrate the unique problems minority immigrants face in their intergenerational relationships. Different cultural values and, in the Turkish case, language barriers between generations, limited resources, and contradictions between high cultural expectations for family sociability and actual constraints by life in the Netherlands were found to influence intergenerational solidarity. Compared with non-immigrant families, immigrant elders are more likely to be dependent on their adult children because of their lack of language skills, and difficulty accessing formal support. These dependencies and the shift in power relations they imply can cause tensions between the generations as was illustrated by a Turkish father's frustration about the lack of initiative on the part of his daughters to help him in making appointments and translating forms. This frustration is worsened by the loss

of language proficiency in the mother tongue by the second generation. Related to this, whereas in Western cultures parents see tensions between themselves and their children as part of a normal developmental process, in ethnic groups with a strong norm of greater respect for elders and obedience to authority, intergenerational value differences might be less accepted (Phinney et al., 2000).

Nevertheless, Turkish informants were quick to point out the, in their opinion, superior family relations in their own cultural group compared to the Dutch natives. Taking care of family members and helping each other out were seen as typical Turkish family characteristics, and people were proud to be able to explain these cultural ideals to the interviewer. In recent times, immigrants in the Netherlands have been in the news mostly in a negative way. Much research on Turks and other minorities in the Netherlands addresses problematic issues like high unemployment rates, dropout from school, high proportions of involvement in crime, Islamic radicalism, oppressed wives and daughters, and so on. Often such problems have been related to immigrants' cultural background. Informants were pleased to be able to talk about a part of their culture that they see as positive and that they assume is judged as positive by the Dutch as well.

Some limitations of the study need to be mentioned as well. Although varied, our qualitative sample is not representative for families in the Netherlands. Surinamese men were clearly underrepresented in the qualitative part of the study, and although this represents their actual limited involvement in Surinamese families, we could not use their perspectives in our research. Furthermore, since few parents really were 'in need' of support at the time of the interview, it remains difficult to assess if cultural ideals and individual preferences can be met in practice. Future research would benefit from longitudinal data aimed at measuring changes over time in intergenerational support and attitudes towards such support.

# Chapter 6

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## **'Intimacy at a distance': Transnational family ties of immigrants<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> A slightly different version of this chapter is currently under review. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the ERCOMER (European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations) research seminar, May 2005, Utrecht, and at the *American Sociological Association* Annual Meeting, August 10-14, 2007, New York.

## 6.1 Introduction

In January 1906 Walery Wroblewski wrote from Poland to his family in America the following:

*Your letter of October 29<sup>th</sup> I received on December 30. It traveled for about two months, and perhaps it lay in the post offices, because there has been a strike. All the trains stopped for more than a week, and afterward in the post and telegraph service there was a strike for 3 weeks (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1984 [1918] p.101).*

The irregular mail correspondence and long journeys overseas by boat with which the Polish peasants had to cope less than a century ago stand in sharp contrast with communication and travel practices of contemporary migrants who often have telephone or (e-) mail contact with relatives abroad on a weekly basis and fly home at least once a year. While back-and-forth movements by immigrants and transnational ties among immigrants have always existed (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004), it is the ready availability of air transport, long distance telephone and electronic mail, which provides the technological basis for the increase in the scale of transnational (family) ties that fundamentally differentiates the Polish peasant from its contemporary migrant counterparts.

The transnational perspective on migration specifically explores the possibilities (facilitated by recent technological developments) for sustaining meaningful relationships with people and institutions in the countries of origin (Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1992). Originally, most studies in the field provided in-depth analyses of relations in one particular sending and receiving country. While the contributions of such studies are manifold, they do not show how widespread transnational practices are among the population as a whole or how they vary among groups (Levitt, 2001a). Recently, a limited number of systematic surveys and comparative case studies have been carried out in the United States which confirm the empirical existence of economic and political transnational activities, but also demonstrate that participation in these activities is not as widespread as previously assumed (Portes, Haller & Guarnizo, 2002; Guarnizo, Portes & Haller, 2003). On the other hand, several studies indicate that transnational practices do not necessarily decrease when immigrants integrate/assimilate/get incorporated into the new society (Itzigsohn & Saucedo, 2002; Haller & Landolt, 2005).

This study contributes to the expanding knowledge on immigrant transnationalism by exploring the degree of participation of immigrants in transnational family practices, by analyzing the determinants of such practices, and by exploring the relationship between immigrant integration and transnational family practices. By using data from a representative survey among the four largest non-Western migrant groups

in the Netherlands, a cross-national perspective is added to the field of transnational migration studies. Our focus will be on two areas of transnational practices: sending remittances to and contact with family members in the home country.

## 6.2 Theoretical background and previous studies

### *Family sociology*

Focusing specifically on transnational family practices is important since in many cases, immigrants are part of what have been called multilocal, binational, or transnational families, with parents and children distributed in households across national borders (Guarnizo, 1997). For example, a pattern found frequently among Dominicans, is that one or both parents live in New York City with some or none of their children, while other children live on the island in households headed by relatives or non-relatives (Guarnizo, 1997). Among successful Korean professionals, 'international commuter marriages' arise (Min, 1998), when the husband returns to Korea for a better job while his wife and children remain in the U.S. to take advantage of educational opportunities there. Italian dual wage earner-couples might hire Eastern European or Asian women to take care of their elderly parents, where in turn these care-takers leave behind their own elderly parents and children in the home country.

Through modern transportation transnational families are able to visit back and forth and through modern communications they are able to participate in family events and decisions from a distance (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton-Blanc, 1994). Moreover, in many cultures, there are clear expectations that family members will send remittances to and stay in touch with relatives who remained in the home country. The family may see supporting a family member to emigrate as an investment where economic benefits will be gained through the receipt of remittances (Haas & Plug, 2006).

In family sociological studies, though, much emphasis is placed on proximity and family ties that cross borders are often neglected. This means that very little empirical research has been done on the relationships between family members who live in different nation states. As a result transnational family practices are assumed to be unfeasible or have remained largely invisible (Baldassar, 2007).

Recently, some qualitative studies have contradicted this assumption. For example, Schmalzbauer (2004) focuses on the survival strategies of poor Honduran–U.S. transnational families to find that family members rely on each other to improve the situation of the family by making it possible for one member of the family to migrate to the U.S. Very few Hondurans are able to migrate to the United States without the financial help of family and kin. After migration, ties with the family left behind are often close and remittances help migrants' families back home to survive.

Families without migrant members are often the poorest of the poor. Nevertheless, Schmalzbauer explicitly draws attention to the tensions and problems that may occur in transnational family relations. Children can resent their parents for leaving them behind, whereas immigrants themselves might be frustrated if they cannot meet the families' (excessive) needs or expectations.

Parrenas (2005) examines how transnational families achieve intimacy across great distances by focusing on Filipino immigrant mothers and their young adult children. She finds that communication technologies offer Filipino women the opportunity to stay in touch with their children on a very regular basis which helps them to achieve an intimate family life across borders. Parrenas argues, though, that working-class mothers have less access to transnational communication and that the myth of the female homemaker that immigrants uphold may leave children dissatisfied with transnational mothering.

### *Migration studies*

The process of assimilation, conventionally described as the gradual learning and adoption of the language, culture, and behavioral patterns of the receiving society and corresponding abandonment of those of the countries of origin, was traditionally regarded as a precondition for the socio-economic advancement of immigrants (Gordon, 1964; Alba & Nee 1997). Although the straight-line assimilation perspective acknowledges that some immigrants may return to their home country, it does not incorporate sizeable back-and-forth movements and regular exchanges of tangible and intangible goods between places of origin and destination.

The transnational perspective on migration specifically explores the relationships immigrants have with people and institutions in the countries of origin. The concept of 'immigrant transnationalism' entered the literature through the work of anthropologists Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc (1992). Transnationalism was defined by these authors as 'the process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders' (Basch et al., 1994: 6). Numerous studies have since documented the existence of such transnational ties through hometown organizations, political participation and economic involvement (Kyle, 2000; Levitt, 2001a,b; Smith, 2005). Although the context of the family is often mentioned in transnational migration studies, the family is rarely the main topic of investigation. Moreover, little systematic research using representative samples exist to determine the scope and determinants of transnational practices. A comparative study based on probability surveys of Colombian, Dominican, and Salvadoran immigrants in their respective areas of urban concentration in the United States found that a minority of immigrants participated in transnational

economic and political activities, ranging from around five per cent of immigrants being transnational entrepreneurs to up to 30 per cent of immigrants being occasionally involved with hometown civic associations (Portes, Haller, & Guarnizo, 2002; Guarnizo, Portes & Haller, 2003).

*Remittances, contact and integration into the host society*

Although remittances are often found to be very important for the development of sending countries, not all migrants necessarily send remittances, and large group differences exist. In the UK, Burholt (2004) found in her sample of 300 elderly South-Asian migrants that relatively few respondents sent remittances to kin abroad, although there were large differences between ethnic sub-groups in this respect. Snel, Engbersen and Leerkes (2004) report that in their sample of 400 respondents in the Netherlands 72% of the Iraqi's, 62% of the Yugoslavs, 40% of the Moroccans 16% of the Antilleans and only 2% of the Japanese send money to relatives back home. Zontini (2004) shows that Filipino women often migrate with the sole purpose of sending money to their families back home to pay, for example, for their children's education. Gowricharn (2004) reports that in Surinam in 1993, 28 per cent of his respondents received money and postal packages from family or friends in the Netherlands.

Much less numerical data exist on the exact amount of contact transnational families have. Whereas the overall volume of international telephone calls climbed from 12.7 billion call minutes in 1982 to a massive 154 billion minutes by 2001 (Vertovec, 2004), there are no exact figures on the proportion of calls actually made by migrants to their families, even though it is highly likely that these types of calls comprise a significant share. Moreover, the recent fall in cost of international calls, shortened travel times, discounted airfares and the spreading availability of e-mail makes frequent transnational family contact readily available for a growing number of people, and so facilitates a kind of 'intimacy at a distance' within families (Izuhara & Shibata, 2002). Burholt (2004) indeed found that levels of contact between Asian family members in the UK and the country of origin were high.

Recently, several studies have addressed the relationship between transnational practices and linkages and integration into the receiving society. Results indicate that integration into the new society and transnational lifestyles are not necessarily incompatible. Portes, Haller and Guarnizo (2002) show that transnational entrepreneurs are better educated and more economically successful than either purely domestic entrepreneurs or wage workers. In addition, and contrary to what conventional assimilation theories would predict, their results indicate that transnational entrepreneurs are more likely to be US citizens and to have resided in the country for longer periods of time than the sample average. A parallel analysis of political transnationalism based on the same study indicates similar trends. Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002) furthermore

found that the process of incorporation does not weaken transnational participation; neither citizenship nor time spent in the United States had a negative effect on transnational participation. They also show that for different immigrant groups different determinants exist for being involved in transnational practices, related to the groups' differing context of reception and mode of incorporation.

Many of the studies focusing on transnational families have in common that they rely on small, qualitative samples, often specifically selected on the basis of whether family members are spread over different countries. It remains unclear therefore, how widespread the phenomenon of transnational families is and in what ways transnational families differ from mono-national families. This is an important question, though, not only from an empirical point of view, but also for policymakers. The need to care for overseas family members might affect a large (and increasing) number of immigrants yet the difficulties associated with transnational family life and transnational care-giving have rarely been acknowledged in policy debates in immigration receiving countries.

I use a large random sample ( $N = 1402$ ) to explore and analyze the scope and determinants of transnational family practices for different immigrant groups in the Netherlands. Analyses focus on immigrants with a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillean background. More specifically, characteristics associated with integration into the Netherlands will be investigated. Sociologists refer to assimilation, acculturation, incorporation and integration depending on their background (Alba & Nee, 1997; Gordon, 1964; Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000). Here, we want to distinguish between socio-economic aspects of integration and socio-cultural aspects of integration. From the assimilation theory perspective we expect that as time passes and immigrants culturally assimilate into the society of the receiving country, the linkages with and obligations toward people in the country of origin will weaken and contact with and remittances to family members there will decline. Alternatively, contrary to this straight-line assimilation perspective, and more consistent with a transnational perspective, Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002) suggest that the more immigrants are socio-economically incorporated into the host society, the more they will engage in transnational practices. The assumption is that transnational involvement and incorporation can coexist and might even mutually reinforce each other (Faist, 2000; Portes et al., 1999; Marcelli & Lindsay, 2005).

## 6.3 Transnational ties of immigrants

Many immigrants living in the Netherlands still have family in the country of origin<sup>4</sup>. Turks and Moroccans started coming to the Netherlands from the 1960's onwards as labor migrants, to fill labor shortages occurring in the Netherlands at that time. They were mostly unskilled male laborers who arrived without their family and who didn't speak the Dutch language. Although initially both the Dutch government and the labor migrants themselves envisioned the migration as temporary, it soon became clear many migrants would stay in the Netherlands and the process of family reunification started. Under the Dutch immigration law it is difficult for immigrants to have their parents join them in the Netherlands. Family reunification schemes are usually intended to reunite parents with (young) children, and not to reunite adult children with their elderly parents. Many Turkish and Moroccan immigrants therefore left behind their parents in the country of origin.

Immigrants from Suriname and the Dutch Antilles, former Dutch colonies, were likely to hold Dutch citizenship and many immigrants convinced their families, including their parents, to come to the Netherlands as well. Nevertheless, many parents decided to stay in the country of origin, coming occasionally for extended periods of time, to the Netherlands. More recently, some of the first immigrants, who are now ageing themselves, have returned to their countries of origin to retire, while their children – often born in the Netherlands - stay behind. This way, new transnational intergenerational linkages are created.

Turkish and Moroccan immigrants, for whom it is possible to return to their respective countries not only by plane but also by car or mini-van, are often seen preparing well in advance for their annual summer holidays. Presents are bought for family members, and supplies that are hard to get by in Morocco or Turkey are taken back. Although some immigrants report mixed feelings about spending a lot of money on these products and question the 'greediness' of some of their family members in the country of origin, most immigrants look forward to returning 'home' now and then (Meer, 2004). For the Surinamese and Antilleans there is no other option to return than by plane, but the recent drop in prices of intercontinental flights made this an easier accessible option.

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4 The number of immigrants in these groups with (young) children in the country of origin is very small. Most immigrants brought their children over to the Netherlands in family reunification processes in the 1970's and 1980's. In this respect, the groups under investigation differ from more recent immigrant groups which are more likely to leave their children behind in the country of origin.

## 6.4 Data, measures and method

### *Data*

The data used for the present study come from a new large-scale study of family relations: the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Komter, Knijn, Liefbroer & Mulder, 2005). For the analyses in this chapter the NKPS migrant sample, drawn from 13 Dutch cities in which half the immigrants from the four largest immigrant groups live, was used. Data on migrants of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean origin was collected (N=1402). All respondents were interviewed at home, where possible by an interviewer from the same ethnic background, in either Dutch or the immigrant's native language. During the survey, detailed questions were asked about the relationships of the respondents with several of their family members, irrespective of whether or not these family members were living in the Netherlands or in the country or origin. The response rate ranged from 41% among the Surinamese to 52% among Turks (see Dykstra et al., 2005 for an extensive overview of non-response issues).

To investigate the occurrence of remittances and the level of contact with various family members in the country of origin, we selected those respondents who reported having one or more close relatives in the country of origin. Close relatives are defined as parents, siblings and children. In other words, respondents who did not have any of these relatives in the country of origin were excluded from the sample in this step of the analysis (N = 647). A little over half of our sample reported having at least one close relative living in the country of origin. We removed the respondents who had missing values on one of our questions (N = 29) so that 736 respondents remained in our sample. Since only 2.2 per cent of the immigrants left in this sample belonged to the second generation, e.g., were born in the Netherlands, we focus only on first generation immigrants (N = 721) in our analyses.

### *Measures*

#### *Dependent variables*

Respondents were asked whether they contribute to the livelihood of family members in (country of origin), for example, by sending money or goods. Response categories were (0) no or (1) yes.

Respondents reported on the amount of contact by phone, mail or e-mail between the respondent and his relative(s) in the past 12 months and on the amount of face-to-face contact they had with their relatives in the past 12 months. Response categories were measured in 7 categories (never, once a year, several times a year, at least once a month, at least once a week, several times a week and daily). The amount of contact with each relative was summed up and divided by the appropriate number of family members to get the amount of transnational family contact.

### *Demographic variables*

The ethnic background of the respondents is defined according to his/her country of birth. For each group, a separate dummy variable was created.

A dichotomous variable indicating if the respondent is female (coded 1) or male (coded 0) is included as well. Furthermore, the respondents' age (in years) at time of the interview is entered as a continuous variable.

Respondents who were married at the time of the interview (coded 0) are compared with those who were single and those who were divorced or widowed (coded 1). The number of children is entered as a continuous variable.

Educational attainment was measured in 7 categories, running from no education at all to university educated.

### *Integration variables*

A variable indicating the length of time the respondent has been living in the Netherlands (in years) was added in the second step of the analysis.

Several variables related to socioeconomic integration were included in the analysis as well. First, respondents were asked whether or not they received (part of) their education in the Netherlands. Second, respondents indicated whether or not they were currently employed. Third, respondents provided information on whether or not they (co-)owned the house they were living in.

### *Method*

Besides descriptive findings to indicate the scope and level of remittances to and contact with family members in the country of origin, we use binary logistic regression and OLS regression models to analyze the determinants of transnational family practices in our sample.

## **6.5 Findings**

### *Descriptives*

Table 1 presents means and standard deviations of the independent variables used in the analyses, both separately by ethnic group category and totaled across categories.

Table 1 shows that in the Surinamese group, female respondents are slightly over-represented and on average respondents in this group are somewhat older. The Surinamese are most likely to own their home. In contrast, Antilleans are rarely homeowners. The Surinamese and the Antilleans are significantly more likely to have a

higher level of education and to have received (part of) their education in the Netherlands than the Turks and the Moroccans. Moreover, the former two groups more often hold a job. Turks and Moroccans are much more often married than the Caribbean groups, and especially Moroccans have a higher average number of children. Finally, whereas a large proportion of Antilleans arrived in the Netherlands relatively recently, the majority of the Surinamese have been living in the Netherlands for many years.

**Table 1.** Description of independent variables by ethnic group. Mean (percentage) and (SD).

	Turks (n = 219)	Moroccans (n = 180)	Surinamese (n = 125)	Antillean (n = 197)	Total (n = 721)
<b>Demographic variables</b>					
% Female	42	37	71	50	48
Mean Age (years)	41 (11)	43 (12)	45 (12)	37 (12)	41 (11)
<i>Family composition</i>					
%Single	3	7	33	58	24
%Married	82	83	32	23	58
%Other	15	10	35	19	18
Mean number of children	2.5 (1.4)	3.3 (2.4)	2.4 (2.1)	1.6 (1.7)	2.4 (1.9)
Educational level* (0-7)	1.9 (1.8)	1.6 (2.1)	3.2 (1.9)	3.8 (2.0)	2.6 (2.2)
<b>Integration variables</b>					
Duration of stay (years)	21 (9)	21(10)	24(10)	15(10)	20 (10)
Education Netherlands (%yes)	15	17	58	65	37
Home owner (%yes)	34	40	54	19	35
Having a job (%yes)	44	37	61	60	50

\*Note: Education is measured on a scale from low to high.

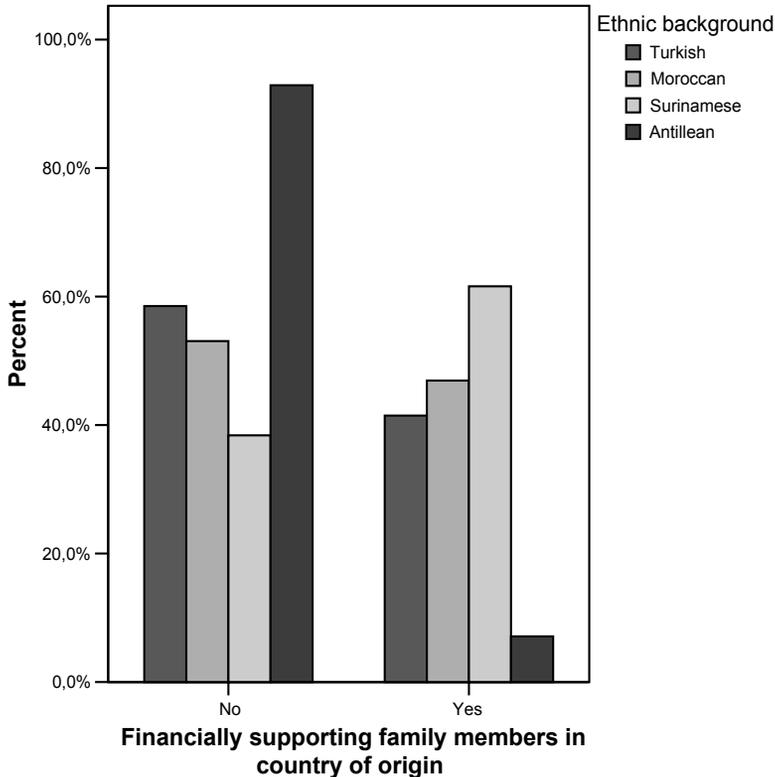
### Remittances

We first turn our attention to the question whether or not respondents contributed to the livelihood of relatives in the country of origin in the past year. Bivariate results (not shown) indicate that around 37 per cent of respondents reported they do provide such support. Cross-tabulations show large ethnic differences. Figure 1 shows that whereas almost 62 per cent of the Surinamese, and more than 41 per cent of the Turks and 47 per cent of Moroccans send money to relatives in the country of origin, only 7 per cent of the Antilleans do so.

Separate analyses (not shown) show that the Surinamese are significantly ( $p < .01$ ) more likely to contribute to their relatives than any of the other groups, while Antilleans are significantly ( $p < .01$ ) less likely to do so compared to the other groups. Turks and Moroccans did not differ significantly from each other in this respect. Multivariate

results from a logistic regression analysis in Table 2 show that Antilleans are less likely to contribute and Surinamese are more likely to contribute than the Turks (reference group) even when other background variables are taken into account.

Figure 1. Percentage of respondents who are financially supporting family members in country of origin by ethnic background



In general, women are less likely to give financial support than are men. Married respondents are more likely to contribute anything than are single, divorced or widowed respondents. The number of children and the educational attainment of the respondents yield no significant effects in our analysis.

In model 2, variables related to integration into the host society are added. Unlike conventional assimilation theory would predict, duration of stay does not have an effect on the likelihood of sending remittances. The only effect of integration variables in our analyses comes from the employment variable. People who have a job are significantly more likely to send remittances than are those who do not have a job, indicating support for the resource based transnationalism hypothesis.

**Table 2.** Logistic regression model for contributing to livelihood of family members in country of origin ( $n=721$ )

	Model 1	Model 2
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
<b>Demographic variables</b>		
<i>Ethnicity (Turk =ref)</i>		
Moroccan	1.23	1.32
Surinamese	3.87***	3.36***
Antillean	.14***	.13***
Female	.56**	.70*
Age	.99	1.02
<i>Family composition (married=ref)</i>		
Single	.46*	.54*
Other	.47**	.52**
Number of children	.97	.96
Level of education	1.06	1.03
<b>Integration variables</b>		
Duration of stay		.99
Education in Netherlands		.73
Home owner		1.04
Having a job		2.59***
<b>Constant</b>	1.08	.450
Nagelkerke Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.29	.32
-2loglikelihood	739	717

\* $p < .1$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ .

### Contact

Next, contact with relatives in the country of origin is considered. Immigrants in the Netherlands have extensive contact with relatives in the home country, both by phone or (e)-mail and face-to-face. Less than 10 per cent of the respondents reported having no contact at all with their relatives in the country of origin in the last year. Over 60 per cent of respondents indicated having contact with their close relatives at least once a month. Finally, 30 per cent of the respondents reported having contact with their relatives at least once a week. Again, we find large group differences by ethnicity. Table 3 shows the amount of contact immigrants have with their relatives who are living in the country of origin by ethnic group (the original seven categories were recoded to three categories for the sake of clarity).

**Table 3.** Frequency of contact (%) with relatives in the country of origin by phone or (e) mail in the past 12 months (n = 721).

	Turks	Moroccans	Surinamese	Antilleans
Frequency of contact				
Never	3	2	11	16
At least once a month	60	60	74	57
At least once a week	37	38	15	27

Whereas two per cent of the Moroccans and three per cent of the Turks did not have any contact with close relatives in the country of origin during the last year, 11 per cent of the Surinamese and 16 per cent of the Antilleans did not have any such contact. Almost 40 per cent of Turks and Moroccans were in touch with their relatives abroad at least once a week, and the vast majority of Surinamese and Antilleans kept in touch at least once a month. 11,5 per cent of Moroccans and 26 per cent of Turks did not see their relatives in the home country during the last 12 months. On the other hand, 45 per cent of the Surinamese and almost 50 per cent of the Antilleans had no face-to-face contact with their close relatives in the past year.

To determine which factors account for the amount of contact, an OLS regression analysis was performed with the frequency of telephone and (e-) mail contact as the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 4.

The Surinamese and Antilleans have significantly less contact with their relatives compared to the Turks. Separate analyses (not shown) indicate that Surinamese and Antilleans differ significantly from Moroccans as well in this respect ( $p < .01$ ), but not from each other. Turks and Moroccans do not differ significantly from each other.

No significant effects are found for gender and family composition when contact is considered, but our results show that younger respondents and more highly educated people report more contact. In model 2, integration variables are added once again, and the pattern is different from the results for remittances. When contact is considered, the conventional assimilation hypothesis gets confirmed. The frequency of contact with relatives in the country of origin is lower for people who lived longer in the Netherlands, and people who received part of their education in the Netherlands, and can therefore be expected to be better integrated into the society, report less frequent contact.

**Table 4.** OLS Regression of frequency of contact by phone or (e)-mail on selected independent variables: Unstandardized coefficients(n=721)

	Model 1	Model 2
	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
<b>Demographic variables</b>		
<i>Ethnicity (Turks =ref)</i>		
Moroccan	.06 (.13)	.06 (.13)
Surinamese	-.65*** (.16)	-.63*** (.17)
Antillean	-.72*** (.15)	-.73*** (.16)
Female	.01 (.10)	.01 (.10)
Age	-.03*** (.01)	-.02*** (.01)
<i>Family composition (married=ref)</i>		
Single	-.18 (.15)	-.12 (.15)
Other	.01 (.14)	.03 (.14)
Number of children	-.01 (.03)	-.02 (.03)
Level of education	.08** (.03)	.10** (.03)
<b>Integration variables</b>		
Duration of stay		-.02** (.01)
Education in Netherlands		-.27* (.14)
Home owner		.14 (.10)
Having a job		.17 (.19)
<b>Constant</b>	5.40***(.24)	5.24*** (.25)
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.17	.19

\* =  $p < 0.1$  \*\* =  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < 0.01$

## 6.6 Conclusions and discussion

Although it might be true as Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004, p. 1188) state, that 'Earlier, the simple letter knitted together transoceanic migration networks with remarkable effectiveness', it seems reasonable to assume that electronic mail, telephones and airplanes have enhanced the opportunities for immigrants for transnational linkages. However, little is known about the determinants and persistence of such transnational linkages, and how they vary between different kinds of sending and receiving countries. The purpose of this study therefore was to investigate the occurrence of transnational family practices such as remittances to and contact with family members in the country of origin and to analyze the relationship between transnational practices and characteristics associated with integration into the host society among a representative sample of four groups of immigrants in the Netherlands.

An important aspect of this study was to investigate whether integration in the host society would lead to less transnational ties, as expected by conventional assimilation theory. Our results found some support for this point of view, but only in the case of the frequency of contact. Respondents who lived in the Netherlands for a longer time and those who received (part of) their education in the Netherlands reported less frequent contact with relatives in the country of origin. It is likely that immigrants who live longer in the Netherlands and who received part of their education in the Netherlands are more culturally assimilated. Such immigrants might experience more (cultural) distance with their family members in the country of origin and contacts might become more strained.

When sending remittances to family members in the country of origin is concerned, however, these variables had no effect. Having a paid job, on the other hand, increased the likelihood of sending remittances significantly. This finding is more consistent with the Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002) who suggested that the more immigrants are economically incorporated into the host society, the more they will engage in transnational practices.

The level of transnational practices is clearly different for different groups. Migrants with an Antillean background are far less likely to send remittances to family members than are the other ethnic groups, whereas Surinamese immigrants are most likely to contribute to the livelihood of relatives in the country of origin. Turks and Moroccans on the other hand report significantly more contact with their relatives compared to the Caribbean groups. Whether these differences occur due to different migration histories, different cultural family models or other characteristics is beyond the scope of this chapter, but more in-depth research on the origins of these ethnic differences in transnational family practices is warranted.

Younger and more highly educated respondents reported more contact with family members in the country of origin. This might be explained by the fact that such respondents are more familiar with modern forms of communication, like pre-paid telephone cards, or calling through the internet.

Our findings increase our knowledge regarding the maintenance of transnational family ties and suggest that integration into the host society does not necessarily mean a weakening of these ties. In some cases, integration can actually facilitate such ties. Some limitations of our study warrant discussion as well. The nature of the data prevents taking the perspective of the relatives in the country of origin into account. No information is available on the preferences for contact or the need for remittances of family members in the homeland. Future research would benefit from a methodology in which both immigrants in the host countries and the relatives in the country of origin would be incorporated. Moreover, the focus of our data is on the nuclear family, whereas family relations among immigrant groups often include a large number of extended

family members as well. Future research should extend its focus to the extended family to get a more inclusive overview of transnational family relations.

Finally, there is no evidence at present that transnational practices are transmitted inter-generationally. However, Haller and Landolt (2005), found that whereas most second generation migrants in Miami feel more at home in the U.S. than in their parents' home country, visits to the country of origin were frequent nevertheless. Future research would benefit from longitudinal data to explore how transnational practices change over time and whether or not they remain salient beyond the first generation.

# Chapter 7

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**Conclusion and discussion**

## 7.1 Introduction

Immigrants are an understudied population in family sociology, and simultaneously, in migration studies a focus on the family is relatively rare. This thesis combined both insights from family sociology and migration studies to offer a comparative perspective on intergenerational solidarity in different ethnic groups in the Netherlands. By systematically comparing different aspects of intergenerational solidarity among immigrants and Dutch natives, theoretical ideas about family decline in Western families and collectivist family ideals in immigrant families were studied. A review of previous studies showed that little comparative research exists on ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity between parents and adult children and the mechanisms that influence such intergenerational solidarity. Although cross-cultural studies have shown that patterns of intergenerational solidarity differ among societies worldwide, it is largely unknown how immigrants construct and reconstruct their family lives through the cultural meanings and social practices they brought with them from their home countries, nor how these cultural differences remain important after migration or how they compare to structural, economic and cultural forces in their new environments. Moreover, studies comparing immigrants and natives are rare, and therefore differences are assumed but not empirically tested, so that similarities might be overlooked. Our aim therefore was to find out which attitudes and behaviors regarding intergenerational solidarity are predominant among Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean immigrants in the Netherlands as well as among the native Dutch. Second, we examined what factors influenced these attitudes and behaviors using both quantitative and qualitative data that included respondents of all ages 18-79. Finally, the general preoccupation in family studies with geographic proximity and the relative lack of attention to the family in migration studies have led to a neglect of transnational family ties. In this study we therefore added a transnational perspective to the study of intergenerational solidarity by including ties between adult children and parents that cross national boundaries.

Getting more insight into the mechanisms that shape intergenerational relations in different groups is of clear societal relevance in the Netherlands, where not only the population as a whole is ageing, but where also the share of the non-Dutch population in the elderly population will rise rapidly in the coming decades. Today, 37 000 elderly people (65 years old or above) who migrated from Turkey, Morocco, Surinam or the Dutch Antilles live in the Netherlands. This is just over one per cent of the Dutch 65-plus population, but this percentage is predicted to grow rapidly to 3.6 per cent in 2025 (Statistics Netherlands, 2007). In total, immigrants will make up more than six per cent of the elderly population in the Netherlands by then, and due to the concentration of immigrants, a significantly larger proportion of the elderly population in the larger cities will have an immigrant background.

In the next section (7.2), the main findings of this thesis will be recapitulated. Section 7.3 follows with a discussion of the findings and a reflection on their scientific and societal implications. The chapter concludes with limitations and suggestions for future research (7.4)

## 7.2 Summary of findings

The research questions posed in the five chapters of this thesis originated from five current scientific and societal debates.

### 7.2.1 Disintegration versus superintegration

The first debate, identified by Sarkisian and Gerstel (2004a) as the ‘superintegration versus disintegration’ debate, questions whether ethnic minority families are more or less integrated in their families than native families. Do immigrants who originate from family-oriented societies have stronger intergenerational ties, put more emphasis on these ties and exchange more intergenerational support than natives, or does the migration experience and the difficulties related to settling in a different culture put such a pressure on immigrant families that intergenerational ties might actually be less supportive than natives’ intergenerational ties?

Our results showed that to answer this question, it is important to differentiate between preferences for intergenerational support and actual support behavior. Findings show that immigrant elders have much higher expectations regarding filial obligations than Dutch elderly (chapter 2). Immigrant elders generally expected more weekly visits and care from their children, and more facilitation of co-residence to parents than was the case for the Dutch. This finding was consistent throughout generations, since adult children with an immigrant background also agreed much more with such statements than Dutch adult children (chapter 3). Especially Turkish and Moroccan elderly and adult children preferred strong intergenerational commitment from children to parents. Surinamese and Antilleans showed less preference for this than the Turks and Moroccans, but more than the Dutch.

Results for actual support, however, showed that the extent to which parents receive support in various domains from their adult children is not determined by their ethnic origin in the same way as perceptions were (chapter 3 and 4). Results were much less consistent in this respect. The frequency of contact between parents and adult children is still highest for Turkish and Moroccan parent-child dyads and lowest for the Dutch, but differences in the provision of practical support seemed insignificant at first sight. Additional analyses, however, revealed that these results changed when gender was taken into account. Immigrant women provided more practical support than Dutch

women but no ethnic differences existed for men. When we turned to a different type of support, giving counsel or advice, no ethnic differences were found, neither for men nor for women.

### 7.2.2 Culture versus structure

The second, 'culture versus structure', debate concerns the relative importance of culture and structure in shaping intergenerational solidarity and differences therein between different ethnic and immigrant groups. In general, we found limited support for the hypothesis of the influence of structural background on preferences and behavior. Only educational attainment had clear and consistent effects on normative views. For example, among elderly people in all ethnic groups including the Dutch, the attained level of education was related to perceptions of filial obligation. The more highly educated were less of the opinion that children have an obligation to care for elderly parents (chapter 2). Women agreed less than men that children have caring obligations, including caring for ill parents and providing co-residence for older parents. Separate analyses for the individual ethnic groups, however, did not find gender differences among the immigrant groups. It appears that the effect was principally caused by the fact that Dutch women agreed less with such norms than men. We expected that longer residence in the Netherlands would weaken the adherence to filial norms, but no such effects were found among the immigrant groups.

In our analyses of support behavior, we examined the influence of preferences on behavior (chapter 3). High levels of filial obligations were positively associated with the frequency of contact between parents and children and with both the provision of practical support and counsel or advice but controlling for levels of filial obligation did not eliminate all ethnic differences. Unlike in previous research from the U.S. no effect of income was found in our analyses. Whereas a higher educational level decreased the level of filial obligation, educational attainment is positively associated with the provision of practical help and counsel and advice. We found that grandchildren act as a tie between parents and grandparents. When adult children have children themselves, they are in contact more often with their parents.

### 7.2.3 Generalized versus balanced reciprocity

Classical anthropologists (Malinowski, 1922; Sahlins, 1972) assumed that 'generalized exchange' – support given without any well-defined expectations of returns – would be the prototype of support exchange within the family. However, contrary to this assumption we found that 'generalized reciprocity', giving without receiving much in return, is in fact the most exceptional pattern of all within the family (chapter 4). In fact, the reciprocity pattern where a low level of giving is paired with a low level of receiving is the most common pattern. The reciprocity pattern of receiving much while giving

little is the next most important category: more than one quarter of all respondents are found to be receivers. Apparently, parents give their adult children a lot of support that is not necessarily or immediately reciprocated. A slightly smaller group of adult children were involved in an intensive mutual exchange of support with their parents: the high exchangers. 'Givers', consisting of less than one tenth of all respondents, were the smallest category.

Again contrary to what modern theory on cultural differences in the nature of reciprocity suggests, our data showed that the similarities in intergenerational exchange patterns between ethnic groups were greater than the differences. Ethnic group membership does affect reciprocity type in the sense that the Dutch are less often found among the high exchangers, but the effect disappears when specific characteristics of the adult children, their parents, and their relationship are taken into account. Gender, both of the respondents and of their parents, stands out as one of the strongest predictors of the type of reciprocity, regardless of ethnic group membership.

#### 7.2.4 Independent versus interdependent families

This debate concerned the dichotomy between independent and interdependent families. Western families, originating from individualized societies, are often described as being independent and autonomous; instead of being based on culturally prescribed norms, family relations are seen as voluntary. Contrary, families originating from more collectivistic societies are described as being interdependent, with strong material dependencies existing between members. These ideal types are not static though and the dichotomy might oversimplify reality. Intergenerational solidarity might be accompanied by ambivalent feelings under certain circumstances. The complex systems of meaning, interpretation, motivation and legitimation that people use to reconcile possible discrepancies between ideals and practices are usually not captured in survey research. In chapter 5 we used additional qualitative analyses to explore such discrepancies. The findings of this study demonstrate the unique problems minority immigrants face in their intergenerational relationships. Different cultural values and, in the Turkish case, language barriers between generations, limited resources and contradictions between high cultural expectations for family sociability and actual constraints by living in the Netherlands, were found to influence intergenerational solidarity. Compared with non-immigrant families, immigrant elders are more likely to be dependent on their adult children because of their lack of language skills, and difficulty accessing formal support. At the same time, many Dutch families have strong interdependent intergenerational relations as well, indicating a simple dichotomy between independent and interdependent families is not adequate when describing ethnic differences in intergenerational ties.

### 7.2.5 Assimilation versus transnationalism

The final debate addressed in the present study was the one between 'assimilation versus transnationalism'. This debate questions whether the process of assimilation, conventionally described as the gradual learning and adoption of the language, culture, and behavioral patterns of the receiving society, necessarily leads to a corresponding abandonment of those of the countries of origin. Our focus was on transnational family ties, a type of family relation often neglected in family-sociological studies where proximity is considered crucial. Our findings show that the vast majority of immigrants who still have relatives in the country of origin have (frequent) contact with these relatives, while one third of our respondents contribute to the livelihood of family members in the homeland. Integration characteristics did not show similar patterns over different domains of involvement (chapter 6). While integration variables had a negative effect on the frequency of contact, they show a positive effect or no effect on the sending of remittances. Respondents who lived longer in the Netherlands and those who received (part of) their education in the Netherlands reported less frequent contact with relatives in the country of origin. When sending remittances to family members in the country of origin is concerned, however, these variables had no effect. Having a paid job nonetheless, increased the likelihood of sending remittances significantly. The level of transnational practices is clearly different for different groups. Migrants with an Antillean background are far less likely to send remittances to family members than are the other ethnic groups, whereas Surinamese immigrants are most likely to contribute to the livelihood of relatives in the country of origin. Turks and Moroccans on the other hand report significantly more contact with their relatives compared to the Caribbean groups.

## 7.3 Conclusion and discussion

This dissertation aimed to contribute to the existing literature on ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity between adult children and their parents in two main ways. Theoretically, our aim was to investigate common assumptions about family decline in Western families and collectivistic family ideals in immigrant families. In particular, the supposed dichotomy between interdependent (immigrant) and independent (Dutch native) families was critically examined. Moreover, we aimed to add to existing knowledge in the transnational migration studies field, by providing a focus on family members separated by national borders. Methodologically, we aimed to refine existing knowledge by using a mixed-methods approach, combining in-depth qualitative data and large-scale quantitative data. This allowed us to compare patterns of intergenerational solidarity and their correlates between and within ethnic groups as well as to offer an additional perspective focusing on the potential tensions and ambiguities in the way

intergenerational solidarity is experienced, that is usually not captured in survey data only.

We started out by discussing three theoretical debates concerning intergenerational solidarity in general, and five current debates related to ethnic differences in particular. Our first conclusion is that when preferences for filial obligations are considered, a clear ethnic line can be drawn between immigrants and the Dutch. Immigrants had stronger preferences for filial obligations compared to the Dutch, and this pattern was the same over generations. More highly educated respondents showed lower preferences for filial obligations though, so one might expect that as the level of education of immigrants rises, their preferences will become more comparable with those of the Dutch. However, analyses of our qualitative data showed that family values such as filial obligations are a very positive source of self-identification, especially for Turkish respondents that they might not be willing to give up.

Secondly, although higher levels of filial obligations had a clear and consistent positive effect on the behavioral components of intergenerational solidarity, this did not explain away all the ethnic differences. Moreover, contrary to arguments on the decline in family commitments in the Western world, intensive intergenerational exchange in Dutch families is not necessarily less common than in immigrant families. Although the Dutch seem to hesitate to agree with statements on filial obligations phrased as general norms, they do also adhere to norms of responsibility towards their own family. For the Dutch, individualized attitudes towards the meaning of family do not prevent them from having strong family ties and providing intergenerational support. The results of this study show that it is important to distinguish between different types of support. Whereas practical help might be more common in immigrant groups, the Dutch offer just as much advice as other ethnic groups. Results also showed that gender is of utmost importance when comparing ethnic groups. It is well-known that women are 'kin-keepers' and our study shows that this is even more so in immigrant families. Differences in, for example, practical support between Dutch and immigrant groups only existed for women, not for men.

Thirdly, our qualitative data analyses showed that the meaning of support exchange may differ for different generations. Dependencies of parents on children in the Turkish group due to language difficulties in the Netherlands imply a shift in power relations that can cause tensions between the generations. Whereas in Western cultures parents see tensions between themselves and their children as part of a normal developmental process, in ethnic groups with a strong norm of respect for elders and obedience to authority, intergenerational value differences might be less accepted (Phinney et al., 2000).

Finally, we showed that for immigrants, family ties are not restricted to the host country and geographical proximity is no impediment for close contact with family

members in the country of origin. Moreover, transnational involvement and integration are not necessarily at odds, as is suggested in, for example, the Dutch governments' opposition against dual citizenship.

To summarize, we found that ethnic differences in attitudes are more pronounced than differences in behavior. This finding is important in view of the persistent tendency in Western European countries to exaggerate differences between ethnic minorities and the original population, or to think in stereotyped ways about them. We can conclude that the supposed dichotomy between interdependent (immigrants) and independent (Dutch) families is not an adequate description of contemporary family ties in the Netherlands. Moreover, our study suggests that a third option, the model of emotional interdependence, as it was proposed by Kagitçibasi (1996) to explain intergenerational relations in immigrant families from developing countries, defines a proportion of Dutch native families as well. In addition, our study shows that emotional interdependencies do not necessarily take the place of practical interdependencies, but that the two can coexist, both among minority and native families.

## 7. 4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Although this study was one of the first that compared different ethnic groups on different dimensions of intergenerational solidarity, some limitations of our research design need to be mentioned as well. The focus of our data is on parents and adult children, whereas in many immigrant cultures daughters-in-law are expected to provide support to their husband's parents. Future research should extend its focus to the extended family to get a more inclusive overview of intergenerational relations in immigrant groups.

Our study showed that strong preferences for filial obligations are positively associated with behavioral aspects of intergenerational support. However, the causal relationship between filial obligation norms and support behavior is difficult to disentangle with cross-sectional data. Dynamic designs are needed to better trace causal relationships and the ways in which filial obligations change over time (see also Gans & Silverstein, 2006).

From a transnational perspective, the nature of our data prevents taking the perspective of the relatives in the country of origin into account. No information is available on the preferences for contact or the need for remittances of family members in the homeland. Future research on transnational family ties would benefit from a methodology in which both immigrants in the host countries and the relatives in the country of origin would be incorporated (Mazzucato, 2007). Transnational family studies would also benefit from longitudinal data to explore how transnational practices change

over time and whether or not they remain salient beyond the first generation.

Future research will most likely also benefit from taking into account family migration laws in the Netherlands. Legal systems and government agencies may affect family relations by defining family membership. For example, immigration laws, based on the notions of the nuclear family, facilitate the immigration of legitimate children and legal spouses, while often denying access to elderly parents, siblings, illegitimate children and other close kin.

Given the growing number of older people with migrant histories in Western societies, we strongly argue that minority and immigrant families should be included in large surveys as a matter of standard practice. Their inclusion will enable comparison of family ideals, attitudes and practices across diverse groups and generations. Filial obligations are just one aspect of intergenerational support systems that, in turn, in welfare-states like the Netherlands are just one aspect of old-age security (Kohli, 1999). The interplay between filial responsibilities and formal assistance might be of special importance for immigrant families and should be taken into account by policymakers and family sociology scholars alike.



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## Curriculum Vitae

Djamila Schans was born in Rhenen (the Netherlands) on May 6, 1976. In 1994 she started her studies in Interdisciplinary Social Sciences at Utrecht University. She spent a year on exchange at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan, where she wrote her thesis entitled 'Girlpower in Kimono'. She obtained her Master's degree in May 2000 and worked at University College Utrecht (UCU) for two years. In September 2002 she started her PhD project at the European Research Center on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER) at Utrecht University, participating in the PhD training program of the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS). In 2006 Djamila was a visiting researcher at the California Center for Population Research (CCPR) at the University of California, Los Angeles for which she received a Fulbright scholarship. Currently she works as a post-doc fellow on the research program 'Transnational research: operationalizing the space of flows' at the Amsterdam institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies (AMIDSt) at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and as a tutor and teacher in the department of social sciences at University College Utrecht (UCU).



# Nederlandse Samenvatting

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(summary in Dutch)

De etnische compositie van Nederland is sterk veranderd sinds de jaren '60. Vandaag de dag is ongeveer 10 % van de Nederlandse bevolking van niet-westerse afkomst. Deze immigranten en hun kinderen komen voornamelijk uit Marokko en Turkije, en uit voormalige koloniën van Nederland, zoals Suriname en de Antillen. De gevolgen die deze etnische diversiteit voor de samenleving heeft, zijn tot op heden zowel maatschappelijk als wetenschappelijk onderwerp van discussie.

Een ander onderwerp van discussie in de Nederlandse samenleving is de toenemende vergrijzing en de druk op de verzorgingsstaat die deze vergrijzing impliceert. Verdergaande immigratie wordt soms naar voren geschoven als een oplossing voor dit probleem, maar dit is niet het enige raakvlak dat de twee onderwerpen hebben. Ook onder immigrantengroepen stijgt het aandeel ouderen en neemt de vergrijzing toe. Het aantal oudere immigranten van niet-westerse afkomst zal de komende decennia sterk stijgen. Waren er in 2003 nog 117 000 niet-westerse immigranten ouder dan 55 jaar, de verwachting is dat hun aantal zal toenemen tot 354.000 in 2020 (CBS, 2003). Oudere immigranten zullen dan meer dan zes procent van alle ouderen in Nederland uitmaken, en dit aandeel zal vele malen groter zijn in de grote steden, waar niet-westerse immigranten oververtegenwoordigd zijn.

Tegelijkertijd met deze demografische verschuivingen vinden ook politieke verschuivingen plaats. De laatste jaren ligt de verzorgingsstaat onder vuur. De overheid trekt zich terug, terwijl meer verantwoordelijkheid bij de familie gelegd wordt wanneer het gaat om de verzorging van ouderen en hulpbehoevenden.

Deze demografische en politieke verschuivingen roepen vragen op over intergenerationele solidariteit in Nederlandse en in immigrantenfamilies. Hoewel over het algemeen wordt aangenomen dat immigranten uit niet-westerse samenlevingen andere overtuigingen hebben ten aanzien van familierelaties dan Nederlanders, is er maar weinig empirisch onderzoek dat dit staaft. Ook is er weinig bekend over etnische verschillen in familierelaties waar het intergenerationele solidariteit betreft. Bovendien zijn verschillen in overtuiging nog geen garantie voor verschillen in gedrag. In dit onderzoek staan dan ook de opvattingen en het gedrag van verschillende etnische groepen over intergenerationele solidariteit centraal.

Door het systematisch vergelijken van verschillende aspecten van intergenerationele solidariteit bij Nederlandse en immigrantenfamilies testen wij theoretische ideeën over de afnemende rol van familie in Westerse samenlevingen en collectivistische familie idealen in immigrantenfamilies. Een literatuurstudie liet zien dat er weinig vergelijkend empirisch onderzoek bestaat over etnische verschillen in intergenerationele solidariteit tussen ouders en volwassen kinderen en dat er weinig bekend is over de factoren die intergenerationele solidariteit beïnvloeden. Hoewel enkele cross-culturele studies hebben aangetoond dat patronen van intergenerationele solidariteit verschillen tussen landen (Kagitçibasi, 1996), is er weinig bekend over

wat er gebeurt met deze verschillen als mensen immigreren naar een maatschappij met andere culturele en structurele kenmerken. Studies die zich wel bezighouden met intergenerationale relaties in immigranten families (Kibria, 1993; Yerden, 2000) bieden geen vergelijking met andere immigranten groepen of met de autochtone bevolkingsgroep en dus geen empirische test voor de veronderstelde verschillen tussen groepen. Onze doelstelling in deze studie was dan ook om attitudes en gedrag ten aanzien van intergenerationale solidariteit te vergelijken tussen immigranten met een Turkse, Marokkaanse, Surinaamse of Antilliaanse achtergrond en de autochtone Nederlanders. Met gebruik van kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve data hebben we onderzocht wat de factoren zijn die deze attitudes en gedragingen beïnvloeden bij verschillende generaties. Niet alleen verschillen tussen, maar ook binnen etnische groepen zijn bestudeerd. Tot slot heeft deze studie ook een transnationale dimensie. Een substantieel deel van de immigranten in Nederland heeft ouders die nog in het land van herkomst verblijven. Ook de intergenerationale solidariteit die de landsgrenzen overstijgt wordt in deze studie onderzocht en gekoppeld aan de mate van integratie in de Nederlandse samenleving.

We richten ons op een vergelijking van Nederlanders met leden van de vier grootste minderheidsgroepen in ons land. Deze groepen vormen samen zeven procent van de Nederlandse bevolking (CBS, 2007). Een substantieel deel van de huidige 369.000 Turken, 330.000 Marokkanen, 333.000 Surinamers and 129.000 Antillianen behoort tot de zogenaamde tweede generatie, dat wil zeggen is geboren in of migreerde op jonge leeftijd (<6) naar Nederland.

Analyses in dit onderzoek zijn gebaseerd op data van de Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS, 2003) en het survey Sociale Positie en Voorzieningengebruik Allochtonen (SPVA, 2002). Deze gerelateerde vragenlijsten zijn ontworpen voor de bestudering van familierelaties in Nederland en om vergelijkingen tussen immigranten en Nederlandse families mogelijk te maken. De NKPS is een grootschalig, multi-actor, multi-methode, panelonderzoek naar solidariteit in familierelaties in Nederland (Dijkstra, Kalmijn, Knijn, Komter, Liefbroer & Mulder, 2005). De NKPS bestaat uit een nationale representatieve steekproef van ca. 8100 respondenten. Deze steekproef is aangevuld met een migrantensteekproef, waarin 1400 respondenten van Turkse, Marokkaanse, Surinaamse en Antilliaanse herkomst in 13 Nederlandse steden zijn geïnterviewd. In de SPVA zijn verder 4199 respondenten uit de vier genoemde migrantengroepen in dezelfde 13 steden geïnterviewd (Groeneveld & Weijers-Martens, 2003). Respondenten in de migrantengroepen werden persoonlijk benaderd (waar mogelijk door interviewers uit dezelfde etnische groep) en de schriftelijke vragenlijsten waarvan gebruik werd gemaakt waren beschikbaar in het Turks, Arabisch en Nederlands. De uiteindelijke respons van de NKPS was 45 procent. Deze respons was vergelijkbaar voor de migrantengroepen (41 procent voor de Surinamers en 52 procent voor de Turken).

Behalve van deze grootschalige kwantitatieve survey-data is gebruik gemaakt van een kleinschalig kwalitatief onderzoek (minipanel) onder 40 respondenten uit de NKPS, met een Nederlands, Turkse of Surinaamse achtergrond. De semi-gestructureerde interviews, die tussen de een en twee uur duurden, gingen over de opvattingen, verwachtingen en ervaringen van de respondent ten aanzien van intergenerationele solidariteit. Door een breed leeftijdsbereik te hanteren, konden verschillende generaties met elkaar vergeleken worden. Het multi-actor perspectief van de NKPS komt ook in het minipanel naar voren, omdat waar mogelijk meerdere leden van één familie zijn geïnterviewd.

Terwijl het survey als methode geschikt is om structurele en demografische trends in familierelaties in kaart te brengen en om hypothesen te toetsen over veronderstelde causale relaties tussen variabelen, bieden de minipanelen als voordeel dat zij de processen en mechanismen bloot kunnen leggen die ten grondslag liggen aan de vormgeving van familierelaties en aan het samengaan van bepaalde variabelen.

## Resultaten

De resultaten uit deze studie laten zien dat het belangrijk is om attitudes en gedrag ten opzichte van intergenerationele solidariteit apart te bestuderen. Turken en Marokkanen zijn het veel vaker eens zijn met stellingen ten aanzien van intergenerationele solidariteit dan Nederlanders, zelfs nadat voor opleiding, inkomen en andere achtergrondvariabelen is gecontroleerd (hoofdstuk 2 en 3). Dit verschil strekt zich uit over verschillende generaties. Oudere immigranten verwachtten over het algemeen meer bezoek en zorg van hun kinderen, en zagen het kunnen inwonen bij kinderen als veel meer vanzelfsprekend dan Nederlandse ouders (hoofdstuk 2). Ook volwassen kinderen uit deze migrantengroepen waren het veel vaker eens met deze attitudes dan Nederlandse volwassen kinderen (hoofdstuk 3). Surinaamse en Antilliaanse respondenten waren het minder eens met onze stellingen aangaande intergenerationele solidariteit dan Turken en Marokkanen, maar meer dan Nederlandse respondenten.

Resultaten gebaseerd op daadwerkelijk gegeven of gekregen steun later echter een ander patroon zien. Hier is etniciteit niet van zo'n doorslaggevende betekenis als bij attitudes het geval is (hoofdstuk 3 en 4). Hoewel het patroon voor de contactfrequentie tussen ouders en kinderen nog hetzelfde is - het hoogst in de Turkse en Marokkaanse groep en het laagst in de Nederlandse -, lijken verschillen in praktische steunverlening van kinderen aan ouders op het eerste gezicht niet significant. Aanvullende analyses lieten echter zien dat er wel degelijk etnische verschillen in steunverlening zijn als er rekening gehouden wordt met gender. Vrouwelijke immigranten verlenen meer praktische hulp aan hun ouders dan Nederlandse vrouwen, maar er werden geen etnische verschillen

gevonden voor mannen. Als we naar een kwalitatief andere vorm van steun kijken, het geven van advies, dan vinden we helemaal geen significante etnische verschillen, noch voor vrouwen noch voor mannen. Ook etnische verschillen in patronen van reciprociteit waren na controle voor achtergrondkenmerken niet meer aanwezig (hoofdstuk 4).

In hoofdstuk 5 gebruiken we aanvullende kwalitatieve data om een beter beeld te krijgen van de ervaringen die mensen hebben met intergenerationale solidariteit. De resultaten laten enkele problemen in intergenerationale relaties zien die uniek zijn voor migrantenfamilies. Verschillende acculturatieniveaus binnen families, evenals het verlies van spreekvaardigheid in de moedertaal voor jongeren, gecombineerd met een slechte beheersing van het Nederlands bij sommige ouders, beïnvloeden de intergenerationale solidariteit. Vergeleken met Nederlandse ouders waren Turkse ouderen vaker afhankelijk van de steun van hun kinderen door bijvoorbeeld taalproblemen en onbekendheid met andere vormen van geïnstitutionaliseerde hulp. Deze afhankelijkheid van ouders van kinderen kan een verandering in machtsrelaties binnen de familie veroorzaken die kan leiden tot spanningen in de relatie tussen de generaties

Tegelijkertijd laat onze kwalitatieve data zien dat intergenerationale solidariteit door immigranten gezien wordt als een zeer positief kenmerk van hun cultuur en dat dit fungeert als een bron van positieve zelf identificatie. In een tijd waarin migranten culturen vaak negatief in het nieuws komen werd door onze respondenten sterk de nadruk gelegd op de 'superieure' familiebanden in hun eigen cultuur vergeleken met die van Nederlandse autochtonen. De kwalitatieve data laat echter ook zien dat alhoewel autochtone Nederlanders veel minder geneigd zijn het eens te zijn met algemeen gestelde normen over hoe intergenerationale solidariteit zou moeten zijn, dit hen er niet van weerhoudt sterke intergenerationale banden binnen hun eigen familie te hebben.

Tot slot laat hoofdstuk 6 zien dat het overgrote deel van de immigranten met familieleden in het land van herkomst frequent contact heeft met deze familieleden. Het aantal migranten dat familieleden in het land van herkomst onderhoudt is echter veel kleiner (33 procent). De relatie tussen de mate van transnationale betrokkenheid en integratie in Nederland is niet eenduidig. Hoewel integratievariabelen een negatief effect hadden op de mate van contact met familieleden in het land van herkomst, hadden zij een positief effect op het verlenen van praktische steun aan familieleden in het moederland.

Concluderend kunnen we stellen dat de veronderstelde dichotomie tussen collectivistische families (migranten) en individualistische families (autochtonen) een versimpeling van de werkelijkheid is. Niet alleen bestaan er verschillen tussen migrantengroepen, ook binnen migrantengroepen verschillen niveaus van intergenerationale solidariteit. Bovendien zijn immigranten (met name Turkse en Marokkaanse) wel veel meer geneigd normatieve intergenerationale solidariteit ten

toon te spreiden, etnische verschillen in solidair gedrag zijn minder geprononceerd en afhankelijk van welke dimensie van intergenerationele solidariteit bestudeerd wordt. Door moderne communicatie middelen lijkt het wonen in hetzelfde land in ieder geval geen absolute voorwaarde meer voor het onderhouden van familiebanden.

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