SUMMARY

For several decades now ethnicity has been a focus of concern among researchers in the social sciences (McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998). In the Netherlands, most of the earlier research on ethnic minority youth was directed at analyzing their position in the educational system and in the labor market and at analyzing the possible effects of discrimination by the Dutch population (Eldering, 1997; Distelbrink & Veenman, 1995; Vollebergh, 1996). Because the research concentrated on problematic aspects of adolescence such as delinquency, normative development among ethnic minority youth remained less well understood. However, researchers are increasingly addressing positive and normative aspects of behavior, such as self-esteem (Verkuyten, 1995, 2001) and child-rearing practices in immigrant families (Pels, 2000). This dissertation investigates some of the cultural values that may influence the normative development of adolescence. The focus lies on values connected with the individualism-collectivism (IC) dimension, probably the dimension most studied by cross-cultural psychologists in the past 20 years (Kâgitçibasi, 1994).

In the introductory chapter, the major concept in this dissertation, individualism-collectivism, was introduced and its relevance for the study of adolescence was highlighted. First, we provided background information on the position of Moroccan and Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. Immigrants are counted as second generation when they were born in the Netherlands while at least one of their parents was born in a foreign country (CBS, 2001). According to a broader definition, children who arrive in the host country before the age of six years also belong to the second generation (Pels, 1998). Here we use this broader definition. The vast majority of the subjects participating in the different studies in this dissertation belong to the second generation. Only a few subjects arrived in the Netherlands after the age of six years.

The second-generation immigrants in the Netherlands constitute a young group. More than 80% of the second generation has not yet reached the age of twenty years. On the one hand these allochthonous youngsters, especially the girls, are highly motivated to succeed in school but, on the other hand, they show poorer results than the autochthonous Dutch youth. Disappointing results despite high effort can often be attributed to early problems in developing proficiency in the Dutch language. In general, allochthonous pupils have shorter school careers and make occupational choices earlier than Dutch pupils. The same can be said of their relational careers. Many allochthonous youngsters leave the parental home to build a family of their own at an earlier age than is common among Dutch youth (CBS, 2001).

The first-generation immigrants arrived in the sixties and seventies to the Netherlands. First, only the men came as unskilled workers. Originally, it was assumed that their stay would be temporary but after several years most
men brought their wives and children to join them. Many families had difficulty in adapting to their new situation: it was a major step to move from a rural area in Morocco or Turkey to an industrial city in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the balance in the family had to be reestablished after the husband’s long absence (Eldering & Knorth, 1998). Often immigrants suffer economic hardship and the percentage of first-generation men now receiving government support is disproportionately high (CBS, 2001). A number of factors, such as migration generation, education, gender, and rural or urban background, determine the distance immigrants experience between themselves and Dutch society. In general, females are less traditional and more inclined to agree with the liberal Dutch way of living than males. The most important factor is education: higher educated people have better chances of successfully integrating into Dutch society.

A number of differences between ethnic minority and (white) majority groups, such as the stronger family values of ethnic minorities, are related to the individualism-collectivism (IC) dimension (Hofstede, 1980, 1995). Cultural tendencies toward collectivism include subordination of an individual’s own goals to the goals of others, concern for the ingroup, interdependence and family harmony. In collectivistic societies such as those in Morocco and Turkey, people used to live together in extended families, headed by the grandfather or his eldest son and comprising several generations with women related by marriage. In contrast, in individualist cultures personal goals have primacy over ingroup goals and personal achievement and independence from the ingroup are emphasized. In individualist cultures most people live together as a nuclear family, i.e. two parents and their offspring (Triandis, 1994; Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990).

We focused on the psychological aspects of this cultural dimension. Speaking in more psychological terms, individualism can be seen as the expression of the need for autonomy or independence, and collectivism can be seen as the expression of the need for relatedness or interdependence (Kâgitçibasi, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Both are considered as fundamental and basic human needs (Guisinger & Blatt, 1994). To operationalize these needs, we utilized the theoretical and empirical work of Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (1995) among other factors. These Dutch psychologists connected different emotions, such as self-esteem and love, to the human striving for autonomy and connectedness, respectively. Autonomy and connectedness are both important topics for adolescents (Grotevant & Cooper, 1998). It is the developmental task of an adolescent to find a new balance between an emerging sense of self as a separate and competent individual and a transformed, but continued feeling of connection with his/her significant others (Baltes & Silverberg, 1994).

This dissertation aimed to investigate ethnic differences in the basic human needs of autonomy and connectedness in several samples of adolescents. By systematically comparing adolescents from diverse ethnic populations on
different aspects of autonomy and connectedness, we wanted to gain insight into the role of culture in this life period. Some leading questions were: do Dutch youngsters score higher on all forms of autonomy, such as behavioral and emotional autonomy? To whom do Turkish and Moroccan youngsters express higher levels of concern, to members of their own family or to other people as well? The first chapter ends with an overview of the different operationalizations of connectedness and autonomy used in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation. Although we explored the role of gender and age in these chapters, we do not discuss these results in the summary due to space limitations.

In chapter 2 we examined whether strong feelings of belonging to the own ethnic group are crucial for the psychological functioning of minority and majority group members. For minority group members it was hypothesized that a bi-cultural identification, strong feelings of attachment to the own as well as to the Dutch group, would enhance feelings of well-being (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). Preceding questions in this chapter were: are allochthonous youngsters less well off than Dutch youngsters in terms of psychological well-being? Is degree of acquaintance with the Netherlands related to the well-being of allochthonous youngsters?

In total 405 autochthonous and 185 allochthonous youngsters from diverse ethnic backgrounds participated in this study. The research was carried out in secondary schools in Rotterdam, one of the four largest cities in the Netherlands. Psychological functioning was operationalized both in terms of well-being and in terms of stress and depression. Several aspects of ethnic identity were assessed. In the first place, subjects indicated whether they had a mono-cultural or a bi-cultural orientation. Of the allochthonous pupils, 55% considered themselves as a member of their own ethnic group only; 40% considered themselves as both a member of their own group and as a member of the Dutch group (e.g. a ‘Dutch Moroccan’); and only 5% considered themselves as a member of the Dutch population only. Furthermore, we measured positive and negative attitudes towards the own ethnic group, a preference for contact with the own group, and positive attitudes toward Dutch society. Acquaintance with the Netherlands was assessed by the language spoken at home (Dutch and/or allochthonous language) and the length of stay in the Netherlands.

Allochthonous pupils reported more feelings of stress and a lower level of well-being than the Dutch pupils. This difference was most pronounced between allochthonous pupils and Dutch pupils attending ethnic autochthonous (‘white’) schools. Dutch pupils originating from ethnic mixed schools occupied an intermediate position. Acquaintance with Dutch society appeared to have no effect on levels of well-being in the allochthonous group. Also, the different dimensions of ethnic identity were not very strongly related to feelings of either stress or well-being. Those with a bi-cultural orientation did not differ from those with a monocultural orientation in terms of stress or well-being, nor were
any correlations between ethnic identity and well-being found. The correlational pattern between the dimensions of ethnic identity and stress seemed to be strongest for the allochthonous youngsters identifying solely with their own ethnic group. Negative attitudes toward their own ethnic group augmented their feelings of stress, while positive attitudes toward the Dutch way of living diminished their level of stress. The allochthonous youngsters with a bi-cultural orientation, who feel Dutch already, seemed to be rather indifferent about these issues. Their feelings of stress were unrelated to their opinions on ethnic groups. In the autochthonous pupils, one small correlation was found between negative attitudes toward their own group and stress.

Whereas in chapter 2 we solely addressed attitudes towards the own ethnic group, in chapter 3 we examined how adolescents with different cultural backgrounds value a number of groups, including their family, friends, school, and the larger society. Based upon IC theory and existing empirical research, it was hypothesized that, compared to Dutch autochthonous youngsters, allochthonous youngsters:

1. would agree more strongly with Family Integrity, but agree equally strongly with other subsyndromes of IC such as Interdependence and Individualism;
2. would value uniform groups in which members share opinions on important matters more highly;
3. would attach more importance to close ingroups (family and friends) and less importance to more distant groups (city and society);
4. would attach more importance to personal characteristics that enhance the smooth functioning of the collective, such as modesty.

This study made use of the same dataset as the preceding chapter, but here a different subset of subjects was selected. Only allochthonous youngsters with a collectivistic background and only autochthonous youngsters visiting ethnically mixed schools were included in this sample. Applying these criteria resulted in a sample of 144 Dutch, 36 Turkish and 25 Moroccan respondents, aged between 14 and 20 years. Hypothesis 1 was measured with items of the Triandis group (Triandis et al., 1986, 1988, 1990), while the other three hypotheses were tested with items developed by Kraak and Nord-Rüdiger (1987).

As expected, the allochthonous adolescents attached more importance to traditional family values (Family Integrity) than the autochthonous adolescents (first part of hypothesis 1). They also favored groups giving little room for individuality more strongly (hypothesis 2) and personal qualities that enhance the functioning of such groups (hypothesis 4). Our third hypothesis was not supported. Whereas a great involvement with the own ingroup is considered an important characteristic of collectivism, the allochthonous and autochthonous pupils in this study did not differ in this respect. Nor did they differ with regard to more distant and abstract matters, e.g. social justice in a country. Thus, the Turkish and Moroccan adolescents underscored the importance of universal social values, a notion of Schwartz (1990), just as much as the Dutch pupils.
Unexpectedly, the Turkish and Moroccan youngsters scored higher on a subscale measuring individualistic attitudes (second part of hypothesis 1). A possible explanation might be that belonging to a minority, not only in a numerical sense but also socially and economically, makes these youngsters more suspicious and defensive. In the Netherlands, the Individualism scale has been shown to measure a defensive attitude towards anonymous others (Vollebergh, Huiberts, & Meeus, 1999).

In chapter 4 we considered the manifestation of IC within the two major contexts of adolescent life: family and friends. We investigated the degree of generalization of collectivistic tendencies, such as showing respect and giving support, and individualistic tendencies, such as overt expression of disagreements, across these two contexts. Degree of generalization was defined in two ways: it was assessed in terms of correlation coefficients as well as in terms of consistency of average levels across both contexts. Regarding our first method, we expected IC tendencies to be moderately correlated across the nuclear family and the peer group and we had no hypotheses concerning ethnic differences in this respect. Regarding our second method, we anticipated different patterns for ethnic groups. In line with the psychoanalytic notion of the second separation individuation process in adolescence, we expected Dutch youngsters to show a lower level of collectivistic tendencies and a higher level of individualistic tendencies towards their parents in comparison to their peers. Because of the more hierarchical nature of parent-child relations in non-western immigrant families, we expected the opposite pattern to be evident for allochthonous youngsters. Thus, we expected allochthonous youngsters to show stronger collectivistic and weaker individualistic attitudes towards their parents than towards their friends.

The sample for this study consisted of 59 second-generation Moroccan and 196 Dutch adolescents, aged between 12 and 18 years. They were presented with an adapted version of the Individualism Collectivism Interpersonal Assessment Inventory (ICIAI) that covered the domains of parents and peers. In both domains collectivistic tendencies and individualistic tendencies were measured with the same items. We named the scales Accommodating Style and Distancing Style, respectively. Within both contexts, accommodating and distancing behavioral tendencies were negatively correlated with each other.

As anticipated, bivariate correlations between behavioral tendencies across both contexts were positive and of medium effect size. We encountered no ethnic differences in the pattern of correlations. The hypotheses formulated with regard to our second research question were partly confirmed. As expected, Dutch youngsters were relatively individualistic at home compared to their friends, and Moroccan youngsters were relatively collectivistic at home compared to their friends. Contrary to expectation however, Dutch youngsters were equally collectivistic while Moroccan youngsters were equally
individualistic towards both collectives. Each group thus showed larger fluctuations in behavior congruent with its own culture.

In chapter 5 we aimed at the construction of emotion scales suited for adolescents, based on the work of Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (1995) and on the work of Kitayama, Markus, and Kurokawa (2000). Hermans and Hermans-Jansen speak of Self (S) and Other (O) emotions to denote emotions that accompany the human needs for autonomy and relatedness, respectively. Instead, Kitayama et al. use the words interpersonally disengaged and interpersonally engaged emotions. Beside S and O emotions such as self-esteem and love, respectively, Hermans and Hermans-Jansen distinguished positive (P) emotions such as joy and negative (N) emotions such as unhappiness. These emotions are considered neutral with respect to the striving for autonomy and relatedness. Kitayama et al. also distinguish general positive emotions. Within the negative emotions, they make a distinction between negative disengaged emotions (anger) and negative engaged emotions (guilt). We wanted to replicate as many of these emotion scales as possible. As noted before, we considered autonomy and relatedness to be the psychological counterparts of the cultural constructs of individualism and collectivism (Kâgitçibasi, 1997).

In total 476 adolescents attending secondary schools in Utrecht twice filled out a list of 61 emotion words. The first time they indicated how often they experienced each emotion when they were with their parents and the second time when with their friends. We performed Principal Components Analysis (PCA) in both contexts and selected 20 emotion words. Three reliable and valid emotion scales were constructed: a Positive and Self scale (PS scale), an Other scale (O scale), and a Negative scale (N scale). We had to combine the separate P and S scales of Hermans and Hermans-Jansen into one PS scale because the P and S emotions loaded equally high on one component in our analyses. As all negative emotion words comprised one component, it was not possible to construct several negative scales as Kitayama et al. (2000) had done. Bivariate correlations between the PS and O scales were positive and of large effect size; correlations of these scales with the N scale were negative and of medium effect size. Among Dutch and Moroccan youngsters, the scales correlated similarly with each other and with instruments measuring autonomy and attachment. Therefore, the three emotion scales were considered suitable for future research with both ethnic groups.

In chapter 6 the central assumption of IC theory, that connectedness is a central value in collectivist societies whereas autonomy occupies a central place in individualistic cultures, was put to the test. Different aspects of connectedness and autonomy in relation to different target persons were measured among 51 Dutch and 53 Moroccan adolescents living in or near Utrecht. Several aspects of connectedness were measured: family values, attachment and Other (O) emotions. As indicators of autonomy, we used behavioral autonomy, emotional
autonomy, feelings of personal control, and Positive and Self (PS) emotions. The O and the PS emotions were measured in general as well as in relation to four target persons. The main differences between the ethnic groups were found on traditional forms of connectedness, i.e. family values, and on behavioral aspects of autonomy. Moroccan youngsters agreed more strongly with traditional family values and experienced less personal choice in comparison to their Dutch counterparts. Broadly outlined, the ethnic groups were similar on psychological aspects of connectedness and autonomy, such as feelings of intimacy and personal control. The differences that did emerge were found in relation to specific persons. Moroccan youngsters reported more O and PS feelings towards their favorite teacher and were more strongly attached to their friends. These results could be explained by the acculturation task Moroccan youngsters face. To find their way in the Dutch society they need the aid of their teachers and friends to a higher degree than autochthonous youngsters, who can rely more upon the support and knowledge of their parents. Furthermore, Moroccan youngsters reported stronger PS and O feelings towards their mother, who probably functions as an intermediary between them and their often rather authoritarian father.

In the final chapter we summarized the findings of the previous chapters in three ways. First, we simply counted how many times allochthonous and autochthonous youngsters differed on the operationalizations of connectedness and autonomy that were used throughout this dissertation. Second, we counted ethnic differences when the instruments were arranged according to their (in)group specification. Third, we placed the instruments into a typology borrowed from Van Geel (2000) and Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (1995) and examined where ethnic differences occurred in the typology. The instruments were assigned to the typology only on conceptual and not on empirical grounds. Generally, we concluded that most ethnic differences occurred on instruments measuring connectedness. These differences were always in favor of the allochthonous youngsters. No clear pattern emerged when target persons were taken into account. When behavior was measured in general, or in relation to the family, ethnic differences were most likely to occur. A clear pattern did emerge when the typology of Van Geel and of Hermans and Hermans-Jansen was applied. Ethnic differences were most pronounced on instruments simultaneously measuring connectedness and submissiveness.