

University of Groningen

Partnering Patterns

Wachter, Gusta

DOI:
[10.33612/diss.211106811](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.211106811)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2022

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Wachter, G. (2022). *Partnering Patterns: diversity in Union Formation and Dissolution among the Children of Immigrants*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen.
<https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.211106811>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

6.

Conclusions

6.1. Introduction

In this thesis, I examine the union formation and dissolution behaviour of the children of immigrants in the Netherlands while placing it in a broader European context. Interest in this topic has surged during the last two decades as this so-called second generation started entering young adulthood around the turn of the century. Next to scholarly attention, union formation patterns and particularly the partner choice of the second generation have also become part of broader societal and political debates on immigrant integration. The main focus has so far been on differences between the second generation on the one hand, and the first generation and majority population on the other hand, as this can serve as an indication of intergenerational adaptation across migrant generations. However, much less is known about differences within the second generation. The key question addressed in this thesis is therefore: How does union formation and union dissolution in young adulthood vary within the second generation? The dual socialisation of the second generation in both the majority culture and origin culture has been put forward as an important mechanism underlying changes in union formation behaviour between migrant generations. Our understanding of how this dual socialisation influences differentiation within the second generation is, however, more limited. The second question I pose is therefore: How is diversity in union formation and dissolution within the second generation related to processes of socialisation?

By integrating the literature on (dual) socialisation with elements of the life course approach, I first of all aim to examine variation in the union formation and dissolution of the second generation between origin groups. Second, this thesis contributes to the literature by providing a detailed analysis of intragroup differences based on the life course principles of time and space. More specifically, the focus lies on changes across birth cohorts and differentiation in union formation in young adulthood by ethnic composition of the childhood neighbourhood. Third, the level of analysis shifts to diversity in partner choice options and its implications within union types. I thereby go beyond the dominant focus to date, which has been on marital unions and the standard endogamous versus exogamous dichotomy. The detailed analyses conducted in this thesis were possible due to the unique combination of using both comparative survey data as well as longitudinal, individual level, full population register data. Overall, the findings call for a more differentiated, longitudinal study of the second generation acknowledging diversity in type of unions and partner choice options as well as differences within the second generation with regard to when and where they grow up.

Improving our understanding of the union formation and dissolution behaviour of the second generation has both scientific and societal relevance. More in-depth analyses of union formation and dissolution of the second generation can test and challenge existing theories, hypotheses and concepts. The outcomes of these analyses can subsequently inform researchers, policymakers and the public debate in a more precise way. With an increasingly diverse society and an expanding adult second generation, this will become even more important in the future. In the next section (6.2), I will recap the main findings for each of the chapters in this thesis. Then, in section 6.3, I will discuss how these findings relate to

the contributions of this thesis and the research questions. I will conclude with a discussion on directions for future research (section 6.4).

6.2. Summary of the findings

In chapter 2 I examined partner choice in the dating relationships of the numerically largest second-generation origin group in Europe, the Turkish second generation. My findings show that it is common for the Turkish second generation, especially for men, to date a partner with a non-Turkish background. The findings also indicate that endogamous partners can entail different things. Of the partners with a Turkish background about half were born in Turkey, while the other half was part of the second generation themselves. Moreover, of those born in Turkey, some still lived there at the time of dating which indicates that dating takes place across borders. The majority of respondents indicated that their parents approve of their dating relationships. But strikingly, around 30 percent of the second generation noted that their parents did not know about their dating relationship. Women more often perceived their parents to disapprove of their relationships, yet no difference in perceived approval was found by origin of the partner. Finally, my findings suggested that the role of parents in the choice of a partner in dating relationships is relatively limited. Because partner choice in dating relationships serves as an indication of intergroup relations, I conclude this chapter by stating that it needs greater attention in increasingly diverse societies.

The aim of chapter 3 was to test whether change in marriage timing is taking place within the Turkish and Moroccan second generation in the Netherlands. Based on diffusion theories, I hypothesized that younger birth cohorts of Turkish and Moroccan second-generation young adults will postpone marriage. Age at first marriage was compared across entire, successive, birth cohorts of the Turkish and Moroccan second generation (1980-1990) from age 18 to age 25. Confirming my expectations, the findings clearly showed that younger birth cohorts postponed early marriage. The most substantive change was found for the Turkish second generation, but similar patterns were also shown for Moroccan, especially female, second-generation young adults. Because the timing of marriage did not change to the same extent among the Dutch majority population, timing patterns of the Turkish second generation and the Dutch majority population converged. For the Moroccan second generation support for converging patterns was less convincing. I conclude this chapter by emphasizing the need for a more differentiated study of the children of immigrants acknowledging the diffusion of new demographic behaviour among these groups.

With chapter 4 I aimed to unravel the influence of the ethnic composition of the childhood neighbourhood (on different levels of scale) on union formation in young adulthood. The findings indicated that the ethnic composition of the childhood neighbourhood influenced first union formation differently across origin groups. Growing up among higher proportions of Dutch neighbours was found to be related to the postponement of marriage among the Turkish second generation, although after adjusting

for covariates only at the 500 meter scale. No difference in postponement of marriage was found for the Moroccan second generation. Yet for the latter it was found that growing up among more Dutch neighbours increased the risk of entering an unmarried cohabitation, both in comparison to staying single and entering a direct marriage. The findings for the Surinamese showed increased rates of entering an unmarried cohabitation and lower risks of direct marriage for those growing up among more Dutch neighbours. Overall, the proportion of Dutch neighbours appeared to have more influence at lower scales. In sum, this chapter suggests that the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood, especially the proximate neighbourhood, in which the children of immigrants grow up may influence their union formation behaviours in later life. This stresses the need to take a more local approach when studying the union formation of the second generation than has mostly been the case so far.

Chapter 5 challenged and tested the dominant hypothesis that exogamous migrant couples are more likely to separate than endogamous couples. This was done by examining whether and how the ethnic composition of couples related to the dissolution of unmarried cohabiting unions among the children of Caribbean immigrants. My findings from discrete-time event-history analyses indicated that couples were most stable when one of the partners was Dutch. In other words, exogamy seemed to function as a protective factor in unmarried cohabiting unions among the Caribbean second generation. This supports convergence rather than homogamy theory. Surprisingly, I found little difference in the risk of union dissolution by generation of the co-ethnic partner. With regard to gendered patterns, the findings revealed that exogamous couples in which the men had a second-generation Caribbean background and the women were Dutch were less stable than when the women had a Caribbean background. Again no differences were found between couples with a first and second-generation partner. Overall, this chapter stresses the importance of taking diversity in population structures and union formation dynamics into account when conducting empirical studies and formulating theoretical starting points.

6.3. Discussion of the findings

In this section I reflect on the main findings about diversity in union formation within the second generation along the lines of the three-stage model outlined in the introduction (see section 1.4). First, differences between origin groups within the second generation are discussed. Second, I zoom in on specific origin groups and elaborate on the differentiation in their union formation behaviour by the macro context in which they grew up (when and where). In the third stage, I discuss the variety in partner choice options within different union types and their implications.

6.3.1. Diversity in union formation between origin groups

The first stage of analysis examines how union formation differs across second-generation origin groups. Corroborating previous studies (De Valk, 2011; Huschek et al., 2011; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2006), I conclude that union formation of the second generation in the

Netherlands varies depending on the country of origin of their parents. This variation reflects differences in the norms about union formation in the origin countries. Among the second generation of Turkish and Moroccan descent relatively young, direct marriage is the norm and unmarried cohabitation is limited. This is in line with prevailing union formation patterns in Turkey and Morocco, at least in the rural areas where their parents originate from. On the other hand, and reflecting norms in Suriname and the Dutch Antilles, unmarried cohabitation and union dissolution are common among the Surinamese and Antillean second generation in the Netherlands. Together, these findings imply that intergenerational transmission of union formation preferences and norms takes place through parental socialisation.

My findings moreover reveal that even if origin groups share similar cultural and migration backgrounds it is crucial to distinguish between them. Although direct marriage is the norm within both the Turkish and Moroccan second generation, there are differences between these groups as well. Corroborating previous research (Huschek et al., 2011), I show that the children of Turkish immigrants enter marriage at younger ages than the Moroccan second generation. My findings with regard to cohort change, moreover, show larger changes across birth cohorts for the Turkish second generation. This may have to do with the stronger group-orientation among the Turkish migrant population in the Netherlands, making their children more inclined to conform to parental preferences than the Moroccan second generation whose ethnic community is less tightly knit (Crul & Doornik, 2003). Socialisation within the majority culture may therefore have a greater impact on the union formation behaviour of the latter. Both the Surinamese and Antillean second generation are children of postcolonial immigrants but differences exist between these groups. The Antillean second generation, for example, more often have a Dutch partner, and couples comprising two second-generation partners are very rare among this group compared to the Surinamese second generation.

In this thesis I compare second-generation origin groups with each other, and also compare them to majority-group peers. In the literature on intergenerational adaptation, the expectation is usually that adapting to the norms of the majority population means demonstrating more 'modern' union formation behaviour. My study makes it evident, however, that the direction of adaptation in union formation patterns depends on the specific group under study and is not necessarily a path towards more modern or less traditional demographic behaviour. The differences in norms about union formation between Turkey and Morocco, on the one hand, and the Netherlands, on the other hand, are not the same as is the case for Suriname and the Antilles. The Surinamese second generation, for example, is found to enter unmarried cohabiting unions at later ages than the Dutch. Adapting to Dutch norms therefore implies partnering at younger ages. This is the opposite of what would be expected with regard to marriage for the Turkish and Moroccan second generation. Adapting to Dutch marriage norms for these groups implies marrying at older ages. Moreover, my analysis shows that endogamous Dutch couples have lower rates of union dissolution than endogamous Surinamese or Antillean couples. This suggests that adapting to Dutch norms means lower dissolution rates. Overall, these findings

stress the need to distinguish between different origin groups when formulating hypotheses and theoretical starting points as directions of adaptation may be different.

6.3.2. Diversity in union formation within origin groups

The second stage of my analysis goes one step further, shifting from intergroup differences to intragroup differences in union formation behaviour. Differentiation in union formation within specific origin groups is studied according to the macro context in which the second generation grow up. Based on the life course principle of time and space, I examine whether union formation varies depending on the second generation's birth cohort and childhood neighbourhood. I conclude that it is important to take a more detailed look at the macro context in which the second generation is embedded when trying to explain their union formation behaviour. The time at which the second generation is born and then grows up, for example, influences their union formation behaviour in young adulthood. My findings clearly demonstrate the postponement of marriage within the Turkish and Moroccan second generation across birth cohorts. Especially at very young ages (<21) marriage is becoming rare. This is not to say that they will forego marriage altogether, yet change in age at first marriage is taking place. The association between the ethnic composition of the childhood neighbourhood and union formation in young adulthood is less clear. Yet, especially at a small scale, there do appear to be some differences in the time of entering a first union depending on the proportion of Dutch neighbours the second generation grow up amongst.

As well as examining whether variation in union formation exists depending on the time and place of growing up, I also aim to unravel whether differentiation in union formation across birth cohorts and childhood neighbourhoods is based on the differences in socialisation contexts or takes place due to compositional variation. Because my findings with regard to cohort change remain significant after controlling for socio-economic characteristics, I conclude that change in marriage timing appears to take place regardless of the composition of the second generation. Rather, a shift in norms about preferred marriage age seems to be taking place within the Turkish and Moroccan second generation. Although the potential influence of changes in legislation about marriage migrants on marriage timing should not be disregarded (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2010). Compositional effects are, however, found to play a larger role when trying to explain differences in first union formation based on the proportion of Dutch neighbours during childhood. The initial difference can possibly be explained by selection of households into certain neighbourhoods. Households with higher socio-economic status or a stronger orientation towards the majority culture may, for example, move to areas with higher proportions of Dutch neighbours. In that case, household characteristics are more important in explaining union formation than neighbourhood characteristics. Overall, this may suggest that the period in which someone grows up (which is determined by the year they are born) may be more important than where they grow up. Norms about union formation may potentially diffuse across the entire second generation, regardless of their childhood neighbourhood.

Socialisation is not only dependent on the macro context of time and space. Family factors influence the norms and preferences transmitted to the next generation as well. As in previous studies (Kleinepier & De Valk, 2016; Wiik & Holland, 2018; Zorlu & Mulder,

2011), my findings show clear differentiation in union formation behaviour depending on the number of foreign-born parents. Those with one Dutch-born parent¹⁶ are found to marry at later ages, are more likely to enter unmarried cohabitation and more often opt for an exogamous partner. This suggests that this so-called 2.5 generation is more strongly socialised with norms and preferences prevailing in the Dutch mainstream culture. Interesting to note here though is that the Dutch-born parent does not necessarily need to have a Dutch background. In fact, the parent born in the Netherlands may him or herself be part of the second generation. In a chapter that I was invited to write in the bi-annual report on the integration of migrants in the Netherlands¹⁷, I show that the Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese second generation increasingly often has one parent who is born in the Netherlands. Yet I also show that, especially for the Surinamese and Turkish second generation, it is becoming more prevalent that this Dutch-born parent has a second-generation migrant background (Wachter & De Valk, 2018). This raises the question how to measure the (dual) socialisation of the descendants of immigrants in the future. Merely considering the country of birth of people and their parents may no longer be adequate proxies for ethnic origin and associated cultural norms in the parental home.

Another important source of differentiation in union formation behaviour within origin groups is gender. Throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis, and in line with previous studies, differences are found between men and women. Men, for example, enter unions at older ages in all groups and they more often date outside ethnic group boundaries. These differences may be attributed to different socialisation processes for men and women. Research suggests that this is especially true with regard to dating behaviour, as communities are typically more concerned with potentially promiscuous behaviour of women than men (Bordini & Sperb, 2013; Eşsizoglu et al., 2011). This is in line with my finding that Turkish second-generation women more often than men indicate that they perceive their parents to disapprove their dating relationship. Diffusion of marriage timing, however, does not show major gender differences. Some underlying mechanisms of union formation may therefore be more universal.

As touched upon in section 1.3, social inheritance and socio-economic status may underlie variations in union formation within origin groups as well. With regard to parental SES, especially the mother's educational level and employment appear to matter. Those with employed and higher educated mothers are, for example, found to be more likely to date a majority-group partner compared to a second-generation partner. Having an employed mother at age 15, moreover, has a small delaying influence on entering a direct marriage. Yet no association is found with regard to entering unmarried cohabitation. The SES of the second generation themselves seems more influential. Being enrolled in education overall delays entering a union, especially unmarried cohabitation. The influence of educational level is less uniform and appears to differ by gender. My findings reveal that second-generation Caribbean couples are most likely to separate when both partners have less

¹⁶ Or other European-born parent in chapter 2.

¹⁷ The 'Jaarrapport Integratie' is a bi-annual report on the integration of immigrants and their descendants in the Netherlands. The report is composed by Statistics Netherlands and commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

education and least likely when both partners have higher education. Taking a couples perspective may, therefore, be particularly useful in studies on union formation and dissolution as the combination of educational levels could be more important for union trajectories than individual educational attainment.

My findings about intragroup differences also have implications for research on intergenerational adaptation across migrant generations and the way the concept of dual socialisation is used. The argument of dual socialisation as a facilitator of intergenerational adaptation across migrant generations often implies that all second-generation young adults in the Netherlands (or other European countries) have experienced the same level of socialisation within the majority culture and the culture of their parents' country of origin. Some of my findings, however, indicate that a more local and temporal approach is needed in order to understand how processes of dual socialisation relate to intergenerational adaptation. For example, cohort change in marriage timing seems to be happening at a more rapid speed within the, especially Turkish, second generation than within the majority population among whom postponement is found to take place at lower rates. These findings show that marriage timing of mainly the Turkish second generation is converging towards that of the Dutch majority population. This suggests that intergenerational adaptation accelerates across birth cohorts and the time at which a person is born should be taken into account when conducting empirical studies. Moreover, some aspects of union formation are more similar to patterns dominant among the majority population for the second generation growing up among more Dutch neighbours. The local residential context and opportunities for interacting with majority group members during childhood should therefore not be overlooked.

These two findings focus on socialisation within the majority culture and relate to the (local) context in the Netherlands. Yet migrant families often live transnational lives (Vertovec, 2009), as is also shown by transnational dating partners of the Turkish second generation. The first question this transnationalism raises is to what extent the second generation actually grows up in their birth country. One of the possible explanations put forward for not finding a difference in the risk of union dissolution between different types of endogamous Caribbean couples is that some may partially be raised in their parents' country of origin. Another study I participated in (De Jong et al., 2020)¹⁸ shows that the second generation relatively often emigrates during childhood compared to the majority population. Those who come back to the Netherlands and enter a union there have experienced a different type of socialisation than those who grow up in their birth country entirely. Diversification in local socialisation contexts during childhood may, in this sense, result in diversification in union formation patterns in later life. Secondly, migrant families keep a certain level of attachment to their country of origin through contact with and visits to family and friends as well as through media outlets (Fokkema et al., 2012; Klok et al., 2020). The country of origin, in this sense, exerts its influence beyond parental socialisation. The life course principle of space in the context of the second generation is therefore not merely the geographically bounded area in which they live, it can also be the (cultural)

¹⁸ This study was conducted within the same research project as this thesis.

context of a more distant place. This implies that there is not 'one' second generation the majority population can be compared to and that specific macro contexts in which socialisation takes place need to be considered when making comparisons.

Overall, these findings about intragroup differences suggest that when applying socialisation theories the specific local and historical context in which the second generation grows up is key. As the importance of socializing agents changes across the life-course and socialisation contexts can vary due to (temporary) emigration, internal mobility or changing compositions of the neighbourhood, it is crucial to approach (dual) socialisation from the perspective of life-span development and account for accumulative experiences when trying to understand diversity in the union formation of the second generation.

6.3.3. Diversity in union type and partner choice

At the third stage of analysis, diversity in partner choice within union types and its implications are studied. In the literature on partner choice of migrant populations there is a focus on an endogamous – exogamous dichotomy. Yet the meaning and operationalization of this dichotomy for the second generation is questioned based on the findings of my analysis in this thesis. Many more distinctions are possible within the framework of endogamy versus exogamy and children of immigrants opt for a diverse range of partners. The Turkish second generation, for example, is found to date different types of endogamous partners all with a co-ethnic Turkish background. They are either born in their parents' country of origin (first generation), still live in their parents' country of origin (transnational) or they have a co-ethnic second-generation migrant background. Partners without a Turkish background (i.e. exogamous), on the other hand, have either a majority-group background or a non-co-ethnic migrant background.

These non-co-ethnic partners are often merely categorized as exogamous partners and typically not examined in more detail. The heterogeneity of this group makes it difficult to postulate hypotheses. As an article I wrote in Dutch shows (Wachter & de Valk, 2019), this 'other' partner choice category is, however, increasing in the Netherlands, at least for marriages. The Turkish and Moroccan second generation even more often opt for such an 'other' partner rather than a Dutch partner. My findings on partner choice in marriage in this article reveal a broad variety of origins within this overarching category. Yet three underlying patterns can be distinguished for this 'other' partner choice. First, these partners are relatively often part of one of the other four largest non-European migrant populations in the Netherlands, reflecting the importance of group size and meeting opportunities. Second, my findings reveal that what appear to be exogamous partners may in fact be endogamous partners, depending on what criteria are used to determine endogamy. Certain marriage partners share cultural and religious similarities as reflected in countries of origin, such as Iraqi partners for the Turkish second generation and Indian partners for the Surinamese second generation. Third, partners relatively often originate in neighbouring countries. European immigrants make up a large share of the total migrant population and it is, moreover, relatively easy for partners to move to the Netherlands. However, the way migrant generations are defined in the Netherlands and many other European countries seems to disguise a particular type of endogamy. I show that first-generation European

partners in some cases are part of the second-generation in their own country of birth. A first-generation German partner may in fact have a second-generation Turkish background. Using country of birth as an indication of migrant generation may no longer be adequate as an indication of endogamy, especially not for migrant groups with large European diasporas.

The previous paragraph shows that when examining the partner choices of the second generation it is particularly difficult to determine what endogamy entails. It can be argued that couples with two second-generation partners are truly endogamous due to their shared experience with dual socialisation. Based on the homogamy principle it would then be expected that the second generation prefers a second-generation partner with the same ethnic background. And, moreover, that couples formed of two second-generation partners would be most stable. My findings are, however, not in line with this interpretation of homogamy theory. In dating relationships, the second generation does date others with the same second-generation background but this is not the majority of dating partners. In fact, dating partners have a variety of origins and the Turkish second generation relatively often opts for a majority group partner. I moreover show that couples among the Caribbean second generation are most stable when one partner has a Dutch background, not in case of two second-generation partners. This again goes against the expectation based on the homogamy principle that couples with two second-generation partners are truly endogamous.

The finding that the dating relationships of the Turkish second generation are relatively often with majority group partners emphasizes the need to move beyond a focus on marriage as a way of measuring interethnic partnerships. Interethnic marriages are often seen as an indicator of integration and argued to be an indication of diminishing boundaries between ethnic groups that can be beneficial for social cohesion (for a critical reflection see Sterckx, 2015). According to the winnowing hypothesis, however, homogamy becomes more important with higher levels of commitment in a union (Blackwell & Lichter, 2004). As marriage is the type of union typically involving the highest degree of commitment it is more often endogamous than cohabiting and dating relationships. Marriage is, however, no longer the only type of union people opt for. As discussed in section 6.3.1, unmarried cohabitation is common among the Surinamese and Antillean second generation. And 6.3.2 shows that part of the Turkish and Moroccan second generation also opt for (a period of) unmarried cohabitation. In diverse societies such as the Netherlands where different origin groups are represented, it is thus crucial to take different types of unions into account when making claims about interethnic relationships. This is especially the case going into the future where new birth cohorts of relatively traditional migrant populations may increasingly adopt periods of dating and unmarried cohabitation, as we see happening with marriage timing. By focusing mainly on partner choice in marriages, the degree to which group boundaries are overall crossed in unions of the second generation may be underestimated.

My findings with regard to diversity in partner choices and union types within different origin groups call for critical reflection on theories about union formation and partner choice among the second generation. Theories about union formation, union dissolution and partner choice have predominantly been tailored to and tested for marital unions and focus on origin groups holding relatively conservative norms. The generalizability of

hypotheses and theories about union formation, dissolution and partner choice can, however, only be tested by expanding the types of unions studied. Underlying mechanisms such as preferences, the role of third parties and opportunities (Kalmijn, 1998) may, for example, differ depending on the type of union. An indication for this is that the Turkish second generation is found to relatively often date outside ethnic group boundaries, especially compared to what research on interethnic marriage shows (Hamel et al., 2012; Huschek et al., 2012; Milewski & Hamel, 2010). A preference for endogamous partners in dating relationships may thus be less strong, particularly for men. Moreover, conforming to parental preferences may be more important with regard to marriage because of its larger impact on parents and the family. This is indicated by findings in chapter 2 that show a relatively small role of parents in the choice of a dating partner, whereas literature on marriage implies a stronger influence of parents on partner choice (Huschek et al., 2012; Van Zantvliet et al., 2014). The dominant hypothesis in literature on union dissolution - that exogamous couples are more likely to separate than endogamous ones - is also challenged in this thesis as my results reveal that unmarried cohabiting relationships among the Caribbean second generation are more stable when the partner has a Dutch background.

Overall the findings from this third stage of analysis stress that a simple distinction between exogamy and endogamy is no longer accurate or just when studying the second generation in Europe as both can entail a variety of origins. Moreover, the meaning of partner choice may vary across different union types. Partner choice in dating, unmarried cohabitation and marriage need to be accounted for in order to better assess the degree to which group boundaries are crossed in relationships.

6.4. Broader implications and suggestions for future research

The aim of this thesis is to provide a more in-depth analysis of the union formation and dissolution behaviour within the second generation in the Netherlands. Although the findings contribute to the literature in multiple ways, a number of limitations can be identified that offer avenues for future research. First, the theoretical framework is built around socialisation theories and the transmission of norms about union formation from various socializing agents to the second generation. I however only study the actual behaviour of the second generation and do not measure socialisation directly. More research is needed to better understand how processes of socialisation work. Merely comparing the behaviour of parents and their children or the behaviour of peers is thereby not sufficient as it does not capture the facilitating and hampering factors at play during the transmission of norms and preferences. A way forward would be to study the type and quality of relationships with different socializing agents and their influence on the socialisation process among the descendants of immigrants. Such research to date mainly focuses on the level of closeness and conflict in the relationship between parents and their children (e.g. De Valk & Liefbroer, 2007a; Idema & Phalet, 2007; Sen Das, 2018). It is however crucial to move beyond a focus on biological parents when studying socialisation processes. The family has become more complex, with a multitude of possible family structures including step-parents

who may also act as socializing agents (De Leeuw & Kalmijn, 2020; Kalmijn, 2015). Moreover, the influence of peers may be substantial as well, especially with increasing age. As the importance of different socializing agents may shift over the life course, it is important to take a longitudinal, dynamic approach in future research. Moreover, in order to study socialisation processes among the second generation quantitatively, survey studies will remain important as population register data does not include information about the type and quality of interpersonal relationships. Finally, this line of research would benefit from taking an interdisciplinary approach by building on the insights on socialisation, (complex) family relations and personal development from cross-cultural psychology, developmental psychology, sociology and demography.

Second, the argument that the second generation is socialised in two cultures and that this dual socialisation impacts union formation is referred to differently throughout all chapters. Although the second generation is likely to be socialised in both cultures, a sole focus on dual socialisation ignores the fact that the Dutch society is diverse and multicultural. Other cultural norms may therefore exert their influence as well. This is not just the case for the children of immigrants. Regardless of migrant background, children grow up surrounded by a multitude of ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Although diversity is highest in the larger cities like Amsterdam and The Hague, it is not just an urban phenomenon. Throughout the country, the number of people with a migrant background is increasing (Jennissen et al., 2018). This diversification of populations calls for a reconsideration of theories that are used to explain the behaviour of both minority and majority groups. Moreover, in an increasingly diverse society it is crucial to come up with better ways of measuring socialisation contexts, not only for the descendants of immigrants but also for the majority population. I therefore argue that we need to change our perspective on socialisation and switch from the concept of dual to plural socialisation. As suggested by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (Jennissen et al., 2018), a paradigm shift is needed in which diversity is no longer seen as the (local) exception, but as the norm that influences the life course in a variety of ways across different domains.

Third, with my research I clearly show the diversity in union formation and dissolution behaviour within the second generation in the Netherlands. Like the total population, the second generation is expected to become more diverse. Due to an increase in partnering across ethnic group boundaries, more children of immigrants will have mixed parents in the future. This mixed parentage is becoming increasingly complex, resulting in more diverse combinations of origins represented within the second generation. A second-generation child can have one Dutch parent and one foreign-born parent, two foreign-born parents from the same country of origin, two foreign-born parents from different countries of origin, or one foreign-born parent and one Dutch-born parent with a second generation migrant background. In turn, this increasing diversification of the second generation also has implications for their own children. Many different combinations of parental origin are possible for the third generation. Researchers and policymakers should critically reflect on the possibility and meaningfulness of distinguishing between migrant generations and categorizing origin groups when conducting and interpreting future research. Related to the desirability and possibility of categorizations of migrant populations in increasingly diverse

societies is, moreover, the question of data availability. Certain countries, like the Netherlands, have high quality population registers and make these available for (scientific) research. This allows for detailed analyses of union formation behaviour of diverse populations as conducted in this thesis. In the scenario that objectively measuring ethnic origin becomes more difficult due to blurring group boundaries, a more useful concept for future generations may be self-identified origin (Aspinall, 2003, 2009). This is already regularly used in studies from the US where they have a longer migration history and therefore more adult migrant and minority groups (Qian & Lichter, 2007; Van Zantvliet & Kalmijn, 2013). This may be a fruitful approach because for some origin groups a distinction may still matter in later migrant generations, whereas for others it will play a less significant role. Yet, information about self-identified origin is lacking in register data. Ideally, large-scale surveys including such items would be linked to population register data. In this way it can, first of all, be determined what measure of ethnic origin is more relevant for specific groups and outcomes. And, moreover, differentiation within the second generation can be studied in even more detail.

Fourth, although the population register data used in this thesis offers a unique opportunity to examine union formation and dissolution in detail, it lacks information about religious affiliation and religiosity. These are important determinants of union formation behaviour (Berghammer, 2012; Eggebeen & Dew, 2009) and may influence diversity within the second generation as well. Studies have shown that children of immigrants with a religious background, especially Muslims, hold more conservative union formation norms and are less in favour of unmarried cohabitation (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018; Kogan & Weißmann, 2020). Across denominations, however, it has also been found that the more religious people are, the stronger the influence of religion on attitudes towards union formation (Berrington, 2020; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018; Kogan & Weißmann, 2020). As secularization has been argued to be one of the societal drivers of changing union formation patterns among the majority population in western Europe, it would be interesting to examine how religiosity relates to changes in union formation among the children of immigrants. A cross-European study by Rijken and Liefbroer (2019) on the relationship between Christianity and marriage attitudes suggests that an adaptation mechanism may be at play; religious people may adapt their marriage attitudes to that of the non-religious when they live in a very secularized area. It may be that similar patterns hold for the children of immigrants growing up in the highly secularized Dutch context. Adapting to Dutch union formation norms will thus not necessarily mean that levels of religiosity are decreasing among the second generation. In fact, although my research shows that changes in union formation patterns are taking place within the Turkish and Moroccan second generation, Huijnk (2018) shows that secularization among these groups is limited.

Fifth, social inheritance is one of the ways through which parents influence the union formation behaviour of their children. Although some aspects are taken into account in this thesis I do not provide a full overview of how parental socio-economic status impacts the union formation processes of the children of immigrants. Previous studies, however, clearly show the importance of parental education on the timing and type of union formation (Mooyaart & Liefbroer, 2016; Wiik, 2009). More highly educated parents may socialize their

children differently than lower educated parents. There is a debate in the literature whether this has to do with different cultural preferences transmitted in higher and lower educated families or with differences in structural opportunities and constraints. Mooyaart and Liefbroer (2016) show that higher parental education in the Netherlands is associated with a higher likelihood of opting for unmarried cohabitation as the first union. This is the opposite effect of what has been found in several other countries, such as the United States (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008; Manning & Cohen, 2015). A possible explanation put forward by the authors is that, in the Netherlands, economic circumstances may be less important in union formation decisions due to the relatively generous welfare system making union formation feasible for most people. Yet economic circumstances are not the same across the Netherlands and some migrant groups are overall less well off (Gracia et al., 2016; Statistics Netherlands, 2020e). The extent to which differences in parental socio-economic circumstances influence union formation behaviour across different second-generation origin groups deserves further attention in future research. It is thereby important to bear in mind that higher educational attainment does not necessarily lead to stronger adaptation to majority group norms. In comparison to their first-generation parents, the second generation is doing increasingly well in school and their educational attainment has made remarkable progress (Crul, 2000a). Yet as the integration paradox posits, economically more integrated and highly educated immigrants may become more disassociated from the majority culture as a result of higher perceived discrimination (De Vroome et al., 2014; Verkuyten, 2016). Socio-economic status and educational attainment may thus impact union formation differently among certain origin groups than it does among the majority population.

Sixth, this thesis focusses predominantly on the Dutch context. Other countries are however also home to many children of immigrants. Overall, patterns of intergenerational adaptation are comparable with the second generation generally being more similar to the majority population than their parents were (Hannemann et al., 2018; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2006; Pailhé, 2015; Rahn et al., 2015; Wiik & Holland, 2018). As the current and previous studies show some differences however also exist in the union formation behaviour of the second-generation across countries. Comparative research on intragroup differences across time and space across European countries is missing and will be needed to determine whether these life course principles have a generalizable influence on union formation and dissolution of the second generation. Moreover, zooming out and taking a European perspective is also interesting with regard to the free movement of people between member states. Because of this free movement it is easy for second-generation partners to migrate to another European country potentially creating an intra-European second-generation marriage market. Ideally, in the future, we would have linked European data to follow the life course of the second generation also after migrating.

Finally, in this thesis I focus on the four largest non-European second-generation origin groups in the Netherlands. I clearly show diversity in union formation and dissolution behaviour within these groups. In the future, new second-generation origin groups will however enter young adulthood and start their first unions. Since the enlargement of the European Union, immigration from eastern Europe has increased tremendously (Statistics

Netherlands, 2019a). In 2019, most immigrants in the Netherlands came from Poland, and Romania and Bulgaria were also in the top five main origin countries (Statistics Netherlands, 2019c). The Polish second generation is already the eighth largest second-generation origin group in the Netherlands (see Figure 1.1 in section 1.2.1). Their life courses are expected to differ from the non-European groups examined in this thesis. One major difference is the possibility of parents and families to move freely between the origin country and the Netherlands, something that was not possible for the parents of the Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese second generation. In the case of circular migration these children may grow up and be socialised in different countries, potentially influencing their union formation in later life. For the children of eastern European immigrants transnationalism may therefore take a more prominent place in shaping their life course. Moreover, under the assumption that the free movement of people between EU member states will remain intact, restrictions on bringing a partner in from the origin country will be very different from how it is for the children of the former guest workers studied in this thesis. It is up to future research to follow the life courses of new second-generation origin groups in a dynamic and longitudinal way and to assess how their union formation trajectories take shape.

