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Migrant family matters

Rooijackers, Elisabeth Nathanaël

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CHAPTER 2

MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONS IN IMMIGRANT AND NONIMMIGRANT FAMILIES

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2.1. Introduction

Despite academic interest in intergenerational solidarity in European countries (for an overview see Nauck & Steinbach 2009), studies that focused on immigrant families are still sparse. The changing ethnic composition of Western European societies, however, has important implications for care arrangements and family relations. Individuals of immigrant origin constitute an unrecognized, but growing group of the aging populations. At the same time, older immigrants are among the most deprived and excluded (Warnes, Friedrich, Kellaheer, & Torres 2004). It is far from apparent how intergenerational solidarity takes shape in these families. Settling in another country frequently means accommodating to different socio-structural and cultural circumstances, particularly for non-Western immigrants moving to a Western country. Although they were raised in a society where state-based social arrangements are uncommon and collectivistic rather than individualistic ideals tend to be the norm (Inglehart & Baker 2000; Kagitçibasi, 1996; Todd 1985), children of immigrants grow up and are socialized into cultural norms of the country of settlement.

This article started by questioning how patterns of intergenerational solidarity characterized different types of relationships among parents and adult children in non-Western immigrant and native families in Western Europe. Research has shown that considering multiple, rather than separate facets of intergenerational solidarity offers valuable insights into the meaning of relationships (Dykstra & Fokkema, 2011; Silverstein & Bengtson 1997; Van Gaalen & Dykstra 2006). Immigrant groups, however, have not yet been studied from this perspective. As a theoretical framework, we drew upon the Model of Family Change (MFC; Kagitçibasi 1996), a theory which views family relations as shaped by contextual conditions. The MFC has been used to explain variation across societies (Georgas et al. 1997; Kagitçibasi, Ataca, & Diri 2005; Keller et al. 2003; Nauck 2010) as well as differences between immigrant and nonimmigrant families in Western countries (De Valk & Schans 2008; Durgel, Leyendecker, Yagmurlu, & Harwood 2009; Phalet & Güngör 2009). However, no study has empirically reconstructed the expected relationship structures in the context of migration. Instead, the MFC has served as a general framework to interpret findings concerning separate features of family relations (e.g., De Valk & Schans 2008; Kagitçibasi et al. 2005).

The aim of this paper, therefore, was to empirically test the MFC theory by applying Latent Class Analysis (LCA) for constructing a typology of intergenerational relations by combining information about practical and emotional bonds among families of different origin. Rather than examining the MFC in terms of family values (e.g., Phalet & Güngör 2009), our focus was on behaviors of intergenerational solidarity. Given the key role as caregivers and kin keepers of women (Gerstel & Gallagher 2001) in general and mothers in particular, our study looks into relations between adult children and their mothers.

The guiding questions of the article were, first, what types of mother-child relationships can be distinguished among non-Western immigrant and native families in the Netherlands and, second, to what extent do relationship types differ by origin group, sex, and age? Data were used from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS; Dykstra et al., 2004) on the relation between Dutch and non-Western immigrant adult children and their mothers, as reported from the perspective of the child. Considering the history with diverse migration flows and growing number of second-generation immigrants in the Netherlands, this country is an appropriate context for studying the impact of migration on family ties.

2.2. Theory and expectations

2.2.1. The Model of Family Change

According to theories of cultural differences in “family systems,” non-Western immigrants come from regions where kinship takes a more prominent place than in Western countries (Inglehart & Baker 2000; Todd 1985). The MFC links this variation in family relations to socio-structural and cultural circumstances. Because non-Western and Western regions differ systematically in conditions, these societies would bring forward family systems that vary in the extent to which family members rely on each other for practical and emotional support.

In rural societies, low levels of affluence and an absence or unreliability of social welfare provisions implies that family members need to depend on each other to ensure material wellbeing. Because children are an economic asset and old-age security for their parents (Fawcett 1983; Trommsdorff & Nauck 2005), their independence would threaten the family’s welfare. Parenting styles are therefore oriented toward child obedience (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard 2003), and

children are socialized into lifelong family obligatory norms (Hofstede, 2001). These conditions foster family relations that are close in both practical and emotional respect—a family system of full-interdependence. Contrary, the situation of industrialized countries is assumed to promote a family system of independence. The more prosperous economies and social welfare policies in these societies exempt family members from the need to depend on each other for practical support. Furthermore, as processes of individualization and secularization have diminished the centrality of traditional collectivistic oriented institutions, the value of individual freedom of choice has become more dominant and increasingly taken normative precedence over family obligations (Inglehart & Norris 2003; Thornton & Young-DeMarco 2001). Rather than being a threat to family livelihood, autonomy and self-reliance of the child are actually useful to get ahead in society and parents encourage children to become independent and self-sufficient (Keller, Borke, Yovsi, Lohaus, & Jensen 2005). In addition to full-interdependence and independence, the MFC distinguishes a third system which is characterized by primary importance of emotional bonds. In non-Western societies, urbanization and economic advancements make the economic contribution of the child no longer necessary for the family's material survival. The value of children for parents therefore changed from practical to more psychological or emotional (Kagitçibasi 1982). Although achievement and autonomy gain importance over obedience and conformity as parenting goals (Kagitçibasi & Ataca 2005), emotional ties become of core importance to families.

By connecting family relations to changing contextual conditions, the MFC offers a theoretical basis for characterizing contemporary family relations among non-Western immigrants and natives in the Netherlands. Because norms are acquired through early socialization (Burr & Mutchler 1999), non-Western immigrant families would retain the features of a full-interdependent family system. Dutch natives, considering they grew up in an individualized Northwestern European society with an elaborate social welfare system, would predominantly maintain family relations that are characterized by independence. However, the experience of migration affects family relations. After settling in a new country, the influence of the home culture generally decreases over time (Alba & Nee 1997). The emotional-interdependence family system in the MFC can help us understand how family relations develop as non-Western immigrants negotiate between the legacy of the country of origin and their current situation in the destination country. Because close emotional ties are not

discouraged in Western European societies, their relevance for family relations would remain. In addition, challenges that are related to the process of migration may even strengthen family ties, as a way to cope with insecurities (Nauck 2007). Nevertheless, whereas emotional bonds would endure, practical reliance may diminish. Western European countries offer state-based forms of support that can take over some of the responsibility of families. Moreover, processes of acculturation and the fact that individual autonomy is beneficial for the future of their children may result in immigrant parents increasingly endorsing their independence. The foregoing means that the situation of immigrant families may foster the development of emotional-interdependent relations.

Emotional-interdependence can also be expected to characterize intergenerational relations among Dutch. Although family relations in Western countries have become increasingly independent over the last century, the MFC proposes that more recent cultural developments have led to conditions that promote a family system of emotional-interdependence (Kagitçibasi 2005). Combined with individualization and secularization processes, contemporary demographic trends, such as rising divorce rates and increased participation of women in the labor force, raised public concerns about potential negative effects on family relations. However, although individualistic ideals are increasingly criticized, human relational values have been emphasized (Dykstra & Fokkema 2011; Inglehart 1991; Young 1992). Moreover, individualism has also been challenged by the argument that an orientation toward the individual together with changed negotiation styles actually brings about more affective orientations in families (Lewis 2001). These different perspectives nevertheless assume that contemporary Western societies encourage emotional-interdependent family relations because values of relatedness are reconciled with a recognition of individual autonomy as an essential personal quality.

2.2.2. Variations in family relations

The ideas of the MFC in terms of differences between families of various origins are partially corroborated in previous research. It was shown, for example, that traditional family values in non-Western immigrant families persist. In the Netherlands, immigrant (adult) children were found to abide to norms of filial obligation more strongly than their native Dutch counterparts (De Valk & Schans

2008). Other studies similarly indicated that family values and family-related attitudes remain important in parental socialization in migrant families and are quite effectively passed on to the second generation (De Valk & Liefbroer 2007; Nauck 2001; Phalet & Schönplflug 2001; Schönplflug 2001). At the same time, other studies suggested that adjusted parental socialization goals and styles foster emotional-interdependent relations between parents and children in immigrant families (Durgel et al. 2009; Pels & De Haan 2007). The shift from full-interdependent to emotional-interdependent family relations across immigrant generations, moreover, has been documented by Phalet & Güngör (2009), who examined the degree to which Turkish immigrants in Germany adhere to values that reflect the different family models. Compared with the attention for family values among immigrants, few studies have addressed behavioral aspects of intergenerational solidarity. The limited existing research indicated that differences in family behaviors between immigrants and nonimmigrants are less pronounced than in values. Among immigrant adult children in the Netherlands, for instance, the stronger endorsement of filial obligations was not found to translate directly into higher levels of actual support (Schans & De Valk 2011; Schans & Komter 2010).

With respect to Dutch families, empirical evidence supported the expectation that contemporary conditions foster independent and emotional-interdependent ties. Studies have documented the weakened authoritarian orientation of households and greater mutual respect for the autonomy of both parent and child. At the same time, intergenerational solidarity among Western European families has been found to be quite strong. Parents and children maintain frequent contacts and adult children provide support to their aging parents (Glaser, Tomassini, & Grundy 2004; Tomassini et al. 2004). Ties are in particular strong on affective dimensions such as relationship quality and feelings of cohesion (Dykstra et al. 2006; Georgas et al. 2006).

Apart from variation between families depending on their origin and immigrant status, previous studies suggested that there are important differences within families. Intergenerational relations have repeatedly been found to differ, for example, by sex and age of parent and child. Research from the United States (Atkinson, Kivett, & Campbell 1986; Rossi & Rossi 1990) as well as from European countries (Fokkema, Ter Bekke, & Dykstra 2008; Komter & Vollebergh 2002) showed that mothers and daughters are more engaged in contacts and providing help to kin compared with fathers and sons. Studies that focused on family relations over the life-course indicated

that relationships tend to be most exchange intensive when children are young adults, whereas contacts and support exchanges decline when they become middle aged and involved with a family of their own (Dykstra et al. 2006). In older adulthood, with their own children leaving home and parents entering their last life-phase, the help that children provide their parents intensifies, a trend which is expected to become only more outspoken with the aging of populations in Western countries (Merz, Schuengel, & Schulze 2008; Rossi & Rossi 1990). Thus, empirical work suggested that, next to the origin of families, the prominence of practical and emotional intergenerational interdependencies would vary depending on the sex and age of family members. In addition to distinguishing types of relationships and examining patterns across families of different origins, we therefore also explored the distribution of relationship types by sex and age of the child.

The foregoing led us to formulate hypotheses concerning the types of relationships and the distribution of relationships across origin groups. First, we expected that the different identified mother-child relationships, characterized by full-interdependence, independence, and emotional-interdependence, would be reflected in our empirical findings (H1). Second, it was hypothesized that intergenerational relations among immigrants would be more often characterized by full-interdependence (H2a) and native Dutch families by independence (H2b), whereas emotional-interdependence would uniformly characterize intergenerational relations among immigrants and natives (H2c).

2.3. Method

2.3.1. Context of study

Our analyses focused on the native population and the four largest non-Western immigrant groups in the Netherlands. In Dutch statistics, persons are registered by the country of birth of themselves and their parents and are assigned a non-Western background if at least one parent was born in Africa, Latin America or Asia, excluding the former Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) and Japan. In 2010, this was the case for about 11% of the Dutch population or 1.8 million individuals. The majority of non-Western immigrants come from Turkey (21%), Morocco (19%), Suriname (18%), or the Dutch Antilles (7%; Statistics Netherlands, 2010). Most Turkish and Moroccan immigrants arrived during the 1960s and 1970s as recruited, unskilled

male labor workers. They came predominantly from rural areas where families are organized traditionally and along patrilineal lines and almost all of the population is Muslim (Van Tubergen 2003; Vermeulen & Penninx 2000). Although it was initially expected that these migrants would return home, a majority stayed and settled in the Netherlands. When the recruitment process stopped in the 70s, immigration continued through family reunification and later marriage formation. Marriages with a partner from the same origin and religion are still quite common among both immigrant groups (Huschek, De Valk, & Liefbroer 2012), whereas intermarriage with Dutch is rare (according to Statistics Netherlands, less than 8% married a Dutch partner in 2010).

Immigrants from Suriname and the Antilles came to the Netherlands after World War II, mostly for educational purposes (Vermeulen & Penninx 2000). By originating from former Dutch colonies, these immigrants were already partly familiar with Dutch society before migration. In contrast to the Turks and Moroccans, for instance, virtually all Surinamese and Antillean immigrants were acquainted with the Dutch language. Rates of Dutch-intermarriage are also relatively high among Surinamese and Antillean immigrants, as about one third married a Dutch partner in 2010 (Statistics Netherlands 2010). Furthermore, although the Surinamese and Antillean population is heterogeneous in religious composition, Christianity is the most important religion (Van Tubergen 2003). In terms of family organization, Surinamese and Antillean immigrants come from societies where families are matrifocal (Otterbein 1965) and single-motherhood is relatively common (De Valk 2010).

2.3.2. Data and participants

The data for the analyses came from the first wave of the *Netherlands Kinship Panel Study* (NKPS 2002-2003; Dykstra et al. 2004), a survey which addressed behavioral, normative, and emotional dimensions of connectedness in family relationships in the Netherlands. Collaboration with the survey *Social Position and Use of Facilities by Ethnic Minorities*, resulted in two samples from the Dutch population: a main random sample including 8,161 individuals between 18 and 79 years of age and a random stratified migrant sample of 1,402 respondents with a Turkish, Moroccan, Antillean, or Surinamese origin in the same age range. Whereas data on the main sample were

collected throughout the country, immigrants were sampled from the 13 municipalities where half of the total immigrant population resides (Garssen, Nicolaas, & Sprangers 2005), covering Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Eindhoven, Enschede, Bergen op Zoom, Almere, Alphen aan de Rijn, Dordrecht, Tiel, Delft, and Hoogezand-Sappemeer. For comparative purposes, only Dutch respondents who lived in those same 13 municipalities were included in our analyses (1,493 cases). Our selection additionally included a small number of immigrants from the main sample who lived in surrounding cities. Since excluding these 29 Mediterranean and 28 Caribbean respondents did not change our findings, they were included in our analyses. Further information can be obtained from the first author upon request.

Because of the regional differences in terms of historical ties, religion, and family organization, individuals with a migration history from Turkey or Morocco were grouped as Mediterranean migrants and those with an Antillean or Surinamese migration origin were referred to as Caribbean migrants. Respondents with any other immigration origin were excluded from the analysis. To retain the largest sample sizes possible, we examined intergenerational relations from the perspective of the child. Obviously, no information was available for respondents whose mother was deceased ($n=995$), which primarily concerned older adult children (mean age was 55 years). We furthermore restricted our analyses to those adults who did not share the same household with their mother and whose mother did not live abroad because these characteristics may affect the mother-child relationship in a way that may interfere with the analyses. After applying these selection criteria and taking nonresponse on one or more of the items included as our dependent variables into account ($n=207$) our final sample included 868 Dutch, 158 Mediterranean, and 241 Caribbean respondents.

Most of the immigrant respondents in our sample were born abroad themselves and were, therefore, just as their parent(s), first generation migrants. The number of second-generation migrants was somewhat higher among Caribbeans—24% versus 14% of the Mediterraneans. Whereas the face-to-face interviews of the survey were held completely or mainly in the Dutch language with the majority of all immigrant respondents, this was even more the case for Caribbeans than Mediterraneans (98% vs. 70% respectively). These differences reflect the longer migration history and period of residence as well as the pre-migration familiarity with the Dutch language among the Caribbeans.

2.3.3. Measurements

We used LCA to construct a typology of mother–child relationships. Because the input for LCA is a cross-classification of multiple-item scores, indicators are commonly dichotomized to create a manageable number of cells and reduce sparseness (cf. Dykstra & Fokkema 2011; Silverstein & Bengtson 1997; Van Gaalen & Dykstra 2006). In this study, we used eight indicators of intergenerational solidarity: two items on the frequency of contact, four items concerning practical support (giving/receiving), and two items on emotional support (giving/receiving).

Contact frequency. Two items measured the frequency of contact between the respondent and his/her mother in the last year, including face-to-face contact and contact by phone, letter, or email. The initial answers were rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 0 = *never*; *once*, *a few times*, *at least monthly*, *at least weekly*, *several times a week* to 6 = *daily*. Although different coding of the variables was tested, we found that converting both items into dichotomous measures gave the most robust and clear findings (alternative coding suffered from sparseness and more limited comparability of the measures). For face-to face contact, “at least monthly” and higher was coded 1 and any lesser frequencies were coded 0. In view of the comparative ease to keep in touch by phone, letter, or email, “at least weekly” and any more regular contact were coded 1 to indicate frequent contact by these means, with all categories indicating lower frequencies coded 0.

Practical support. Respondents were asked how many times in the last 3 months they had given and received help with housework and practical matters to and from their mother. Examples of housework were preparing meals, cleaning, fetching groceries, or doing the laundry. Help with practical matters involved doing chores in and around the house or the lending, transporting, and moving of things. The initial ordinal answering options of *never*; *once or twice*, and *several times* for both items were converted into dichotomous measures by distinguishing between who did (coded 1 and covering both *once or twice* and *several times*) and *who did not* (0). This resulted in four indicators of practical support.

Emotional support. As indicators of emotional support, we used the following two

survey questions: “How often have you shown an interest in the personal life of your mother in the last 3 months?” and “How often has your mother shown an interest in your personal life in the last 3 months?” the three ordinal answering categories were coded into two by combining *once or twice* and *several times* to indicate support (coded 1), in contrast to *never* (coded 0) indicating no emotional support.

Sex of child. The sex of the child was measured by a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the respondent was a daughter and 0 if the respondent was a son.

Age of child. The continuous measure of age from the survey was recoded into three dichotomous measures to capture three important life-phases of the child and thereby, indirectly, of the mother as well. Age categories were chosen based on both theoretical (Dykstra et al. 2006; Rossi & Rossi 1990) and empirical grounds (Merz et al. 2008) aiming at capturing relevant and different life phases of adult children across their life course. Respondents scored 1 on the variable *young-adult* if they were below 30 years of age and scored 0 otherwise. A score 1 on *middle-age* referred to an age between 30 and 45, with ages outside this range being coded 0. Finally, respondents above 45 years scored 1 on the variable *older-adult* and all ages below were coded 0.

2.3.4. Analysis

LCA was conducted by use of the statistical software package *Latent Gold 4.0* (Vermunt & Magidson 2005). LCA combines information of a series of single items by linking response patterns to a set of latent, unobserved variables (Collins & Lanza 2010). We thereby tested whether an underlying class structure explained the associations between observed features of the mother–child relationship and used this structure to categorize people into different classes. The first step and main objective of our analyses was to find a well-fitting class structure and ascribe a theoretical meaning to each of the classes. To determine the optimal number of classes, the likelihood ratio statistic and Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) served as evaluative measures for model selection (Vermunt & Magidson 2002). The likelihood ratio statistic tests the null hypothesis that the specified model matched the observed data. A nonsignificant result is thereby indicative of a satisfying model fit. The BIC takes into account parsimony, whereby the model with the lowest BIC is the most

desirable. Theoretical interpretations of the model were guided by an inspection of the conditional class probabilities, which reflect the likelihood that individuals within a particular class give a certain response on each observed indicator. Based on their response patterns, individuals have different propensities to be assigned to a certain class. After ascribing respondents to the class for which this propensity was the highest, class prevalence was calculated. This measure gives the proportion of respondents that is categorized into each class, and thereby, indicates how common classes are. In a second step, the distributional patterns were analyzed by origin, sex, and the life-phase of the child to determine the main characteristics of each class.

2.4. Results

2.4.1. Descriptive findings

Table 2.1 gives an overview of the distribution on the demographic characteristics and solidarity indicators per origin group. The age of respondents in the total sample ranged from 18 to 69 years. Dutch and Caribbeans were on average 38 and 37 years of age, respectively. Mediterranean respondents were slightly younger, with a mean age of 32 years. Among our respondents, women were slightly over-represented in all groups: 57% of the Mediterraneans, 58% of the Dutch, and 60% of the Caribbean respondents were daughters. A majority of all respondents, but especially immigrants, reported to have had frequent contacts with their mother. The high average rates were more outspoken for face-to-face contact. Whereas 84% of the Dutch had seen their mother frequently, this was the case for 86% of the Caribbeans and 92% of the Mediterraneans. For frequent contact by phone, letter, or email, proportions ranged from 67% among the Dutch, to 76% among Caribbeans, and 82% among Mediterraneans. Average scores for practical help were lower than for contact in all origin groups, especially in terms of receiving this type of support. Whereas

Table 2.1
Descriptive information of Dutch, Mediterranean and Caribbean respondents

Variable	Range	Origin group		
		Dutch	Mediterraneans	Caribbeans
		Mean (SD)/%	Mean (SD)/%	Mean (SD)/%
<i>Demographics</i>				
Age (years)	18-69	38 (10.3)	32 (6.9)	37 (9.1)
Young-adult (1=18-30)	0-1	28	44	27
Middle-age (1=31-45)	0-1	48	51	56
Older-adult (1=46-69)	0-1	23	04	17
Sex (1=daughter)	0-1	58	57	60
<i>Frequent contact (1=yes)</i>				
Face-to-face	0-1	84	92	86
Phone, letter or email	0-1	67	82	76
<i>Practical support (1=yes)</i>				
Housework help given	0-1	48	59	59
Housework help received	0-1	31	42	38
Practical help given	0-1	55	61	56
Practical help received	0-1	32	29	32
<i>Emotional support (1=yes)</i>				
Personal interest shown	0-1	94	86	90
Personal interest received	0-1	93	87	88
N		868	158	241

Note. Mean score for continuous variable is presented with standard deviation in parentheses, scores for categorical variables indicate percentages.

Source = NKPS, wave 1, 2002-2004.

housework help was given to the mother by 48% of the Dutch and 59% of both immigrant groups, it was received from the mother by 31% of the Dutch, 38% of the Caribbeans, and 42% of the Mediterraneans. Help in practical matters was given to the mother by 55% of the Dutch, 56% of the Caribbeans, and 61% of the Mediterraneans, while receiving this support from the mother was reported by 32% of the Dutch and the Caribbean and 29% of the Mediterranean respondents. In all origin groups, the average scores for giving and receiving emotional support to and from the mother were high, but among the Dutch slightly more so: 94% of the Dutch, versus 90% and 86% of the Caribbeans and Mediterraneans, respectively, had given emotional support, and 93% of the Dutch compared with 88% and 87% of the Caribbeans

and Mediterraneans, respectively, had received this type of support.

2.4.2. Model selection and class interpretation

When latent class models were estimated separately for the native Dutch, Mediterranean, and Caribbean respondents, a similar class structure emerged in each of the three groups. This evidenced a general mother-child relationship typology that is highly robust across different origins. We accordingly continue to report the latent models in which migratory background did not differentiate class structure. Goodness-of-fit statistics for one- to six-class models (see Appendix A, Table A1) indicated a preference for a model with five classes. In this model, the likelihood ratio statistic no longer reached the level of significance ($p=.18$) and the lowest BIC score was obtained. Furthermore, the conditional probability patterns of the five-class model demonstrated clear internal class structures. Table 2.2 gives the conditional probabilities of the final model. To recapture, these measurements indicate how likely respondents within a certain class are to respond affirmatively to each of the solidarity indicators. The analyses revealed five types of mother-child relationships that very well represented the predicted systems according to the MFC, including three variations of full-interdependence. A first type of mother-child relationship was characterized by high probabilities on all indicators (ranging from .71 to .99). Respondents who were assigned to this class had a high likelihood of maintaining frequent contacts with their mother and giving as well as receiving housework, practical, and emotional support. In view of the overall exchange intensity of the mother-child relationship, we labeled this type "reciprocal-interdependence." The second and third type of mother-child relationship differed from the first in terms of the involvement in practical help. In Type 2, low probabilities to receive housework and practical help (.07 and .12, respectively) were paired with high probabilities for all other items (between .72 and .99). This suggested that although frequent contact and emotional as well as practical forms of support were important, practical help was only *given* to the mother. Type 2 was therefore labeled "upward-interdependence." For Type 3, in contrast, the likelihood for giving practical support was low (.32 and .13 for help with housework and practical matters, respectively), whereas the probabilities to receive these types of support were high (.74 and .55, respectively). In

Table 2.2
Conditional probabilities in the five-class Model (N = 1,267)

Indicator	Type of mother-child relationship				
	Type 1 Reciprocal- interdependence	Type2 Upward- interdependence	Type 3 Downward- interdependence	Type 4 Emotional- interdependence	Type 5 Independence
<i>Contact</i>					
Face-to-face	.98*	.94*	.91	.66*	.44*
Phone, (e)mail	.87*	.75*	.82*	.53*	.16*
<i>Housework help</i>					
Given	.82*	.72*	.32	.08*	.09*
Received	.82*	.07	.74*	.01	.00
<i>Practical help</i>					
Given	.99	.83*	.13	.08*	.08*
Received	.71*	.12	.55*	.09*	.02*
<i>Emotional support</i>					
Given	.98*	.99*	.95	.97	.34*
Received	.99	.94	.98	.99	.19*

* p-two sided < .05

Source = NKPS, wave 1, 2002-2004.

this case, help in practical kind was thus only *received* by the child. We referred to this third type of relationship as “downward-interdependence.”

A fourth class was characterized by high probabilities for giving and receiving emotional support (.97 and .99). At the same time, the likelihood to engage in practical support, either giving or receiving, was noticeably low (probabilities between .01 and .09). Respondents in this class also had the tendency to maintain frequent contacts with their mother, although the probabilities were less outspoken compared with the previously described relationship types (.66 for frequent face-to-face contact and .53 for contact by other means). Given the emotional support exchanges, without any form of practical help, this class was labeled “emotional-interdependence.” Finally, overall low probabilities (between .34 and .00 and .44 for frequent face-to-face contact) typified a fifth mother-child relationship. Respondents that were assigned to this relationship type tended to have infrequent contacts with their mother, especially by means other than face-to-face, and were not likely to give or receive support, neither practical nor emotional. This type of mother-child relations was therefore labeled “independence.”

2.4.3. Class prevalence

In the second step, we considered class prevalence in the total sample and studied the distribution by origin, sex, and life-phase of the child (Table 2.3). Overall, we found that upward-interdependent (34%) and reciprocal-interdependent relations (24%) were most prevalent, followed by emotional-interdependence (19%) and downward-interdependence (16%). Mother and child relationships characterized by independence, however, were overall quite rare (8%). When comparing relationship types across origin groups, the relative commonness of reciprocal-interdependence among immigrants stood out: 34% and 30% of the Mediterraneans and Caribbeans, respectively, versus 21% of the Dutch were typified as such. The Dutch, in contrast, were more equally dispersed over different relationship types. Upward-interdependent relations were slightly more common among the Dutch (35%) than among Mediterraneans and Caribbeans (30% and 31%, respectively). The same holds for downward-interdependence (17% among the Dutch, and 11% and 12%, respectively, among the Mediterraneans and Caribbeans). These findings suggested that immigrant

Table 2.3

Prevalence of mother-child relationships (%) according to individual characteristics of the child (N = 1,267)

	Type of mother-child relationship				
	Type 1 Reciprocal- interdependence	Type2 Upward- interdependence	Type 3 Downward- interdependence	Type 4 Emotional- interdependence	Type 5 Independence
Dutch	21	35	17	20	7
Mediterranean origin	34	30	11	16	9
Caribbean origin	30	31	12	16	10
Son	23	37	12	20	8
Daughter	25	32	18	18	7
Young-adult (18-30)	35	26	20	15	4
Middle-age (30-45)	24	32	15	20	8
Older-adult (45-69)	9	50	9	20	12
Prevalence overall	24	34	16	19	8

Source = NKPS, wave 1, 2002-2004.

adult children more often received practical assistance on a reciprocal basis, whereas more of their Dutch counterparts were either the single provider or recipient of practical support. Also relationships that revolved predominantly around emotional support were more common among Dutch; 20% versus 16% of the Mediterraneans and Caribbeans were assigned to the emotional-interdependence class.

The distributions across origin groups indicated that Mediterranean and Caribbean immigrants differed in similar ways from natives. The divergences were slightly more marked for Mediterraneans, especially concerning the importance of reciprocal-interdependence. These results partially confirmed our expectation that full-interdependent mother-child relations would be more common among immigrant families. The findings concerning independent relationships, however, were contrary to what we expected. Not only did we find mother-child independence to be rare in general, it was even less common among Dutch: 7% of the Dutch versus 9% and 10% of the Mediterraneans and Caribbeans, respectively, were characterized as such.

Finally, we considered how relationship types were distributed according to the sex and age of the child. Whereas daughters were comparatively more often characterized by downward-interdependence and thus recipient of practical support, sons were more

involved in upward-interdependence and therefore the provider of practical support. No strong sex differences appeared with respect to the other three relationship types: reciprocal- and emotional-interdependence were approximately equally common and independent mother-child relations about equally uncommon. Taking the life-phase of the child into account revealed a clear age trend. Whereas reciprocal mother-child relationships and being the recipient of practical support was more common for younger-adults, the support provided to the mother was a more important element of the mother-child relations among children who were older, especially those over 45 years of age. The prevalence of emotional-interdependence was less noticeably differentiated by age as such a relationship was relatively common for children in all life-phases, but particularly beyond young-adulthood.

2.5. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to portray mother-child relationships among natives and non-Western immigrants in the Netherlands, using the MFC (Kagitçibasi 1996) as a theoretical basis. Intergenerational relations can be studied and understood from different theoretical perspectives including evolutionary (Nosaka & Chasiotis 2005) and sociological solidarity models (Bengtson & Schrader 1982). The model of MFC seemed appropriate for our study given the aim to explore potential ethnic differences in family relations (e.g. De Valk & Schans 2008). By analyzing actual intergenerational relations in terms of practical and emotional bonds simultaneously, this study was thereby the first to empirically account for the multidimensional view of family relations in the MFC. The performed LCA revealed the expected mother-child relations of full-interdependence, emotional-interdependence, and independence, in line with the theory (H1). Full-interdependent relationships, moreover, could be further differentiated in three variations that were characterized by the direction in which practical support was provided (reciprocal, upward, or downward). These variations highlight how interdependence can be differently defined according to the temporal dimension that is implied. On the one hand, the reciprocal-interdependent relationship entailed a more or less direct form of reciprocity. It thereby comes closest to the MFC's traditional system of full-interdependence in rural societies, where the family's survival requires the consistent input of all family members and strong intergenerational relations irrespective of direction. The upward-interdependent

relationship type, on the other hand, matched intergenerational reciprocity that unfolds over the life-course in correspondence with age-tied family norms prescribing adult children the filial duty of caring for ageing parents (Kagitçibasi 1996). Considering that our focus was on adult children, the downward-interdependent relationships we found can be seen as the least “traditional” form of full-interdependence.

The fact that we found the same types of mother–child relationships among Dutch natives and all four non-Western immigrants evidences that the MFC captures important clusters of family relations that characterize families of different origins. Furthermore, finding an emotional-interdependent family type across all groups, in particular, gives empirical foundation to two important theoretical assumptions of the MFC. First, this confirms the claim that interdependence in immigrant families may diminish in practical respect, but emotional ties remain important (Kagitçibasi 1996). Although the shift from tradition to emotional-interdependent family relations among immigrants was documented by Phalet and Güngör (2009) in terms of adherence to family values, our study gave evidence for a similar trend in solidarity behavior. Second, the finding that emotional-interdependence equally characterized Dutch families supports the idea that contemporary conditions in Western societies also foster emotional-interdependent relations between parent and child (Kagitçibasi 1996; 2005). Given the cross-sectional data we used, our study does not provide information about whether this is a recent development, following the resurgence of post-material values (Inglehart 1991; Young 1992), or whether emotional ties have always been important in Western families, and independence might be a professed ideal rather than reality as suggested by Kagitçibasi (2005).

We, furthermore hypothesized that full-interdependence would characterize immigrant families more than Dutch (H2a), which was partially confirmed. Especially reciprocal-interdependent relationships were more common among immigrants. This finding supports the expectation

that families from non-Western societies are more strongly oriented towards mutual reliance (Hofstede 2001; Inglehart & Baker 2000; Todd 1985). Mother–child relations among Dutch at the same time were more often characterized by upward- and downward-interdependence, suggesting that age-tied responsibilities, rather than general mutual support obligations are important in these families. In addition, the larger share of parent–child relations, characterized by downward-interdependence,

points to the fact that Dutch parents continue supporting their adult children and are therefore less tied to traditional forms of interdependence.

Contrary to our expectations that Dutch would be more strongly characterized by independence (H2b), mother-child independence was quite rare among natives and more common among immigrants. Independent relations in our typology were characterized by infrequent contacts and absence of intergenerational support, thus probably representing detachment. Scholars from the United States found a similar parent-child relationship structure and perceived this type of relation as deviant and problematic (Silverstein & Bengtson 1997). The fact that in our study this type of relationship, though limited, was more often found among non-Western immigrant families, could reflect the challenges related to processes of migration and acculturation. Instead of drawing family members together, settling in a foreign country may also put a strain on family relations, for instance if parents and children adapt to norms of the host country at a different pace. Such intergenerational discrepancies, particularly concerning family values, may create conflicts and engender problems, such as maladjustment and psychological distress (Kwak 2003; Kwak & Berry 2001; Phinney & Vedder 2006).

We should note, however, that intergenerational relations among Dutch could be independent in respects that we did not consider in our study. According to the MFC, independence also relates to a psychological orientation of the self in relation to others, including attitudes toward individual autonomy, for instance (Kagitçibasi 2005). Longitudinal and qualitative data including both these psychological aspects and support behavior are needed to better capture the interaction between family orientations, values, and actual support. Furthermore, going beyond children's self-reports and including, for example, the parents' perspective could reveal whether our results suffered from socially desirable answers in a way that led us to overestimate the actual amount of given support. We are unable to assess levels of social desirability for our study but if we assume the answers of our respondents to be driven by social desirability then our findings at least suggest variation in socially desirable parent-child relationships across groups, with immigrants attaching more importance to reciprocal practical help and Dutch emphasizing emotional aspects. Indeed, although our findings in general picture mother-child relations as being close, irrespective of origin, they particularly underline the importance of affective ties in Dutch families. Although we did not expect a difference in the distribution of emotional-

interdependent relationships across origin groups (H2c), Dutch were more strongly characterized by emotional-interdependence. This suggests that whereas practical and emotional support were more often of simultaneous importance in immigrant families, for Dutch families it was more common that affective ties took precedence.

While previous studies demonstrated that family behaviors differ less than values across groups (De Valk & Schans 2008; Schans & Komter 2010), our analyses additionally point out that the type of behavior under study matters. The results indicated that differences across groups were more apparent for practical than emotional dimensions of solidarity. One should, however, note that our measurement of emotional support may have been too limited to account for the potentially variable meaning of affective ties across cultures. For instance, the finding that immigrant adult children more often enquired into the personal life of their parent may also signal adaptation to Western norms, as in other cultures such behavior might not be accepted as appropriate or a way of showing affection. At the same time immigrant families may actually experience practical help as a form of emotional involvement more than is the case for Dutch, which could imply that we underestimated the differences across origin groups. Future qualitative work or a study of measurement variance on multiple indicators of emotional support is needed in this regard. Nevertheless, our findings correspond to other cross-cultural studies that used alternative measurements of affective ties and similarly concluded that emotional closeness is a universal dimension of family relations (Georgas et al. 2006; Georgas et al. 1997; Triandis et al. 1993).

Despite the fact that we included several dimensions of intergenerational support, we were obviously unable to capture all aspects of support between parent and adult child. One aspect we could not include refers to help with child care, which is a typical form of practical support that parents provide to their children (Hank & Buber 2009). Restricting our sample to only those adults who have children of their own and in the age of childcare needs, resulted in too few cases to draw a reliable and general conclusion. Furthermore, financial support was not considered here due to high rates of nonresponse on this item, particularly among immigrant respondents, making interpretations dubitable. However, research in France showed the reciprocal nature of financial transfers among immigrant families in contrast to the downward flow of financial resources in native French families (Attias-Donfut & Wolff 2008) and, therefore, supports rather than challenges the trends we found.

Our study distinguished between immigrants from Mediterranean and Caribbean origin, and we found that, overall these immigrant groups differed in similar ways from the Dutch, although, in line with previous studies, differences were found to be slightly more pronounced for Mediterranean families. The less pronounced differences between Dutch and Caribbean immigrants in, for example, family values and exchange behaviors (De Valk & Schans 2008; Komter & Schans 2008) have been ascribed to the long existing links of the Caribbean area with the Netherlands as previous colonies. In our study, however, cultural factors specific to the Mediterranean group, such as the traditional family roles that prevail in rural areas from which most Mediterranean immigrants originate (Ataca 2006), may have particularly accounted for a stronger persistence of reciprocal-interdependent relations among these immigrants.

We finally also looked at variations in the distribution of relationship types by sex and age of the child. The differences we found reaffirmed the general value that is attached to emotional mother-child bonds. Sons and daughters mostly varied in practical aspects of the mother-child relationship, whereby the behavior of sons tended to be more in line with traditional filial obligations. Likewise, the importance of practical support varied across age groups in ways that reflected the potential needs of parent and child in different life-phases (Dykstra et al. 2006; Rossi & Rossi 1990). Emotional support in terms of showing an interest in each other's personal life, however, was exchanged by an overwhelming majority of children and their mothers in the Netherlands, irrespective of sex and age.

Our analyses were a first exploration of family relation types and described the typology according to origin, sex, and age of the person. For future work it is interesting to study whether and how variations in family support relations can be explained by or associated with other individual and family characteristics. Examining the role of socio-structural features, for instance, could thereby reveal whether the greater involvement of immigrants in full-interdependence reflects their stronger adherence to family norms, fewer resources, or a combination of both factors. Furthermore, immigrant groups themselves differ in characteristics that are closely connected to family relations, such as household structure, socioeconomic circumstances, and religion (De Valk 2010; Van Tubergen 2003), as well as in levels of acculturation (Berry 1997). Taking these features into account would be a fruitful way to pursue to get more advanced insights into the impact of migration on

intergenerational ties.

Our focus on the relationship of adult children with their mothers may partly explain the emotionally close relations we found. Since mother-child relations tend to be more intensive than father-child relations (Fokkema et al. 2008), the question is whether the same typology holds for fathers. This is particularly relevant for immigrant groups. Mediterranean parents, for instance, may adhere to more traditional, gendered parenting styles that prescribe a warm and indulgent mother, but distant and authoritarian father (Idema & Phaet 2007). Among Caribbean immigrants, the relative commonness for children to grow up in a single-mother household (De Valk 2010) raises questions about the role of fathers.

More insights into intergenerational relations in the culturally diverse societies of Western Europe, such as the Netherlands, are called for now public concerns about family solidarity are growing. This study contributed to the debate by providing a multidimensional portrayal of immigrant and native Dutch mother-child relations. Most prominently, our results revealed the importance of emotional intergenerational ties in adulthood across families of different origins. Future cross-national and cross-cultural research should affirm the more general applicability of the typology to (North-) Western European populations in general and start capturing the possible explanations of variations across countries and origin groups.

