



Parental acceptance of children's intimate ethnic outgroup relations: The role of culture, status, and family reputation[☆]

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 June 2011

Received in revised form

10 December 2011

Accepted 22 December 2011

Keywords:

Parents

Early adolescents

Ethnic outgroup contact

Family reputation

ABSTRACT

Research on adolescents' interethnic relations indicates that parents can resist their children's ethnic outgroup relations. However, there is little insight into the underlying reasons for this. The current study examines how cultural groups differ in parental acceptance of their children's outgroup relations, and it examines the role of perceived family reputation vulnerability as well as parents' religiosity. In addition, it was investigated whether parental acceptance of outgroup relations differs for different outgroups. This was studied among Turkish ($n = 49$) and Dutch ($n = 73$) parents of first grade middle school students. Parental acceptance of intimate ethnic outgroup relations was lower among Turkish–Dutch than among Dutch parents. This difference was explained by group differences in perceived family reputation vulnerability and religiosity. It is concluded that concerns about culture transmission and family reputation are related to parental acceptance of outgroup contact, which explains differences in parental acceptance between cultural groups. In addition, status considerations seem to explain differences in parental acceptance of their children's close contacts with different outgroups.

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1. Introduction

Although multi-ethnic schools are an important arena for adolescents' interethnic contacts, research on friendship networks typically found ethnic segregation in friendships in these schools (Baerveldt, van Duijn, Vermeij, & Hemert, 2004; Moody, 2001; Quillian & Campbell, 2003). Ethnic school composition (Vervoort, Scholte, & Scheepers, 2011) and school policies affect interethnic relations within school classes (Goldsmith, 2004; Stearns, 2004). In addition, parents might have an influence on their children's outgroup attitudes and on close peer relations in particular (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). Research on school choice (Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Karsten, Ledoux, Roeleveld, Felix, & Elshof, 2003), outgroup marriage (e.g. Tolsma, Lubbers, & Coenders, 2008), and dating (Miller, Olson, & Fazio, 2004) shows that parents often resist the idea of

[☆] This research was supported in part by a Grant from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) under the Innovational Research Incentive Scheme (VIDI Grant 452-04-351).

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their children having intimate relations with peers of other ethnic groups. In addition, Edmonds and Killen (2009) found that perceived parental attitudes toward outgroup contacts affect adolescents' friendships and dating behavior.

Whereas there is evidence of parents' resistance to their children's close contacts with ethnic outgroup peers, there is relatively little understanding of the underlying reasons why some parents show more resistance than others. The current study examines ethnic group differences in parental acceptance of close and intimate outgroup relations, and whether these differences can be explained by parents' perceived family reputation vulnerability and religiosity. Family reputation vulnerability refers to the degree to which parents perceive that the reputation of their family is affected negatively when their children deviate from ingroup norms. Religiosity captures the extent to which parents practice their religion in daily life. To assess parental acceptance of outgroup contact and the role of family reputation and religion, we compare Turkish–Dutch and Dutch parents. Dutch parents belong to the ethnic majority group, whereas the Turkish–Dutch are the largest non-western ethnic minority group in the Netherlands. In addition, we assess whether acceptance of ethnic outgroup contact differs depending on the target group. For the native Dutch parents in our study the outgroups are peers of Turkish and Moroccan origin, and for the Turkish–Dutch parents the outgroups are native Dutch and Moroccan peers.

1.1. Parental acceptance of intimate outgroup relations

Perceptions of cultural differences between ethnic groups can be a reason for parents to prefer ethnic ingroup over outgroup contacts for their children. This is in line with the homophily principle (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954) and the similarity attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1971) which both state that people prefer similar others to affiliate with. Research showing parental resistance to ethnically mixed schools (Karsten et al., 2003) suggests that the homophily principle generalizes to parents' preferences for their children's interethnic relations. In addition, Kwak (2003) showed that parents typically try to transmit their ethnocultural norms and values to their children. Children's intimate outgroup relations can be perceived as undermining this transmission process because the values that adolescents endorse are influenced by their peers (Vedder, Berry, Sabatier, & Sam, 2009).

Studies in the United States have shown that ethnic groups differ in the extent to which they endorse collectivist versus individualist values (e.g. Ayçiçeği-Dinn & Caldwell-Harris, 2011; Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001). Ethnic groups in the Netherlands also differ in their value orientations. For example, immigrant parents often think that Dutch society is too liberal (Pels, Distelbrink, Postma, & Geense, 2009). Furthermore, values like obedience, respect for parents, and norm conformity are more strongly endorsed in the Turkish culture and among Turkish–Dutch people than in West-European cultures and among the native Dutch (Pels et al., 2009). Conversely, values like independence, assertiveness, and individual success are endorsed more in individualistic cultures (Harwood, Schoelmerich, Schulze, & Gonzalez, 1999) and among the native Dutch. Thus, both Turkish–Dutch and native Dutch parents might perceive the cultural values of other-ethnic peers as somewhat incompatible or contradictory to the culture they want to transmit to their children.

In addition, parents might be concerned about the related behavior of outgroup peers. Dutch parents might perceive peers from immigrant backgrounds to engage more in deviant and criminal behaviors, in part because that is what is reported in the media (Lubbers, Scheepers, & Westers, 1998; Lubbers, Scheepers & Vergeer, 2000). And Turkish–Dutch parents might be concerned about the 'dangers of the Dutch society'. That is, they might worry about the behavior of Dutch children, because of the permissive socialization styles of Dutch parents (Pels et al., 2009) and the liberties in Dutch society toward, for example, sexuality and the use of drugs. Thus, parents might be less accepting of outgroup relations because they are concerned about their children to adopt the different values and behaviors of ethnic outgroup peers.

Resistance to intimate outgroup relations is likely to exist in many ethnic groups, but not necessarily to the same extent. Particularly in cultures that put high value on conformity and family integrity it is more important for parents that their children do not deviate from ingroup norms. Several studies have shown that conformity and family integrity are more strongly endorsed among the Turkish–Dutch than the native Dutch (e.g. Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001a; Verkuyten, 2001). In addition, as an ethnic minority group, Turkish–Dutch parents may be concerned that their children will 'Dutchify' (i.e. "acting White") and lose their culture (Nijsten, 1998; Verkuyten, 2003). Therefore we expect that parental acceptance of intimate outgroup relations will be lower among Turkish–Dutch parents than among native Dutch parents (*cultural background hypothesis*).

An additional argument for the cultural background hypothesis is that ethnic groups may differ in the relative feeling of control over their children when it comes to friendship or partner choices. For Turkish–Dutch parents it generally is more important that their children defer to parental wishes regarding friendship or partner choices compared to native Dutch parents. Native Dutch parents, however, expect their children to be more independent (Huisberts, Oosterwegel, VanderValk, Vollebergh, & Meeus, 2006) and to choose their own friends and partners.

Studies on interethnic marriage argue that social influence from third parties affects the preferences for ingroup versus outgroup marriages (e.g. Kalmijn, 1998). More generally, significant others in the ethnic community can set the norms for behavior, and individuals who do not follow those norms tend to face sanctions. This is in line with the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1985) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) that both argue that preferences and behavior are influenced by group norms and the perceived pressure to conform.

Following the idea that the ethnic community reinforces ingroup norms, we argue that *family reputation vulnerability* may be related to the parental acceptance of their children's outgroup contacts. Family reputation vulnerability refers to the extent to which parents think that the behavior of their child affects the reputation of the family within their ethnic

community. We expect that parental acceptance of intimate outgroup relations will be lower when parents perceive their family reputation as depending more on their children's actions. That is, if parents have the idea that the behavior of their child affects the family reputation, they might be more concerned with their children's peer relations. For example, they might prefer that their children affiliate with ethnic ingroup peers rather than with outgroup peers who can undermine the continuation of their ingroup values and norms.

Whereas it can be expected that within all cultural groups those parents who perceive relatively higher family reputation vulnerability are more resistant to intimate outgroup contact, it can also be assumed that ethnic groups differ in the extent to which children are perceived to affect the family reputation. Reflecting the view that the native Dutch culture is more characterized by individualistic values, and the Turkish culture endorses more collectivist values, the Dutch and the Turkish culture have been classified as dignity and honor cultures, respectively (e.g. Ijzerman & Cohen, 2011). In dignity cultures, self-worth is based on self-evaluation (inalienable worth), and in honor cultures self-worth is based more on the views of others (socially conferred worth). As a result, in dignity cultures one's individual opinion is an important determinant of behavior, whereas in honor cultures opinions of others (social recognition) are more important (see Lueng & Cohen, 2011 for an overview). This suggests that vulnerability of the family reputation is less important in the Dutch (dignity) culture than in the Turkish (honor) culture, which can lead to group differences in parental acceptance of their children's outgroup contacts. Hence, we hypothesize that the difference between Turkish–Dutch and Dutch parental acceptance of their children's intimate outgroup relations is (partly) explained by differences in family reputation vulnerability between both groups of parents (*family reputation vulnerability hypothesis*).

Another ethnocultural aspect that can affect parental acceptance of their children's close outgroup relations is religiosity. In the Netherlands, people of Turkish and Moroccan origin are predominantly Muslim and the native Dutch are typically not religious or of Christian faith (Driessen, 2007). Hence, intergroup contact between these ethnic minority groups and the Dutch also means interreligious contact. Parents might be concerned about intimate outgroup relations affecting their children's religiosity and the related Islamic or Christian values and practices. Thus, more religious parents can be expected to be less accepting of their children's intimate outgroup contacts. For example, Tolsma et al. (2008) found that stronger religiosity was related to more opposition to ethnic outgroup marriages. Accordingly, we expect that parents who practice their religion more will be less accepting of their children having intimate contacts with ethnic outgroup peers. Similar to family reputation vulnerability, we expect that higher religiosity is associated with more parental resistance among Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents. Previous research indicates that Turkish–Dutch people are generally more religious than the native Dutch (Driessen, 2007). Hence, we expect that religiosity (partly) explains the expected difference between Turkish–Dutch and Dutch parents' acceptance of their children's outgroup relations (*religiosity hypothesis*).

1.2. Parental acceptance of contact with different outgroups

Next to differences between ethnic groups, the degree of parental resistance against close peer relations may differ depending on the outgroup (Tolsma et al., 2008). This can be expected based on perceived cultural or status differences between groups. For Dutch parents, the collectivist and Islamic background of Turkish–Dutch and Moroccan–Dutch people might be perceived as equally different to their ingroup. Hence, based on cultural (dis)similarities, we hypothesize Dutch parents to be equally accepting of intimate relations of their children with Turkish–Dutch and Moroccan–Dutch peers (*cultural distance hypothesis for Dutch parents*).

For Turkish–Dutch parents the culture of the Dutch might be perceived as being more different from their own than the Moroccan culture because the latter is more similar in the endorsement of collectivistic values and its Islamic traditions. Hence, based on cultural (dis)similarities, it can be argued that Turkish–Dutch parents will be more accepting of outgroup relations with Moroccan–Dutch peers than with Dutch peers (*cultural distance hypothesis for Turkish–Dutch parents*).

Differences in parental acceptance of close contacts with different outgroups could also be due to differences in the perceived status of the outgroups. Research on social dominance and ethnic hierarchies shows that people want to maintain unequal social distances to different ethnic groups (Hagendoorn, 1995). Regarding Dutch parents, research on ethnic hierarchies and opposition to children's interethnic marriage shows that the native Dutch want to maintain more social distance toward people of Moroccan descent than toward people of Turkish origin (Tolsma et al., 2008). Hence, based on the theory of ethnic hierarchies, we hypothesize that Dutch parents will be more accepting of outgroup relations with Turkish–Dutch peers than with Moroccan–Dutch peers (*ethnic hierarchy hypothesis for Dutch parents*).

Regarding Turkish–Dutch parents, research on ethnic hierarchies shows that minority groups tend to maintain less social distance toward majority members than to other minority groups (Hagendoorn, 1995; Snellman & Ekehammar, 2005). Hagendoorn (1995) explained this by the need of ethnic minority members to differentiate themselves from other minority groups in order to establish a positive social identity. Turkish parents can be expected to be concerned about their group status and close contact with Dutch people might be perceived to improve the status of Turkish families. In contrast, the Moroccans are at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy in the Netherlands (Hagendoorn, 1995) and therefore contacts with Moroccans can be perceived as lowering one's social status. Thus, based on ethnic hierarchies, we hypothesize that Turkish–Dutch parents will be more accepting of their children's outgroup relations with Dutch peers than with Moroccan–Dutch peers (*ethnic hierarchy hypothesis for Turkish–Dutch parents*).

According to the religiosity hypothesis, parents' religiosity explains (partly) why Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents might differ in their reluctance to accept outgroup contacts of their children. Regarding the different target groups, however, contact

between native Dutch and Turkish–Dutch people is inter-religious, whereas contact between people of Turkish and Moroccan origin is intra-religious. Hence, for Turkish parents, religion might be less important for their acceptance of intimate relations with Moroccans. Thus although religion plays an important role in the lives of Turkish–Dutch parents, we do not expect that differences in religiosity can explain why parental acceptance is lower among Turkish–Dutch than among Dutch parents as hypothesized in the religiosity hypothesis when the target group is Moroccans.

In testing the hypotheses, we control for gender of the child and for parents' Socio-Economic Status (SES). It has been shown that parental lenience differs between daughters and sons (e.g. Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001b) and that parents are particularly protective of daughters. Effects of family reputation and religion might also differ for daughters and sons. For example because Islam prohibits women to marry outside of their religious group, but does not prohibit men to do so. Also, studies have shown that the protection of family honor is particularly important when it comes to intimate relations of daughters (Akpınar, 2003). Therefore, we control for gender and we will also test whether the direct effects that we hypothesize are moderated by gender. Furthermore, we control for SES because research on parental resistance to ethnically mixed schools (Sikkink & Emerson, 2008) and to interethnic marriage (Tolsma et al., 2008) has found that parental resistance toward interethnic contact is related to socio-economic background.

2. Method

2.1. Sample

For the current analysis, a subsample was selected from data collected for the Arnhem Parents Project: a study on the role of parents ($n = 150$) in the acculturation of their children. All parents in the sample had at least one adolescent daughter (47%) or son (53%) in the first grade of middle school. The subsample consisted of parents who were both native Dutch ($n = 73$) or both of Turkish origin ($n = 49$). The Turkish–Dutch participants were predominantly first generation immigrants (only two were born in the Netherlands). Of all parents in the analysis, 73% was married and still living together, 7% was not married but lived together, 13% separated, 3% had never been married and did not live with the other parent, and 4% was widow(er). All Turkish–Dutch parents self-reported to be Muslim. Of the Dutch participants, 56% indicated not to be religious and 44% reported to be Christian (Catholic, Dutch reformed, reformed).

2.2. Procedure

Parents were recruited at four ethnically diverse middle schools in Arnhem, a medium sized city in the east of the Netherlands. The ethnic distribution of these four schools approximated 54% Dutch students, 17% Turkish, 5% Moroccan, and 25% of the students had another ethnic minority background. Two weeks before the beginning of the data collection parents received an information letter about the Arnhem Parents Project. Parents who did not object to being approached were contacted by a Dutch or Turkish interviewer for a phone interview. Similar to previous studies (e.g. Durgel, Leyendecker, Yagmurlu, & Harwood, 2009), preferably the mother was interviewed (in the Turkish subsample 80% and in the Dutch subsample 93%) and otherwise the father. Considering the balance of anonymity and response rate, and given that Turkish–Dutch mothers can be hard to motivate to participate in a study, we chose for phone interviews with Turkish interviewers rather than paper-and-pencil questionnaires. The questionnaire was translated into Turkish by one of the interviewers, and checked and corrected by a professional translator. Participants who could not be reached by phone were visited at home ($n = 7$). Of the Dutch parents, 4% objected to being approached beforehand, and of the Dutch parents approached ($n = 106$) 13% could not be reached, 14% did not agree to participate, and 73% completed the interview. Of the Turkish parents, 15% objected beforehand, and of the parents approached ($n = 66$) 18% could not be reached, 6% did not agree to participate, and 76% completed the interview. This resulted in a response rate of 69% among the Dutch and 63% among the Turkish–Dutch parents.

2.3. Measures

2.3.1. Parental acceptance of children's outgroup relations

An adapted Bogardus (1925) social distance scale was used to measure parents acceptance of increasingly intimate outgroup contacts of their children. Per ethnic target group, the questions were: What do you think about your child: hanging out with classmates at school that are [target group]; becoming friends with someone who is [target group]; having a romantic relationship with someone who is [target group]; later marrying someone who is [target group]. Ethnic target groups were 'Dutch' and 'Moroccan' for the Turkish–Dutch parents, and 'Turkish' and 'Moroccan' for the native Dutch parents. Parents answered on a scale from *That would be*, 1, *no problem at all*, 2, *a bit of a problem*, 3, *a problem*, or 4, *a big problem*. Because there was not enough variance on the first item (see Fig. 1), this item was left out of the analyses. The other three items (Dutch or Turks) formed a strong and reliable Mokken scale (Loevinger's $H = .78$, $Rho = .87$), and the scale was internally consistent for Dutch, (Cronbach's $\alpha = .69$), and for Turkish–Dutch parents ($\alpha = .80$). This was also the case for the items on contact with Moroccans as the outgroup (Loevinger's $H = .76$, $Rho = .88$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$ for Dutch parents, and $.80$ for Turkish–Dutch parents). The scale was reverse coded so that higher scores indicate higher acceptance of outgroup contact.

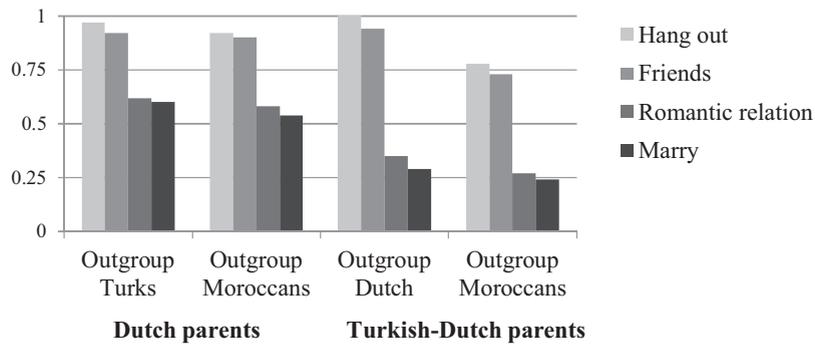


Fig. 1. Proportion of parents who indicate types of relations to be no problem at all. That is, proportion of respondents who indicated types of contact to be no problem at all, as opposed to a bit of a problem, a problem, or a big problem.

2.3.2. Family reputation vulnerability

A three-item scale was developed to measure the parents' belief that their family reputation is affected by their child's behavior. The three items were: People who are important to me will think badly about our family if my son/daughter: would not follow the rules of our religion; would marry someone with another culture; would not follow the habits of our culture. Parents answered on a scale from 1, *not true at all*, to 5, *totally true*. The internal consistency (Cronbach's α) of the scale was in aggregate .84. For the Dutch parents alpha was .65, and for the Turkish–Dutch .80.

Multigroup factor analyses were performed to examine measurement invariance between the two groups (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Lubke, Dolan, Kelderman, Mellenbergh, 2003). The model in which factor loadings were allowed to differ between the two groups ($\chi^2(2) = 2.78, p < .05, CFI = .99, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .08$) had better model fit than the model in which factor loadings were specified to be equal across groups ($\chi^2(5) = 10.46, p < .10, CFI = .92, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .13$). The model fit improved marginally by allowing factor loadings to be different for the two groups (χ^2 difference (3) = 7.68, $p < .10$), which indicates that the factor variance does not differ clearly between the two groups. However, we will present the regression results aggregated as well as for the two groups separately.

2.3.3. Religiosity parents

Religiosity was measured by two questions: How often do you do something that has to do with your religion (excluding praying)? And, how often does your partner do something that has to do with religion (excluding praying)? Praying was excluded because in Islam followers are expected to pray more often than in Christianity. Respondents answered on a scale from 1, *at least once a week*, to 4, *never*. Items were reverse coded such that higher scores indicated stronger religiosity. The Pearson correlation between the two items was .78. For the Dutch parents the correlation was .84, and for the Turkish–Dutch parents it was .53 which indicates that there was less difference in (non-)religiosity between Dutch parents than between Turkish–Dutch parents.

2.3.4. Background variables

Sex of the child (male = 0, female = 1), parents' ethnicity (Dutch = 0, Turkish–Dutch = 1), and Socio-Economic Status (SES) were included as background variables. SES was constructed based on the educational and occupational level of both parents and on family income. Educational level was asked using seven categories from 1, *no education completed*, to the highest 7, *university completed*. Reported occupations were translated into occupational level based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996). Family income was asked using nine categories ranging from the lowest, *less than €800 per month*, to the highest of *more than €4000 per month*. The five items were coded so that higher scores indicated higher SES. Subsequently, these scores were standardized and the mean of the five items was taken. Internal consistency of the scale was .79 in aggregate, and for the Dutch it was .75, and for the Turkish–Dutch .64.

2.4. Analyses

First, descriptive statistics for all variables are presented and differences between the Turkish–Dutch and the Dutch parents are examined. Second, the hypothesis for parental acceptance of outgroup contact was tested with hierarchical regression analyses. Third, the bootstrapping procedure of Preacher and Hayes (2008) was used to test the hypothesized indirect effects, of differences in family reputation vulnerability and religiosity explaining the difference in parental acceptance between Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents. With this bootstrapping procedure multiple indirect paths are tested simultaneously in a single model. Fourth, to disentangle the relations of religiosity and family status vulnerability on acceptance of outgroup contact for Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents, we provide regression results for the two groups separately.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive findings

t-Tests showed that, compared to the native Dutch parents, the Turkish–Dutch parents had a significantly lower SES, were more concerned about their family reputation and were more religious (see Table 1). *t*-Tests also showed that even though both Turkish–Dutch ($M = 3.25$) and Dutch ($M = 3.63$) parents scored relatively high on parental acceptance of intimate outgroup relations, acceptance of these peer relations was significantly higher among the Dutch than the Turkish–Dutch parents, $t(118) = 3.57, p < .01$. This was also the case for contact with Moroccan peers, $t(119) = 4.27, p < .01$. Overall, most parents gave answers that on average corresponded to perceiving outgroup relations of their children being “no problem at all” or “a bit of a problem” as opposed to “a problem” or “a big problem”. Thus, most parents were quite accepting of their children’s close contacts with ethnic outgroup peers but there were also parents who indicated to be less accepting of outgroup contact. However, Fig. 1 shows that for both Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents the acceptance of outgroup contact decreases for more intimate forms of outgroup contact.

Table 2 shows the bivariate correlations between the main variables for the two ethnic groups separately. None of the correlations of the predictor variables with the acceptance of intimate outgroup relations differed significantly between the Turkish–Dutch and the Dutch parents. However, the correlations between parental acceptance of the different target groups was stronger for the Dutch ($r = .88, p < .01$) than for the Turkish–Dutch parents ($r = .65, p < .01$), Fisher’s $z = 3.16, p < .01$. This suggests that Dutch parents distinguished less between intimate relations with the two target groups of Turks and Moroccans, compared to the distinction that the Turkish–Dutch parents made between intimate relations with Dutch and Moroccan peers.

3.2. Acceptance of intimate outgroup relations with Dutch or Turkish peers

Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to examine the hypotheses. Because the score for parental acceptance of intimate outgroup relations was skewed toward high acceptance we logarithmically transformed this variable to better approximate a normal distribution. In support of the cultural background hypothesis, the results in model 1a (Table 3) show that the Turkish–Dutch parents were somewhat less accepting of their children’s outgroup relations than the Dutch parents. In addition, it was hypothesized that the difference in parental acceptance between Turkish–Dutch and Dutch parents is explained by family reputation vulnerability and religiosity. Consistent with the family reputation hypothesis the findings in model 2a show that parents who perceived relatively high family reputation vulnerability were less accepting of their children’s intimate outgroup relations. Also, higher religiosity was related to lower parental acceptance of outgroup relations. The ethnic group difference in acceptance was no longer significant after family reputation vulnerability and religion were added to the regression equation.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for the study variables.

| Variable | Total sample Range | | Dutch parents (n = 73) | | Turkish parents (n = 49) | | Difference <i>t</i> -Test | Effect size Cohen’s <i>D</i> | |
|--|--------------------|------|------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
| | Min | Max | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | | <i>r</i> | <i>D</i> |
| SES | –1.84 | 2.17 | .45 | .85 | –.67 | .82 | $p < .001$ | .56 | 1.34 |
| Religiosity parents | 1.00 | 4.00 | 1.51 | .91 | 2.50 | .86 | $p < .001$ | –.49 | –1.12 |
| Reputation vulnerability | 1.00 | 4.67 | 1.87 | .59 | 3.03 | .86 | $p < .001$ | –.62 | –1.57 |
| Acceptance outgroup contact with Dutch/Turkish–Dutch | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.63 | .56 | 3.25 | .59 | $p = .001$ | .31 | .66 |
| Acceptance outgroup contact with Moroccans | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.56 | .58 | 3.06 | .70 | $p < .001$ | .36 | .78 |

Table 2
Correlations of the study variables for Dutch parents (below) and Turkish parents (above the diagonal).

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-------|------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. SES | | –.01 | –.20 | .03 | –.14 |
| 2. Religiosity parents | .24** | | .07 | –.34** | –.13 |
| 3. Reputation vulnerability | –.04 | .04 | | –.31** | –.28* |
| 4. Acceptance outgroup contact with Turkish/Dutch | .18 | –.17 | –.39*** | | .65*** |
| 5. Acceptance outgroup contact with Moroccans | .11 | –.18 | –.28*** | .88*** | |

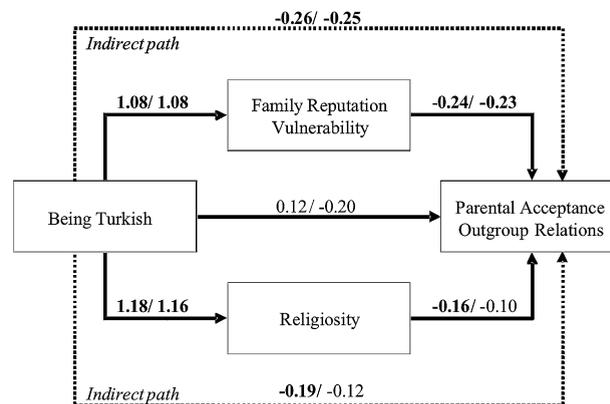
* $p < .10$.

** $p < .05$.

*** $p < .01$.

Table 3Multiple regression analyses predicting parents' acceptance of children's outgroup relations ($n = 122$).

| | Outgroup: Dutch/Turks | | | | Outgroup: Moroccans | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| | Model 1a | | Model 2a | | Model 1b | | Model 2b | |
| | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> |
| Female child | -.04 ^{***} | .02 | -.04 ^{***} | .02 | -.06 ^{***} | .02 | -.05 ^{***} | .02 |
| Being Turkish | -.04 ^{**} | .02 | .03 | .02 | -.08 ^{***} | .02 | -.02 | .03 |
| SES | .01 | .01 | .02 [*] | .01 | .00 | .01 | .00 | .01 |
| Reputation vulnerability | | | -.03 ^{***} | .01 | | | -.03 ^{***} | .01 |
| Religiosity | | | -.03 ^{***} | .01 | | | -.02 [*] | .01 |
| Adjusted R^2 | 12% | | 26% | | 17% | | 24% | |

* $p < .10$.** $p < .05$.*** $p < .01$.**Fig. 2.** Graphical representation of the indirect paths explaining parental acceptance of outgroup relations. The first coefficient is for outgroup relations with Dutch/Turks, the second coefficient is for outgroup relations with Moroccans. Significant coefficients ($p < .05$) are given in bold. Dashed lines indicate the indirect effects through Religiosity and Family Reputation Vulnerability. Included control variables are Sex of the Child and Family SES.

The indirect paths of ethnic group through family reputation vulnerability and religiosity were tested simultaneously by the bootstrap procedure (see Fig. 2). Because a bootstrap analysis is robust to non-normality we did not transform the skewed dependent variable for this analysis. The bootstrap analysis showed that, controlling for gender of the child and SES, both family reputation vulnerability ($-.26$; 95% CI between $-.46$ and $-.14$) and religiosity ($-.19$; 95% CI between $-.42$ and $-.04$) explained a significant and independent part of the difference in the acceptance of their children's intimate outgroup relations among Turkish–Dutch and Dutch parents. This is consistent with the *family reputation vulnerability hypothesis* and the *religiosity hypothesis*.

Regarding gender differences, all models show that parental acceptance of intimate outgroup relations is lower for girls than for boys. The effects of perceived family reputation (outgroups Turks/Dutch: $b = -.01$, $SE = .02$, $p = .42$, and outgroup Moroccans: $b = -.03$, $SE = .02$, $p = .15$) and religiosity were not significantly moderated by gender (outgroups Turks/Dutch: $b = -.03$, $SE = .01$, $p = .06$, and outgroup Moroccans: $b = -.03$, $SE = .02$, $p = .14$). That is, the effects were not significantly different depending on whether the child was male or female.

3.3. Acceptance of intimate relations with Moroccan peers

As expected, the findings for parental acceptance of intimate relations with Moroccans (models 2a and 2b in Table 3) were by and large the same as the findings discussed above. One difference was the role of religiosity. For intimate outgroup relations with Moroccans, the bootstrapping method showed that family reputation vulnerability ($-.25$; 95% CI between $-.43$ and $-.09$) but not religiosity ($-.12$; 95% CI between $-.37$ and $.02$) explained part of the differences in acceptance between Turkish–Dutch and Dutch parents. Thus, as expected, the religiosity hypothesis, stating that religiosity in part explains the ethnic difference in parental acceptance, did not hold for parental acceptance of contact with Moroccan peers.

3.4. Acceptance of intimate relations with different target groups

Based on parents' cultural considerations we hypothesized that Dutch parents would be equally accepting of their children's intimate relations with Turkish–Dutch and Moroccan–Dutch peers (*cultural distance hypothesis for Dutch parents*). Based on parents' status considerations we hypothesized that Dutch parents would be more accepting of intimate relations

with Turkish–Dutch than Moroccan–Dutch peers (*ethnic hierarchy hypothesis for Dutch parents*). Paired sample *t*-test showed that Dutch parents showed higher parental acceptance of intimate relations with Turkish–Dutch than with Moroccan–Dutch peers, $t(70) = 2.07, p = .04$. This finding is in line with the ethnic hierarchy hypothesis.

Furthermore, we hypothesized that, based on cultural considerations, Turkish–Dutch parents would be more accepting of their children's intimate outgroup relations with Moroccans than with Dutch peers (*cultural distance hypothesis for Turkish–Dutch parents*). In contrast, based on status considerations it was hypothesized that Turkish–Dutch parents would be more accepting of intimate relations with Dutch than with Moroccan peers (*ethnic hierarchy hypothesis for Turkish–Dutch parents*). Paired sample *t*-test showed that Turkish–Dutch parents' acceptance of intimate outgroup relations was higher toward Dutch than toward Moroccan peers, $t(48) = 2.43, p < .01$. These findings also are consistent with the ethnic hierarchy hypothesis.

3.5. Analyses for Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents separately

Because the measurement invariance test for family reputation vulnerability showed that the meaning of the family reputation measure differed somewhat (marginally) between Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents, and in order to examine the independent effects for the two groups, separate regressions were conducted for Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents (see Table 4). The results are similar to the results obtained by the combined regression analyses. Regarding the religiosity effect, the results show that religiosity does not play a role in Turkish–Dutch parents' acceptance of outgroup relations with Moroccans. For Dutch parents religiosity was related to lower parental acceptance of their children's outgroup contact with Turkish–Dutch as well as Moroccan peers.

4. Discussion

Past research shows that parents sometimes resist the idea of their children having close contacts with peers of other ethnic groups (Bifulco et al., 2009; Tolsma et al., 2008) and this resistance can affect children's outgroup relations (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). However, little is known about the underlying reasons for parental resistance to their children's ethnic outgroup relations. The current study examined ethnic group differences in parental acceptance of their children's intimate outgroup relations, and the role of perceived family reputation vulnerability and religiosity in this.

Based on cultural differences in family integrity, norm conformity, and community orientation, we hypothesized that Dutch compared to Turkish–Dutch parents would be more accepting of intimate outgroup relations. The findings show that the Dutch parents were indeed more accepting of their children's close outgroup relations with Turkish and Moroccan peers, than Turkish–Dutch parents were of their children's close relations with Dutch and Moroccan peers. Family integrity, norm conformity, and community orientation are more strongly endorsed among Turkish–Dutch than among Dutch people (Verkuyten, 2001) and this may be the reason why Turkish parents are less accepting of their children having intimate relations with ethnic outgroup peers.

To further examine ethnic group differences in parental acceptance of outgroup relations, we examined the role of family reputation vulnerability. We followed the argument that in the Dutch dignity culture personal evaluations are important for attitudes and behavior, whereas in the Turkish honor culture evaluations of others are more important for attitudes and behavior (Ijzerman & Cohen, 2011). In line with this, we found that family reputation vulnerability was stronger among Turkish–Dutch than Dutch parents. Turkish–Dutch parents appear to be more concerned about their children harming the family's reputation within their ethnic community. This could explain differences in parental resistance between the groups. Because intimate outgroup relations can undermine the transmission and maintenance of ethnocultural values and practices, parents who perceive higher family reputation vulnerability might be less accepting of intimate outgroup relations. Whereas the current study shows that this is true for Turkish–Dutch as well as Dutch parents, it also shows that the former group of parents perceives stronger family reputation vulnerability and therefore is less accepting of their

Table 4
Multiple regression analyses predicting acceptance of outgroup relations per ethnic group.

| | Native Dutch parents | | | | Turkish–Dutch parents | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| | Outgroup Turks | | Outgroup Moroccans | | Outgroup Dutch | | Outgroup Moroccans | |
| | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> |
| Female child | –.03 | .02 | –.03 | .02 | –.07* | .02 | –.10** | .03 |
| SES | .03* | .01 | .02 | .01 | –.01 | .01 | –.03*** | .02 |
| Reputation vulnerability | –.05** | .02 | –.04*** | .02 | –.03** | .01 | –.03** | .01 |
| Religiosity | –.03* | .01 | –.03* | .01 | –.03* | .01 | –.01 | .02 |
| Adjusted <i>R</i> ² | 20% | | 29% | | 12% | | 27% | |

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .10$.

children's intimate outgroup relations. Thus, family status vulnerability partly explains why Turkish–Dutch parents are less accepting of intimate outgroup relations than Dutch parents.

Regarding parents' religiosity, it turned out that religious differences explained why Turkish–Dutch parents were less open to intimate outgroup relations with Dutch peers than Dutch parents were toward close relations with Turkish peers. This suggests that Turkish–Dutch parents are concerned about intimate relations with ethnic outgroup peers leading to a loss of religious values, beliefs and practices among their children. This is in line with other studies that show that Turkish–Dutch parents are sometimes afraid that their children 'Dutchify' too much by adopting Western liberal values (Nijsten, 1998). As expected, religiosity did not significantly explain why Turkish–Dutch parents were more opposed to relations with Moroccan peers who are also predominantly Muslim. This indicates that, among Turkish–Dutch parents, religion plays a role in their acceptance of close inter-religious relations. For Dutch parents, even though less religious, religiosity was also related to parental acceptance of contact with Turkish–Dutch as well as Moroccan–Dutch peers.

Cultural and status considerations yielded contrasting hypotheses regarding parental acceptance of intimate relations of different ethnic outgroups. Based on cultural (dis)similarities it was hypothesized that Dutch parents would be equally accepting of intimate relations with Turkish–Dutch and Moroccan–Dutch peers. Based on status considerations we hypothesized Dutch parents to be more accepting of intimate outgroup relations with Turkish–Dutch than Moroccan–Dutch peers. The findings were in line with the latter hypothesis and, thus, confirmed the status explanation.

Based on cultural (dis)similarities it was hypothesized that Turkish–Dutch parents would be more open to their children having contacts with Moroccan–Dutch than with Dutch peers. In contrast, based on status hierarchies it was hypothesized that Turkish–Dutch parents would be more accepting of intimate outgroup relations with Dutch peers than with the low status group of Moroccan–Dutch peers. It turned out that the acceptance of intimate relations with Moroccan peers was lower. This is in line with previous research on status hierarchies and indicates that also for Turkish–Dutch parents status considerations were related to the acceptance of their children's intimate relations with different outgroups.

This study shows that parental resistance is higher for more intimate relations. For none of the parents 'hanging out with outgroup classmates' was a problem, but the more intimate the relations were, the more parents evaluated this as problematic. This tolerance toward relatively low intimate relations appears to be inconsistent with some of the literature on school choice, which shows that at least some parents resist multi-ethnic schools (Bifulco et al., 2009; Karsten et al., 2003). A reason for not finding parental resistance to less intimate forms of outgroup contact might be that in contrast to Bifulco et al. (2009) and Karsten et al. (2003) we interviewed parents of students who already attended multi-ethnic schools. Thus, children of parents that have a strong resistance to multi-ethnic schools most likely were not attending the multi-ethnic schools through which we recruited the parents for this study.

Furthermore, most parents in this study indicated to be quite accepting of their children having close relations with ethnic outgroup peers. However, studies in the Netherlands show that adolescents' friendship networks are often segregated by ethnicity (e.g. Baerveldt et al., 2004; Stark & Flache, 2011). This suggests that the lack of interethnic friendships is not only due to parents not allowing their children to have intimate outgroup relations. Future studies should explore (the lack of) parental influence on outgroup relations in more detail. For example, it may be that parents of students at multi-ethnic schools might have become more open to intimate outgroup relations because they learned about the outgroup through their children. This would be in line with the extended contact hypothesis (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997) which states that the knowledge of ingroup members (in this case their child) having outgroup friends improves outgroup attitudes. It is also possible that the high level of acceptance is in part due to parents giving socially desirable responses in the interviews, a problem that may have been more prevalent due to our use of interviews rather than an anonymous questionnaire. However, we found considerable variation in parents' resistance to intimate outgroup relations. This suggests that social desirability concerns did not dominate parents' answers. Furthermore, it is not very likely that social desirable responding accounts for the ethnic group differences and the different associations found.

The current study showed that the meaning of the measure of family reputation vulnerability was (marginally) different for Dutch and Turkish–Dutch parents. Future studies on family reputation vulnerability should develop items that are more strongly invariant across cultural groups. Also, whereas the current study shows that religiosity affects parental acceptance of intimate outgroup contact, the limitations of the religiosity measure should be taken into account. Many Dutch people do not adhere to a religion, and in Islam orthopraxis is more central than in Christianity. However, the regression results for Dutch and Turkish–Dutch separately show that family reputation vulnerability as well as religiosity plays a role in parental acceptance of their children's interethnic peer relations.

This study provides novel findings on how perceived cultural differences and perceived social pressure from the ethnic ingroup may play a role in parental acceptance of their children's intimate outgroup relations. Future studies should examine whether the current findings replicate in larger samples, across other cultural groups, and in other countries. In addition, because we used a cross-sectional design, the proposed causal directions cannot be established. Also, when interpreting the results it should be taken into account that the findings are based on interviews with mainly mothers. Future studies including both parents have to assess whether there are differences between fathers and mothers. For example, it might be that fathers are more protective of their children and are, hence, less open to outgroup contacts than mothers. Furthermore, future studies should examine in more detail to which extent family reputation vulnerability and parental acceptance differ when it concerns sons and daughters. It might be that for daughters perceived family reputation vulnerability is stronger and consequently that parental acceptance of outgroup relations is lower for daughters than for sons. We did not find such differences in the current study, but this may be due to the relatively limited power of our statistical tests.

The current study measured parental acceptance of intimate outgroup relations but did not assess parental acceptance of such intimate relations with ingroup members. It could be argued that some parents would object to any form of intimate contact, even with the ingroup. However, it seems reasonable to assume that in most cases parents would not have strong objections to close peer relations. In addition, research on ethnic hierarchies (e.g. Hagendoorn, 1995) consistently shows that the social distance is lowest toward the ethnic ingroup, followed by different outgroups. Yet, a more stringent test of parental acceptance of outgroup relations should consider parental acceptance of ingroup contact as well.

In conclusion, this study shows that perceived cultural differences between ethnic groups can raise parents' concerns about close ethnic outgroup contacts of their children because these contacts might hamper or undermine the transmission of ethnocultural values, norms, and behaviors. This appears to be more important in ethnic groups that are more strongly concerned with family reputation and the ways in which the behavior of their children might affect this. In this sense not only the parents but also the wider ethnic community can have an influence on the social integration of adolescents. Therefore, to stimulate ethnic integration of adolescents it may be important to target not only the school and the parents but also the ethnic community. The current study sheds light on the question why parents might be less or more accepting of their children having intimate outgroup relations with ethnic outgroup peers. An interesting topic for future studies is to examine whether parental acceptance of their children's outgroup contacts contributes to or interferes with the attempts of schools to improve interethnic relations. Furthermore, the transition to middle school and the entry in such a school might make parents particularly concerned about the peers with which their child affiliates and the related peer differences and pressures. Future studies should examine the parental attitudes to ethnic outgroup contact of children of different ages.

Acknowledgments

We thank members of the research groups 'Social Development of Adolescents' and 'Norms and Networks' at the University of Groningen for their helpful feedback on earlier versions of this paper. We are grateful for the support and practical help of Tobias Stark, Coby van Niejenhuis, and Irene van der Vaart of the Sociology Department of the University of Groningen, and the school administrators who contributed to making the data collection possible. Also, we gratefully thank the team of research assistants that interviewed the parents, and their coordinators Paul Hindriks and Hester de Bok of GAMMA-Data & Consult, at the Sociology Department of the University of Groningen. Furthermore, the second author gratefully acknowledges financial support by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) under the Innovational Research Incentive Scheme (VIDI Grant 452-04-351).

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