Young Moroccan-Dutch: Thinking in Dutch, Feeling Moroccan
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Young Moroccan-Dutch: Thinking in Dutch, Feeling Moroccan

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Abstract

We examined to what extent Moroccan-Dutch (N = 25) between 15 and 32 years of age are oriented towards the Dutch and Moroccan community when describing their identities. We used the Twenty Statements Test (developed by Kuhn and McPartland (1954). See, M. H. Kuhn and T. S. McPartland, “An Empirical Investigation of Self-attitudes”, American Sociological Review, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1954, p. 69. In this study, participants were asked to complete the sentence with ‘I am.’ 20 times to assess how they described themselves.) and in-depth interviews to understand their challenges on the acculturation path since many face disadvantage and exclusion in the Dutch community. Moroccan-Dutch were, compared to the reference groups of mainstream Dutch (N = 20) and Moroccans (N = 25), more proud of their ethnic identity and attached to Islam. Though their Dutch language was dominant, they felt more Moroccan. They praised the Dutch openness, but suffered from negative stereotyping. Their participation in the Dutch community was low. To enhance their position, social professionals working with Moroccan-Dutch could draw on the rich ethnic and faith traditions of this group to encourage their deeper engagement with the Dutch society.

Introduction

There are many acculturation challenges faced by the 374,996 Moroccan-Dutch1 living in the Netherlands.2 Young Moroccan-Dutch do better than in 1980s and 1990s in school and the gap in educational achievement with the Dutch majority is slowly diminishing.3 Still, like other second-generation Muslim minorities living in Western countries, they are disadvantaged in the labor market.4 Muslim communities in the Netherlands often complain of discrimination.5 Their labor participation is the lowest of non-Western immigrant groups arriving since the 1960s.6 They are underrepresented in receiving preventive youth care, but overrepresented in curative care, such as mental health care.7 In this context, debates on the integration of Dutch immigrant youth are narrowed to Muslim immigrants, notably Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch, which has an impact on their identity construction and participation.8 In light of these challenges, we explore the double cultural identity of Moroccan-Dutch youth, referring to the positive feelings (of pride) and negative feelings (of value clashes) they associate with their dual cultural heritage.9 We also analyze whether there is an association with their acculturation orientation and the way they use or value the languages and social networks of ethnic and mainstream communities. This study is the first to examine the identity of Moroccan-Dutch in relation to their communication and social participation in
both communities, with a comparison being made with mainstream Dutch and Moroccans to better understand their double orientation.

We addressed a group that is developing a new identity, which has implications for their acculturation outcomes. The suggestion that young Moroccan-Dutch are becoming similar to native Dutch is tempered by the disparity in opportunities to participate in the Dutch community, negative stereotypes and the increasing identification with the Moroccan community. Also, the differences that they experience in contact with mainstream Dutch may cause problems. The feeling of being discriminated against has made their cultural and religious identity relevant. This is at odds with their increasing level of sociocultural adjustment in recent years. Their educational qualification has doubled since 2000, with many Moroccan-Dutch girls performing well, yet, their participation is poor, particularly in the labor market. Such positive and negative findings give input to the assumption that young Moroccan-Dutch score high on both failure and success.

**Ethnic Identity in the Acculturation Context**

Ethnic identity, often studied in an immigration context, refers to a person’s ethnically or culturally based practices, values and identifications. It plays a salient role in the acculturation process. Ethnic identity is particularly relevant when at least two groups are in contact with each other over an extended period of time and when there is identification with either or both groups. It involves self-identification, sense of belonging to a group and involvement or participation. The most important component of ethnic identity is the sense of belonging. Identities are constructed and negotiated in interaction.

For understanding the identity development of young immigrants in an acculturation context, we use the two-dimensional model of Berry. This framework, which is dominant in the acculturation literature, argues that immigrants differ in two theoretically independent dimensions: adopting a new culture and maintaining their ethnic culture of origin. Studies point out that integration, the combination of adopting the new culture and maintaining the ethnic culture, gives the best opportunity for greater psychological well-being and a higher level of participation in the dominant culture. A positive correlation between psychological well-being (“feeling well” in the new culture) and sociocultural adaptation (“doing well” in the new culture) has been found. However, Moroccan-Dutch immigrants who choose to maintain their culture of origin more so than adopting the dominant culture have been shown in the literature to demonstrate higher levels of psychological well-being and yet less sociocultural adaptation than immigrants with the opposite pattern.

In addition, the acculturation literature has shown that whereas some cultures have an emphasis on individual aspects of identity (independent self-construal), other cultures emphasize connectedness (interdependent self-construal). When comparing self-descriptions of Moroccan-Dutch and Dutch, one would predict that the Dutch emphasize independent values and skills more, whereas the Moroccan-Dutch underline more their group membership and collectivistic values, which is linked to interdependence. These two dimensions are relevant to understand the impact on family differences and support. Two related dimensions for social perception and judgment, which we use in this study to examine cross-cultural differences when the samples describe their identities, are communion and agency. Agency traits refer to personal skills and abilities such as being ambitious and self-confident (independence), whereas communion traits such as being social and kind emphasize interest in the well-being of others (interdepen-
dence). By exploring the self-descriptions among young Moroccan-Dutch in agency or communion traits, we can determine their level of integration within the Dutch community and their social connection to Moroccan and/or the Dutch community.

Language Usage of Young Moroccan-Dutch

Moroccan-Dutch youth are raised in a bilingual community. Moroccan-Arabic is the spoken language, but depending on their roots they may speak also another language. The majority of Moroccan-Dutch speak Moroccan or Tarifit, the language of their ancestors from the Rif region. While in the 1990s code-switching—or using a mix of Moroccan and Dutch—was typical for the communication of Moroccan-Dutch youth, they now speak Dutch better than their ancestral tongue. This rapid adoption is due to the complex linguistic situation of Moroccans. Morocco is multilingual but has one official language, al-fusha, the standard Arabic. The dârija, the Moroccan-Arabic, is not used in education. It has a low status and not much importance is given to this spoken language in the public domain. The standard Arabic, which nobody speaks as a mother tongue but dominates the Arab world, has a high status because of the religious affiliation, as the Quran is written in Arabic. We were interested in actual language usage and the link with identity. There are indications of an increased importance of the Berber identity in recent years in the Netherlands since most Moroccan-Dutch have a Berber (notably Rif) background.

Social Participation of Young Moroccan-Dutch

Participation in the dominant society, as a critical component of acculturation, is moderated by multiple factors, such as socioeconomic background, education level and the attitude of members of the dominant culture towards minorities. Social participation refers to social networks of interpersonal contacts with members of the dominant culture and one’s own ethnic group. The social network participation of Moroccan-Dutch beyond the ethno-religious community is low, despite the fact that nearly half of Moroccan-Dutch, up to 165,426, are second-generation immigrants born in the Netherlands, the majority of whom are under 26 years of age with 105,513 individuals between 15 and 32 years. Earlier studies concluded that most immigrants have a disadvantaged socioeconomic position that lasts at least two or three generations which impacts on their participation.

Despite forms of acculturation stress and subsequent identity conflicts, young Moroccan-Dutch are problematized in public discourse. They are one of the groups most rejected by the Dutch. These outcomes of rejection by the dominant group can be interpreted in the rejection–identification model of Branscombe. In this model the negative consequences of being perceived to be rejected by the majority group can reinforce identification with minority group. This contributes to structural inequalities, with Moroccan-Dutch experiencing greater difficulty finding internships and jobs than the Dutch group, resulting in higher unemployment. Nearly 37% of Moroccan-Dutch between 15 and 24 years of age are unemployed, compared to the figure of 10% unemployed for their mainstream Dutch peers. This has meant that identification with country of origin has become stronger. In 2006, 46% of the Moroccan-Dutch identified themselves as being more Moroccan than Dutch. This moved up in 2011 to 62%, while identification with the Netherlands reduced from 14% to 7%. An equal orientation towards both cultures (integration) has decreased from 40% to 31% and identification only with the
Dutch community (assimilation) has sharply dropped. This stronger identification with the Moroccan community partially explains low levels of social participation in the broader society. Dutch studies indicate that migrants preferred separation in the private domain and adopted integration in the public domain, but a stronger identification with the country of origin is seen as a barrier to integration.

As the dominant view in the acculturation literature is that orientation of (descendants of) migrants towards both cultures has a positive impact on participation and well-being, disengagement of Moroccan-Dutch youth is therefore a cause for concern.

The Present Study

Our aim was to explore to what extent young Moroccan-Dutch, when describing themselves, are oriented towards the Dutch and/or Moroccan community and how they differ from mainstream peers in the Netherlands and Morocco (we use “peers” here to refer to mainstream Dutch and Moroccan citizens in the age range of our target group). We also studied whether their orientation is associated with the way Moroccan-Dutch use the languages of both cultures and how they use or value their social networks. Two research questions were formulated. The first refers to the extent young Moroccan-Dutch, when describing their identity, are oriented towards the Dutch and/or Moroccan community compared to native Dutch or Moroccans. By comparing them with peers in the Netherlands and Morocco, we want to gain a clear picture of how the Moroccan-Dutch are culturally oriented towards both communities (so as to make their double cultural orientation salient). The second question is whether there is an association between their orientation and language use and social network participation in both cultures. We have chosen young adults who either study or are making their first steps into the labor market.

Method

Participants

A total of 70 young adults from the Netherlands and Morocco, aged between 15 and 32 years, participated in three samples. The reason for selecting these age ranges that include participants younger and older than the youth age group—which usually applies to 18–25-year olds—is that they also can be expected to face identity issues and are able to self-reflect on their (double) orientation. These samples comprised Moroccan-Dutch (N = 25, 13 men, M age = 21.28 years; SD = 4.55), mainstream Dutch who belong to the majority ethnic group in the Netherlands (N = 20, 9 men, M age = 19.80 years; SD = 2.28) and mainstream Moroccans who live in Morocco (N = 25, 15 men, M age = 21.28 years; SD = 3.64). Snowball sampling was used for recruitment. Participants’ background was diverse regarding educational level, (socioeconomic status (SES) as measured by parental occupation) and family size (parents and siblings), as can be seen in Table 1. The Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch, all living in the southern part of the Netherlands, were recruited from two secondary schools, two vocational schools and two universities (all located in Tilburg, Breda and Helmond). Moroccans were recruited from similar institutions in the western part of Morocco, notably in Rabat, but the majority came originally from different cities, including Kenitra, Nador and Tanger. As can be seen in Table 1, 40% are adolescents, 20% visited the secondary school and 44.3% had a low SES.
Measures

We used in-depth, semi-structured interviews and The Twenty Statements Test (TST)\(^45\) which participants filled out prior to the interview and took five minutes. With this face-to-face interview we could collect information and ask for clarification on issues of identity, language usage and social participation because of the interactive nature of communication. We used these two qualitative measures to explore new themes. The TST is a qualitative research tool that yields rich, quantifiable data. The reason for selecting both measures is that the participants are free to choose their own words in responding to the open-ended questions, describing first who they are and then self-identifying as members of a group, for measuring their ethnic identity.

Questionnaire

An initial version of the questionnaire, developed for this study, was pilot tested among Moroccan-Dutch young adults. After some refinement, 40 open questions remained, covering ethnic identity, communication and social participation.

Identity questions dealt with the importance of their double cultural identity and associations with both communities. The first seven questions were focused on self-perceptions and perceptions by others, and the other seven on how they valued their identity. We addressed questions like “What role does religion play in your identity?” and “Describe when do you feel more Moroccan or Dutch?”

Communication questions were related to language usage and communication skills. With the first five questions we wanted to know more about participants’ language situation and with the other four how they dealt with disputes with family, friends or professionals (such as teachers and social workers). Examples of questions were “In what

Table 1. Sample descriptives per ethnic group and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Moroccan-Dutch</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Moroccans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age distribution</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19 years (40%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24 years (44.3%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–32 years (15.7%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total(^a)</strong></td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational level(^b)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school (20%)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school (12.9%)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities (67.1%)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SES(^a)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (44.3%)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (48.6%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (7.1%)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family size</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>5.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std deviation</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Percentages.
language can you express yourself best?” and “What is important in your view when making contact with people?”

The final topic was participation. We posed nine questions to describe their activities and with whom they shared them, and eight questions which asked to which extent they appreciated these and who motivated them. To determine their social networks, we asked with whom they had daily contact and how many times. We asked who or what made them proud, who they saw as role models, what ambitions they had and their experiences with Dutch professionals. Other questions were “What activities do you like?” and “How many friends do you have and with whom do you have more contact (with Moroccan or Dutch friends)?”

Procedure

We collected data from each participant by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews. New participants were recruited in the Moroccan-Dutch group until saturation was reached and no new themes emerged in the interviews. A similar sample size was used in the other samples. The interviews, which were held in the Dutch language in the Netherlands and in dârîja in Morocco, took place in schools and universities. Almost all interviews in Morocco were conducted by two native Moroccans and one Dutch woman who is, like the interviewer in the Netherlands, fluent in both languages. These interviewers, who were personally recruited by the researcher, were trained in doing the interviews and had weekly contact with the researcher via Skype and almost daily by mail. Each interview, which lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, was recorded (with approval) and transcribed. Participants were informed that anonymity was guaranteed, that participation was voluntary and withdrawal possible at any time.

Coding Scheme

Interview

We conducted a semantic clustering of the transcripts of the open questions and created labels for sections of data that summarized answers into common topics. We used grounded theory for determining the most important topics mentioned in the interviews.

Twenty Statements Test

The responses were classified into two categories, namely agency and communion, to study to what extent participants felt themselves to be an independent individual or to be related more to their ethnic community. We used these dimensions to examine the differences between participants, when describing their identities, in relationship with co-ethnics or members of communities they belong to. Only responses that had a direct relationship with others (e.g. being polite and social) or sense of belonging (e.g. student, Dutch or Muslim) were coded as communion. To test the quality of coding responses in communion or agency, we used the inter-rater reliability by involving two raters whose codings showed 90% agreement.
Results

By analyzing and labeling the data using the open coding technique, as presented in grounded theory\(^4\) 12 topics emerged (see Table 2). Inter-rater agreement of labeling the data was established; 2 coders achieved 90% agreement in their coding of data.

We first compared the samples by analyzing TST results and then the content of interviews. Here we discuss only answers that are mentioned at least twice in each sample. Furthermore, only frequencies that occur more than twice will be reported in parentheses.

**Group Comparisons in Identity**

*TST.* We coded all responses as agency or communion and conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), using post hoc tests, to examine group differences. The MANOVA test was significant (Wilks’ \(\Lambda = .76\), \(F (4, 132) = 4.90, p < .001\), \(\eta^2_p = .13\)). Means on agency of the Moroccans and Moroccan-Dutch were significantly different from the Dutch mean, \(F (2, 70) = 8.92, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .21\). Means on communion were also significantly different, \(F (2, 70) = 6.41, p < .003, \eta^2_p = .16\). The Dutch used more agency responses than the other samples that used more communion responses. We studied how many statements with the same formulations were shared by at least two participants in each sample (see Table 3). We found that Moroccan-Dutch had more in common in how they described themselves than mainstream Dutch and Moroccan peers (see Table 3).

**Associations with Moroccan and Dutch Community**

We asked participants whether the characteristics they mentioned in TST were more associated with the Dutch or Moroccan community. Results are presented in Table 4.

---

**Table 2. Topics emerged in the interviews.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Stereotypes</td>
<td>7. Communication style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pride</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Statements of the TST marked as agency or communion.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity of participant</th>
<th>Mean agency**</th>
<th>Std deviation</th>
<th>Mean communion**</th>
<th>Std deviation</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Communion</th>
<th>Shared statements (%)</th>
<th>Range of persons sharing same statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan-Dutch</td>
<td>6.96(_a)</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>12.28(_a)</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>481(^*)</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>287 (59.7)</td>
<td>2–23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>9.95(_b)</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>9.90(_b)</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>176 (44.0)</td>
<td>2–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>7.48(_a)</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>12.44(_a)</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>212 (42.4)</td>
<td>2–15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>11.66</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1381</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>675 (48.9)</td>
<td>2–23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\)Missing: 19. 
**Means with different subscripts are significantly different (post hoc test).
Salima (m, 16): Typical Dutch is freedom of speech and typical Moroccan is hospitality.

Hassan (m, 19): Moroccans are helpful, respectful and spontaneous and Dutch open, realistic and honest.

Marjam (f, 21): Moroccans are helpful, religious, hospitable and stubborn. Dutch are direct, assertive, hardworking and targeted.

The majority of the Moroccan-Dutch group said Moroccans were social, stubborn, helpful and Muslim; the Dutch were mainly viewed as open and shameless but also honest and independent. Both peers (Moroccans and Dutch) confirmed most associations. The Dutch saw being hard-working as a typical Dutch trait, whereas modesty was more commonly associated with native Moroccans.

**Stereotypes**

When we asked how participants thought others viewed them, the mainstream Moroccans had the most negative perception of how they were viewed by others, as reported in Table 5.

**Marjam** (f, 21): Dutch think often that I am a closed person, looking arrogant.

**Brahim** (m, 16): They are afraid of me because of my beard and my strong body.

**Ali** (m, 21): Intimidating because I’m big, and cranky. They are quiet as I come closer … very stubborn.

**Rachid** (m, 22): People see me as a quiet person, but when Moroccans were often in the media, in a negative way, I felt myself uncomfortable because being Moroccan was suddenly emphasized.

Moroccan-Dutch were perceived by Dutch peers as stereotypical Muslim or Moroccan and arrogant, despite their efforts to adjust to the Dutch society. Mainstream Moroccans...
were perceived by others to be abnormal, crazy and arrogant. The Dutch had more positive qualifications about how others viewed them, notably being friendly and quiet. Moroccans did not much pay attention to how others viewed them, whereas Moroccan-Dutch expressed concerns that it could disadvantage their standing. On the one hand, they appreciated the Dutch, as being friendly and open, and liked the Netherlands, because all is well organized, especially when compared to Morocco, which they described as chaotic. On the other hand, the Moroccan-Dutch thought that the Dutch were full of prejudice.

Malika (f, 16): Dutch are polite but think in stereotypes.

Religion

Islam inspired the identity of 15 Moroccan-Dutch the most. Except for one participant all said they were religious. This is consistent with previous studies, which indicate that Islam appears more significant for the Moroccan-Dutch identity than their ethnic culture or community language. Two Moroccan-Dutch made a distinction between their religious and Moroccan identity, two others expressed the importance of being Muslim:

Soufian (m, 17): I pray but that has nothing to do with my Moroccan identity.
Fatima (f, 27): I feel more attached to my religion than to my Moroccan culture.
Fattouma (f, 24): I never go to the mosque but for me being Muslim means a lot.

Religion played a very different role in the other groups. Religion hardly played any role for the Dutch, except for two Protestants. Twelve Moroccans were not religious anymore, but could not express this in public. Moroccans agreed that religion was linked with their community, having a compelling impact on identity. Yet, they saw contradictions between what is preached in the mosque and practiced outside.

Values

Moroccan-Dutch were compared to their peers to be most attached to traditional values. Respect was highly valued by many Moroccan-Dutch and Moroccans. It was more appreciated among Moroccan-Dutch than in the Moroccan community. Moroccans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Typical Moroccan</th>
<th>Typical Dutch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan-Dutch</td>
<td>Stereotypical Muslim (5) and Moroccan (5), arrogant (4), friendly (3), spontaneous (3), quiet, close mouthed, social, shy, critical, laughing, intimidating</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
<td>Friendly (5), quiet (4), arrogant (3), self-confident, spontaneous, tender, organized, direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>Abnormal (6), crazy (5), arrogant (4), modest, egoistic</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Most frequently mentioned stereotypes.

9

Thinking in Dutch, Feeling Moroccan

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confirmed what Moroccan-Dutch did not appreciate in the Moroccan community, but appreciated solidarity and diversity of cultures within Morocco (see Table 6).

Participants differed in which values they would pass on later: most Moroccan-Dutch wanted to maintain a stricter doctrine of Islam than their parents. Whereas Moroccans wanted to raise their children with more freedom than they experienced from their own parents, most Moroccan-Dutch said that they intended to give their children less freedom, planning not to expose them to the temptations of the Dutch society, such as consuming alcohol:

**Warda** (f, 21): I would raise my children with less freedom; the world has become dangerous with social media.

**Soufian** (m, 17): We differ too much from the Dutch; take for example the relationship with our parents and alcohol. They work like robots, but do not spend much money.

The Moroccan-Dutch felt different from both the Dutch and Moroccans. Moroccans felt less attached to the traditional values (except respect and solidarity), whereas the Moroccan-Dutch underlined them.

**Fatima** (f, 27): Compared to Moroccans in Morocco I am very conservative.

When we asked the Moroccan-Dutch to think of possible differences with Dutch persons of the same age and gender, they mentioned a lifestyle that is, according to them, not based on religion, family or moral discipline. However, they appreciated the hard-working and structured nature of the Dutch.

**Zobida** (f, 20): I am religious and a Dutch girl of my age is still seeking what she believes.

**Pride**

When asked whether they were proud of their ethnic identity, Dutch participants were satisfied with their identity. Moroccans expressed mixed feelings; six persons felt more attached to the Berber background and one wished to change his Moroccan identity. The Moroccan-Dutch, all born in the Netherlands, were proud to be Moroccan. They

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Appreciated</th>
<th>Not appreciated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan-Dutch</td>
<td>Respect (18), Islamic values (10), honesty (8), obedience (5), helpful (3), family (3), do not steal, have shame, hospitality, go-getter, persisting, polite</td>
<td>Too emotional (4), lack of honesty (4), negative image of Moroccans (3), fanatic, stubborn, victimization, parenting with fears, chaos, hypocrisy, too much interference, no empathy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Honesty (10), direct (4), openness (4), hard-working (5), freedom (4), structured nature (3), independence</td>
<td>Being busy, working too hard, stereotypes, not hospitable, rude, stingy and complaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>Respect (14), solidarity (11), diversity (8), freedom (7), hospitality (5), family (4), independence (4), good school performances (4), obedience</td>
<td>To much interference (5), stubborn and gossip (3), not organized, superstitious, contradictions, no respect for time, hypocrisy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
felt Moroccan, except for two who were comfortable with both identities, but were not proud of being Dutch.

**Saleh** (m, 18): I am proud to be a Moroccan; we have such strong ties with each other.

Regarding what made them proud, most Moroccan-Dutch mentioned their schooling and faith, the Dutch their schooling and what they did in leisure time and Moroccans when their activities affected others, such as organizing demonstrations for democracy. Though Moroccan-Dutch appreciated living with multiple cultures, there was a hierarchy in their identifications, with the Dutch community at the bottom, the Moroccan in the middle and the Islam being the strongest source of identification.

**Abdel** (m, 22): During fasting the Ramadan I feel myself 100% Moroccan.

**Group Comparisons in Communication**

**Language Usage**

The Moroccan-Dutch were raised in a bilingual community, 13 of them spoke a Berber language and 12 Moroccan-Arabic at home; yet, their Dutch was dominant. Except for two all confirmed that Dutch has become their first language. Participants with a Moroccan background associated their mother tongue as having a low status. Young Moroccan-Dutch easily adopt the Dutch language, especially compared to other non-western peers, like the Turkish-Dutch, but the low standing of their Moroccan community language is combined with a strong pride in their background. Despite the fact that almost nobody of the target group (except one male) mastered standard Arabic, they all valued it. Moroccans spoke at least two languages fluently, a combination of mother tongue, Arabic or French, and switched easily between the two.

**Communication Style**

Moroccan-Dutch and Dutch agreed on the most important communication skills, namely being open (10) and friendly (8), but they differed in what this meant. According to the Moroccan-Dutch, openness is often linked with hospitality, whereas for the Dutch openness is related with honesty. Moroccan-Dutch again valued respect (6), while the Dutch chose authenticity (3), Moroccans thought otherwise: besides respect (3), adjustment (3) is needed for establishing friendly relationships, followed by modesty. When we asked the Moroccan-Dutch to describe a dispute and how they solved it, they said they avoided any conflict, in particular with parents, out of respect.

**Mustafa** (m, 23): I like to be modest and avoid any conflict.

This contrasted with Dutch, who had open communication with parents, and Moroccans who respected parents but did not avoid confrontation. **Friends** (11) was the most frequent answer of Moroccan-Dutch to the question “To whom would you go in case of a problem or a question that you cannot solve?” This again contrasted with most Dutch and Moroccans who mentioned parents (10 to 7), but then they differed who is next. Dutch contacted their best friend(s), whereas Moroccans went to their family, a teacher or an imam. In all, 18 Moroccan-Dutch did not want to bother parents, except
for three males and three females who consulted first their mother and, for one male, his father. The majority preferred their co-ethnic friends even if this was not always easy.

**Houria** (f, 18): When I have a problem I go to my Moroccan girlfriends, not parents, they do not understand.

**Kheira** (f, 19): It is difficult to share my opinion with Moroccan friends, because they react too emotional.

### Group Comparisons in Participation

#### Activities

Fourteen Moroccan-Dutch had a part-time job while studying, 11 did sport and four voluntary work in the mosque or sports club. Among the Dutch, 12 worked part-time, 10 did sport and two did voluntary work in a social organization. Of the mainstream Moroccans three said to have a job, five did sports and five were politically active in the sense that they contributed in organizing with others street demonstrations for more freedom and democracy in Morocco.

**Halima** (f, 16): The Dutch entertain themselves better; they go often to a cinema or restaurant.

#### Social Network

Nine Moroccan-Dutch had more co-ethnic friends than Dutch friends. Seven Moroccan-Dutch had only co-ethnics as friends. Two men had more Dutch friends, but kept frequent contact with Moroccan-Dutch. This was also the case for four women who did not meet any Moroccan-Dutch friends until they went to university. They said they were discouraged by parents from making Moroccan friends. Only two had Dutch friends:

**Ahmed** (m, 28): I used to have many Moroccan friends, but since I became ambitious I just have Dutch friends.

**Houria** (f, 18): It is hard to have a double identity. I always had Dutch friends, but I could never show my Dutch identity, because I was limited in my freedom by my parents.

This conclusion is in line with results of Statistics Netherlands on contact of Moroccan-Dutch with co-ethnics and Dutch. In 2011 57% of Moroccan-Dutch said they had more contact with co-ethnics, while 11% had more contact with Dutch. Except for two (male and female), the Dutch group had no Moroccan-Dutch friends.

### Role Models

What inspired the identity of Moroccan-Dutch and motivated them to participate most were Prophet Mohammed, parents and in some cases successful Moroccan-Dutch. Native Dutch referred to friends, parents and students. Moroccans mentioned students, family, siblings and professionals.

**Houria** (f, 18): I see my father as an example, not in what he achieved, but because of his self-discipline.
Opportunities and Obstacles

Moroccan-Dutch mentioned that opportunities they saw in participating successfully in the Dutch society depended on how the Dutch treated them since they faced obstacles like stereotypes.

_Warda_ (f, 21): We have become like the Dutch but they still see us as Moroccans!

There were 16 Moroccan-Dutch who had negative experiences with Dutch professionals, 5 mixed and 4 positive. Those with negative feelings reported not being motivated, having been treated negatively because of their ethnicity. There were three Moroccan-Dutch who did not see obstacles because they were not recognized as Moroccans. Dutch were positive about their chances; half of them did not see obstacles, the other half saw the economic crisis and new immigrants as threats. Although Moroccans were skeptical, referring to bureaucracy and illiteracy, they saw opportunities but had to adapt to the system.

Future Perspectives

Twelve Moroccan-Dutch saw their future in the Netherlands, 10 in Morocco although they knew their ancestral country of origin just from holidays, two could see their future in both communities and one said elsewhere. Of the Dutch peers, 3 wanted to migrate to other Western countries, and 11 Moroccans wished to go abroad for study or work.

Discussion

Our aim was to understand the challenges of young Moroccan-Dutch on their acculturation path since the majority face disadvantage and social exclusion. We examined to what extent they are attached towards the Moroccan/Dutch community, when describing their identity, compared to peers, and explored the association between their orientation and language usage and participation in the Dutch/Moroccan community. We conclude that Moroccan-Dutch are more oriented towards the Moroccan community and that there is an association between their orientation and the way they use and value the languages and social networks in both communities.

The results showed their stronger ties with co-ethnics and religion, and a weaker identification with the Dutch community. By classifying their identity self-descriptors as agentic or communal, we saw that a (communal) collectivistic orientation prevailed among Moroccan-Dutch. This was in contrast with Dutch peers who underlined their personal identity. Moroccan-Dutch said they had more contact with co-ethnics, which as a result led to a limited network into the Dutch community. However, studies on social participation argue that an ethnically vital community provides support for sociocultural adjustments and helps to deal with negative acculturation experiences, but for successful participation input from both communities is needed.53

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite positive acculturation experiences, such as their school success as a group, Moroccan-Dutch mentioned negative outcomes, such as prejudice, which
jeopardized their social participation and integration with the Dutch community. Their orientation to the Moroccan community is reinforced by the negative Dutch attitude. The rejection–identification model of Branscombe which predicts a salient ethnic identity in such conditions, was observed. Although this study showed that the Moroccan-Dutch think Dutch by using it as their first language, they felt more comfortable in the Moroccan community, were proud of being Moroccan and felt most attached to Islamic faith. This study underlines the importance of increasing knowledge on the identity development of Moroccan-Dutch and what barriers they face to increase participation with the broader Dutch society. Social professionals can benefit from this knowledge by understanding the identification processes among Moroccan-Dutch, whilst also understanding the importance of combating prejudice in order to help young adults enhance their social networks and support their identity development.

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NOTES

1. Moroccan-Dutch persons are defined here as individuals born in Morocco or having at least one parent or grandparent born there. See for the total Moroccan-Dutch population in the Netherlands, Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek Statline 2014 (Statistics Netherlands Statline, 2014), retrieved on 14 January 2015 from http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=37325&D1=a&D2=0&D3=0&D4=0&D5=0-2,4,137,152,220,237&D6=4,l&HDR=G2,G1,G3,T&STB=G4,G5&VW=T.


24. See Prins et al., “Telling the Collective Story?”, *op. cit.*


41. See J. Saib et al., *Participatie van migranten op de arbeidsmarkt*, op. cit.
42. See Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek Statline, 2014, op. cit.
46. Permission to do this study was given by the Psychology Ethics Committee of Tilburg University. When quoting Moroccan-Dutch participants in this paper we use pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.
51. Ibid.
54. See Branscombe et al., “Perceiving Pervasive Discrimination among African Americans”, op. cit.