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# Articles

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## Ethnicity and Youth Cultural Participation in the Netherlands

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In this article the influence of several factors (ethnicity, sex, educational level and the cultural participation of family members) on adolescents' active cultural participation (e.g., drawing, acting) and receptive cultural participation (e.g., attending concerts, visiting museums) is explored. The respondents included 557 12- to 18-years-olds living in the city of Utrecht (the Netherlands): 285 minority youth (i.e., youth whose parents had both been born in Morocco, Turkey or Suriname) and 272 youth with Dutch-born parents. The initially expected lower cultural participation among minority youth was limited to Moroccan youths' receptive cultural participation. Our findings point to the mother as the key figure in the cultural participation of both minority and majority youth.

**KEYWORDS:** *adolescence, ethnicity, cultural participation, the Netherlands*

### Introduction

The cultural integration of ethnic minority youth has been a source of concern in the Netherlands, as they scarcely appear to avail themselves of existing cultural resources. Little is known about their cultural preferences and thus far most Dutch research on cultural participation has been limited to the nonminority population (Ganzeboom, 1989; Ter Bogt & Van Praag, 1992; Van Beek & Knulst, 1991). These studies indicate that Dutch youth generally show little interest in the higher forms of art and culture; the vast majority reserve their enthusiasm for manifestations of youth or mass culture. Dutch research has also shown that adolescents receiving upper-level (e.g., pre-university) secondary education demonstrate a greater interest in art and culture than their peers, and that girls show more cultural interest than boys. Between the ages of 12 and 17, girls engage in more artistic activities than boys (e.g., playing music, dancing, acting, weaving, drawing); girls also attend more artistic performances and visit more cultural institutions (e.g., classical

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concerts, the theater, pop concerts, museums, the cinema) (Central Statistical Office, 1993; Van Beek & Knulst, 1991; Van Wel, Kort, Haest, & Jansen, 1994).

Some authors emphasize the importance of children's experiences at school as a determinant of cultural participation, while others focus on cultural transmission within the family (Ganzeboom & De Graaf, 1991; Knulst, 1989). According to Van Beek and Knulst (1991), the example set by parents is a key factor; they found a particularly strong connection between the cultural participation of mothers and that of their children. However, research by Van Wel (1994) suggests that cultural transmission within the family proceeds along sex-specific lines: cultural interests are passed on from father to son and from mother to daughter. Friends can also inspire cultural enthusiasm, but according to De Waal (1989) youth tend to discourage one another from embracing the higher forms of art and culture. Ter Bogt (1990) found that youth who had developed a particular cultural interest could always name someone in their environment who had inspired the interest.

The existing research thus indicates that the cultural participation of Dutch youth is associated with sex, educational level, and the cultural interests of family members, notably parents. So far little attention has been given to ethnicity as a factor in cultural participation. However, ethnicity has been investigated in American research on leisure-time allocation, suggesting that ethnic minorities show low levels of participation in most forms of recreation outside the home. In the American research no special attention has been paid to cultural participation as it is defined in this article. The low levels of minority participation are usually explained within the framework of the marginality-ethnicity paradigm (Carr & Williams, 1993; Floyd & Gramann, 1993; Hutchison, 1987, 1988; Stamps & Stamps, 1985; Washburne, 1978). The marginality hypothesis states that the disadvantaged socio-economic position of ethnic minorities leads to their marginalization, which is in turn responsible for their low rates of participation. Explanations in terms of ethnicity, on the other hand, focus on cultural differences in leisure-time activities or preferences. The debate over the relative contribution of social class and ethnicity remains unresolved; intra-ethnic variation and cultural diversity impede a clear view of the influence of these two factors.

The Netherlands is a society experiencing changes in its ethnic composition. In the 1960s and 1970s thousands of Moroccan and Turkish laborers migrated to the Netherlands. In the 1980s, the Netherlands began admitting the wives and children of these laborers as immigrants, which has led to a sharp increase in the number of ethnic minorities. In the 1970s there was also considerable immigration from former Dutch colonies such as Suriname. Although the overall percentage of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands is still small (5%), these immigrant groups have established themselves primarily in the four largest Dutch cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. In the last-named city, which was the setting for this research, one third of youth aged 12 to 18 are of Moroccan (19%), Turkish (9%) or Surinamese (6%) descent (Department of Research and Statistics, 1994). This article presents the results of one of the first large-scale

studies in the Netherlands to systematically examine ethnicity as a factor in youth cultural participation.

In our research we investigated whether or not the most important factors which prior research have shown to be related to youth cultural participation generally (e.g., sex, educational level, and the cultural participation of family members) can help account for minority youths' cultural participation. We examined four major questions:

1. First, we investigated in detail whether minority youth (of Moroccan, Turkish, or Surinamese descent) differ from youth with Dutch-born parents (i.e., parents born in the Netherlands) in both active cultural participation (e.g., drawing, acting) and receptive cultural participation (e.g., attending concerts, visiting museums). The usual global distinction between immigrant and Dutch may not do justice to the cultural diversity of minority groups (Penninx & Vermeulen, 1994). On the one hand, since the former colony Suriname was more closely connected to Dutch society than Morocco and Turkey, we expected minor differences in cultural participation between Surinamese youth and youth with Dutch-born parents. On the other hand, it seemed plausible that Moroccan adolescents might show relatively low levels of cultural participation, since most of the Moroccan migrant families in the Netherlands have come from the most remote rural parts of Morocco (e.g., the Rif mountains) (Feddema, 1992). Some of the children of Surinamese, Turkish and Moroccan migrants were born in their parents' homeland, while others were born and raised in the Netherlands. Therefore, it seemed worthwhile to investigate the effect of differences in cultural participation within these minority groups.

2. Our second research question pertained to the role of education in cultural transmission. It could be that the cultural participation of minority youth is connected to their overrepresentation in lower-level secondary schools (e.g., vocational education), which provide little cultural stimulation; in this case educational 'marginality' (i.e., overrepresentation at the lower end of the educational system), not ethnicity, would be the determining factor. However, in line with prior research (Van Beek & Knulst, 1991; Van Wel, 1994), we expected that the cultural influence of the educational system in general would be less than that of the family system.

3. In addition, we investigated whether cultural transmission within ethnic minority families is similar to that in other Dutch families. Due to mixed cultural orientations, we expected less intergenerational similarity in cultural participation in ethnic minority families as compared with other Dutch families. Special attention was given to the cultural influence of mothers, fathers, and siblings, respectively. In line with the research results of Van Beek and Knulst (1991) and Van Wel (1994), we expected that the mother would be the central role model for girls; for boys the key figure was expected to be either the father or the mother.

4. Our research also explored whether minority girls are culturally more active than minority boys, as has been found for adolescents with Dutch-born parents. We predicted that this would not be the case, especially in the area

of receptive cultural participation; this is because Turkish and Moroccan parents, most of whom abide by the tenets of traditional Islam, do not readily permit female adolescents to participate in cultural activities outside the home.

## Methods

### *Sample*

In 1993 questionnaires were mailed to the homes of a sample of 1,000 youth living in Utrecht. The questionnaire items concerned the youths' cultural activities and interests. The systematic random sample was drawn from a list of all 12- to 18-year-olds living in Utrecht, which had been compiled from Utrecht's municipal register. (Dutch law requires that all persons living in the Netherlands be listed in the register for their county or municipality, which compiles a variety of personal data, including current address, age, and birthplace of parents.) The stratified sample consisted of 400 youth with Dutch-born parents (i.e., youth whose parents had both been born in the Netherlands; there were not any ethnic youth in this group) and 600 ethnic minority youth (i.e., youth whose parents had both been born in Morocco, Turkey, Suriname, or the Dutch Antilles). To obtain sufficient respondents from different ethnic groups the minority youth were oversampled. The questionnaires were completed and returned (after two mailings) by 273 boys and 284 girls (average age: 15 years; total response rate: 56%). The respondents included 272 youth with Dutch-born parents (response rate: 68%) and 285 minority youth (response rate: 48%); the latter group consisted of 165 youth of Moroccan descent, 74 of Turkish descent, 43 of Surinamese descent, and 3 of Antillian descent. In view of its small size the last-named group was not included in the analyses. The group of respondents was adequately representative of youth living in Utrecht in terms of sex, age, educational level and neighborhood (cf. Department of Research and Statistics, 1994). Half of the minority respondents had been born outside of the Netherlands (64% of the Moroccan youth, 36% of the Turkish youth, and 26% of the Surinamese youth); half of those born in another country had been living in the Netherlands for 10 years or longer. Thus, about three quarters of these ethnic youth had spent the greater part of their life in the Netherlands.

### *Measurement Instruments*

The youth were asked about their cultural participation in 15 domains. *Active* cultural participation was represented by nine domains: playing music; singing; sculpting; dancing; drawing or painting; photography (or filmmaking); weaving; writing (poetry or short stories); and acting. The questionnaire covered all of the categories of active cultural participation which researchers have traditionally explored (Van Beek & Knulst, 1991); one category, writing, was added. In addition, six domains of *receptive* cultural par-

ticipation were investigated. These included four domains of 'classical' cultural participation: museums; classical concerts; the theater; and dance performances. In comparison with Van Beek and Knulst's (1991) instrument, our questionnaire did not include *mime* and *opera*, because prior research has shown that Dutch youth show very low participation in these domains. We also asked the respondents about their receptive cultural participation in two domains of modern popular culture: pop concerts and the cinema.

For the purposes of our research into 15 domains of active and receptive cultural participation, we made use of a 'transcultural' conceptual scope. That is, although there is a world of difference between Turkish folk dance and modern dance, both fall within the category *dancing*. The youth were asked to indicate which of the active domains they participated in, which of the receptive domains they had participated in during the past year, and the social context in which they had participated: alone, with friends, with family (family members were not specified), at their community center, or in connection with their school. Responses to each of these five social contexts could range in each of the 15 domains from 0 = no to 1 = yes. In addition, we asked the youth if they belonged to a club or other amateur organization for cultural activities (e.g., an orchestra), and if they were taking lessons privately or at a center for cultural education (responses to both questions could range from 0 = no to 1 = yes). The youth also indicated which of the 15 cultural domains their father, mother and siblings were involved in (for each family member the answer could range from 0 = no to 1 = yes).

By means of loglinear analyses we contrasted the (extracurricular) cultural participation of Moroccan, Turkish and Surinamese youth on each of these domains with youth with Dutch-born parents. We subsequently focused our analyses on the differences between Moroccan youth and youth with Dutch-born parents. Moroccan youth form the largest ethnic minority in Utrecht. We examined the relation of ethnicity (Moroccan youth vs. youth with Dutch-born parents), sex, educational level and family participation to global scores for active and receptive cultural participation. The global score for active cultural participation was derived by summing the scores for each of its nine domains (the global scores could range in value from 0 to 9; for each domain scores ranged dichotomously from 0 = no to 1 = yes, i.e., active in one or more of the four extracurricular social contexts mentioned). The global score for receptive participation was a summation of dichotomous scores for the four traditional domains of receptive participation (excluding the two popular domains, viz. *pop concerts* and *the cinema*; these global scores could range from 0 to 4; for each domain scores range from 0 = no to 1 = yes, once again in relation to one or more of the four extracurricular social contexts).

Because of insufficient cell frequencies it was not possible to examine all of the potential determinants of cultural participation simultaneously. To identify significant determinants of cultural participation, two series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were carried out. First, we examined the main effects of ethnicity, gender, educational level and family participation on

global active and global receptive cultural participation scores, respectively. We defined two levels of secondary education: 0 = low, i.e., vocational or lower general secondary education, and 1 = high, i.e., higher general or pre-university secondary education. In the case of active cultural participation, high family participation meant that another family member was active in more than two domains; otherwise family participation was considered to be low. In the receptive sphere, high family participation was defined as participation by a family member in at least two domains; otherwise it was coded as low. Second, we examine the main effects of ethnicity and participation by family members (namely participation by mother, by father and by siblings) on global scores for active and receptive cultural participation. The three family participation variables used in these analyses were dichotomous, distinguishing between no participation and participation in at least one domain of active and receptive cultural participation, respectively.

### Results

Our results indicate that amateur organizations for cultural activities in Utrecht reach 15% of youth with Dutch-born parents and 1.5% of minority youth; three quarters of all the youth who make use of these organizations are involved in dance. Centers for cultural education appear to be utilized by 9% of youth with Dutch-born parents and 1% of minority youth; three quarters of these adolescents take music lessons. Thus, the organizations for cultural activities and education in Utrecht appear to reach minority youth at one-tenth the rate they reach youth with Dutch-born parents.

Do these results mean that minority youth are culturally inactive, or does the picture change when we widen our scope to include other social contexts in which youth can engage in artistic activities, such as with family, with friends, at a community center or by themselves? To answer this question, we examined the respondents' extracurricular cultural activities in these four social contexts considered as a whole. To explore the cultural participation of Moroccan, Turkish and Surinamese youth in relation to that of youth with Dutch-born parents, separate loglinear analyses were performed in each of the 13 previously mentioned cultural domains (see Table 1).

The results indicated that lower cultural participation of minority youth was largely limited to the Moroccan youth and especially to their receptive cultural participation. The Moroccan youth were found to be less active than youth with Dutch-born parents in six cultural domains. They were less likely to play music and to draw or paint, and they less frequently reported visiting museums, the theater, pop concerts and the cinema. Unexpectedly, the Moroccan youth more frequently reported sculpting than youth with Dutch-born parents. The Turkish youth differed from youth with Dutch-born parents in that they less frequently reported acting, sculpting, and going to the cinema. The Surinamese youth showed even more active cultural participation than youth with Dutch-born parents in the domains of singing, dancing, acting and photography. Among the Moroccan youth we found no differ-

**TABLE 1**  
*Loglinear Analyses of Ethnicity as Predictor of Adolescents' Extracurricular Cultural Participation in 13 Domains<sup>a</sup>*

Independent Variables	Active Cultural Participation							Receptive Cultural Participation					
	Playing Music	Singing	Sculpting	Dancing	Drawing / Painting	Photography	Writing	Acting	Museums	Pop Concerts	The Theater	Dance Performances	The Cinema
Ethnicity													
a. Moroccan ( <i>N</i> = 165) vs. Dutch ( <i>N</i> = 272)	2.09		-2.47		2.11				4.19	2.83	3.06		4.94
b. Turkish ( <i>N</i> = 74) vs. Dutch ( <i>N</i> = 272)			2.42					2.11					3.25
c. Surinamese ( <i>N</i> = 43) vs. Dutch ( <i>N</i> = 272)		-2.04		-2.03		-2.85		-2.61					
Percentage of respondents ( <i>N</i> = 554)	17	32	15	32	34	47	25	10	27	51	19	11	78

*Note:* Only significant Z-scores are reported (Z-scores >1.96 or <-1.96 represent significant effects,  $p < .05$ ).

A positive score means a higher participation of Dutch youth than minority youth, a negative score means a higher participation of minority youth.

<sup>a</sup>Two domains were not included in the analyses because of very low participation rates: weaving (5%) and classical concerts (7%).

ences in cultural participation depending on their country of birth or the length of their residence in the Netherlands. We found no such differences for Turkish and Surinamese youth, either. Since the strongest ethnic differences were between Moroccan youth and youth with Dutch-born parents, ethnicity was operationalized in subsequent analyses in terms of the Dutch-Moroccan contrast only.

To obtain a comprehensive view of the factors associated with youth cultural participation, we examined the relation of ethnicity, sex, educational level and family participation to global scores for active and receptive cultural participation. Two preliminary series of univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs; not presented in a Table) were carried out, which tested different combinations of independent variables, namely (1) a 4-way ANOVA combination of the factors ethnicity, gender, educational level and family participation (main-, interaction- and simple main effects) on the one hand, and (2) a 4-way ANOVA combination of the factors ethnicity, participation of mother, father and siblings (also main-, interaction-, and simple main effects) on the other. These analyses revealed no significant effects of educational level, participation of father and participation of siblings. We therefore decided to omit these variables in our definitive 3-way analyses of variance (ANOVA), which incorporated ethnicity (Moroccan youth vs. youth with Dutch-born parents), gender and participation of mother as independent variables (Table 2).

The analysis of global active cultural participation revealed main effects for sex and participation of the mother, as well as an interaction between ethnicity and gender. Youth with culturally active mothers showed relatively high active cultural participation. While girls with Dutch-born parents engaged in more artistic activities than boys with Dutch-born parents, this sex difference was nonsignificant in Moroccan youth. Girls with Dutch-born parents were more active than Moroccan girls, whereas boys with Dutch-born parents were less active than Moroccan boys.

Main effects for maternal participation as well as ethnicity were also found in the analysis of global receptive cultural participation. On average, Moroccan boys and girls visited fewer types of cultural institutions than boys and girls with Dutch-born parents. A significant interaction between ethnicity and sex was also found: whereas girls with Dutch-born parents visited more cultural institutions than boys with Dutch-born parents, this sex difference was nonexistent in Moroccan youth. The receptive cultural participation of the mother emerged again as a strong predictor of both boys' and girls' cultural behavior. Moreover, there was a significant interaction between ethnicity and maternal participation. The receptive cultural participation of the mother evidently stimulated similar behavior in youth with Dutch-born parents more than in Moroccan youth. Both Moroccan youth and youth with Dutch-born parents appeared to follow the example set by their mothers. However, the Moroccan youth had little opportunity to follow their mother's example, because Moroccan mothers showed much less receptive cultural participation than Dutch-born mothers ( $M_{\text{MOROCCAN MOTHERS}} = 0.25$ ;  $M_{\text{DUTCH MOTHERS}} = 1.32$ ;  $t[410.28] = 11.05$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The Moroccan



**TABLE 2**  
*The Effects of Ethnicity, Gender and Maternal Participation on Youth Cultural Participation*

Effects on cultural participation		$M_{MOR}^1$	$M_{DUTCH}$	$M_F$	$M_M$	$M_{MH}$	$M_{ML}$
<i>A. Effects on active cultural participation (range: 0-9)</i>							
gender <sup>2</sup>	F(1,422) = 32.99***			2.70	1.62		
maternal participation	F(1,422) = 32.87***					2.63	1.68
ethnicity × gender	F(1,422) = 5.62*						
gender, Dutch youth only	F(1,422) = 51.22***			2.90	1.47		
ethnicity, males only	F(1,422) = 7.52*	1.87	1.47				
ethnicity, females only	F(1,422) = 12.91***	2.34	2.90				
<i>B. Effects on receptive cultural participation (range: 0-4)</i>							
ethnicity	F(1,423) = 14.89***	0.30	0.87				
maternal participation	F(1,423) = 41.12***					1.12	0.30
ethnicity × gender	F(1,423) = 7.50**						
ethnicity × maternal participation	F(1,423) = 4.85*						
gender, Dutch youth only	F(1,423) = 15.20***			1.06	0.68		
ethnicity, males only	F(1,423) = 9.03**	0.32	0.68				
ethnicity, females only	F(1,423) = 56.11***	0.28	1.06				
ethnicity, high maternal part. only	F(1,423) = 85.38***	0.62	1.21				
maternal part., Dutch youth only	F(1,423) = 80.26***					1.21	0.38
maternal part., Moroc. youth only	F(1,423) = 29.62***					0.62	0.23

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>1</sup>Abbreviations used in subscripts: MOR = Moroccan youth; DUTCH = youth with Dutch-born parents; F = females; M = males; MH = maternal participation high; ML = maternal participation low.

<sup>2</sup>Only significant main effects, interactions effects and the associated simple main effects are specified.

mothers also showed less active cultural participation than the Dutch-born mothers ( $M_{MOROCCAN\ MOTHERS} = 0.58$ ;  $M_{DUTCH\ MOTHERS} = 1.18$ ;  $t[425.73] = 5.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

## Discussion

Our first research question pertained to ethnicity as a factor in cultural participation. From our research it appears that the institutions which organize cultural activities and cultural education in Utrecht reach minority youth at only one tenth the rate they reach youth with Dutch-born parents. If we broaden our focus to include other (extracurricular) social contexts for cultural participation, our findings demonstrate that the usual distinction between immigrant and Dutch-born does no justice to the cultural diversity of minority groups (cf. Penninx & Vermeulen, 1994). As expected we found clear differences between youth of Moroccan, Turkish and Surinamese descent, in relation to youth with Dutch-born parents. As it turned out, the lower cultural participation of minority youth (ascribed by anxious Dutch politicians to all minority groups) is limited to Moroccan youths' receptive participation (as said, most of the Moroccan migrant families have come from the most remote rural parts of Morocco). In the sphere of active cultural participation, Surinamese, Turkish and Moroccan youth appear to rep-

resent a reservoir of cultural interest which cultural institutions have scarcely begun to tap.

Comparison of our findings with national statistics—which are limited to nonminority youth—suggests that nonminority youth in Utrecht show levels of active cultural participation which are on the whole similar to national levels; at the same time, youth in Utrecht appear to visit more cultural institutions and attend more artistic performances, which is not surprising given that Utrecht is a metropolitan cultural center (Van Wel, Kort, Haest & Jansen, 1994). Our investigation of the determinants of youth cultural participation focused not only on ethnicity, but also on sex, educational level, and the cultural participation of family members. In answer to our second research question (the role of education in cultural transmission) it appears that the influence of the family on the cultural participation of youth is of greater importance than that of educational level.

With regard to our third research question (the influence of family members) we expected that the mother would be the central role model for girls in the cultural domain; for boys the key figure was expected to be either the father or the mother. Our findings—like those of Van Beek and Knulst (1991)—point to the mother as the key figure in the cultural participation of both minority and majority boys and girls.

Relating to our fourth research question (sex differences) we found—in line with other Dutch research (Ter Bogt, 1990; Ter Bogt & Van Praag, 1992)—that among nonminority youth girls were culturally more enterprising than boys. However, no such sex difference was found for Moroccan youth, not only (as predicted) in the area of receptive cultural participation, but also in the area of active cultural participation.

Additional research will be needed to elucidate further the process of cultural transmission in relation to the three key factors that our results indicated: ethnicity, sex and the example set by mothers.

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