



Contact and conflict between adult children and their parents in immigrant families: is integration problematic for family relationships?

Matthijs Kalmijn

Department of Sociology, University of Amsterdam and NIDI, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Previous studies have shown that family ties are relatively strong in most non-western immigrant groups in Europe. This paper focuses on differences within the immigrant population and examines how cultural and social aspects of integration affect the relationships that adult children have with their parents. The study is based on survey data with a systematic oversample of persons aged 15–45 with Moroccan and Turkish origins in the Netherlands. The focus is on the amount of contact and conflict that children have with their parents. Findings show that persons of Moroccan and Turkish origins have more frequent contact, but also somewhat more conflict with their parents compared to people without any migration background. Ordinal logit models show that ties to parents are weaker when immigrant children are more liberal in their values and behaviours and when they have more frequent contact with natives. Educational attainment tends to increase conflict between parents and adult children. It is concluded that cultural and social integration may hurt family relationships, pointing to another but less often recognised obstacle for immigrant integration in the west.

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Introduction

There has been a vast amount of research on adult intergenerational relationships (Bengtson et al. 2006; Fingerman et al. 2016; Haberkern, Schmid, and Szydlik 2015), but it is only recently that researchers have begun to explore these issues in immigrant families (Baykara-Krumme 2008; De Valk and Schans 2008; Foner and Dreby 2011; Gruijters 2017; Merz et al. 2009; Rooyackers, De Valk, and Merz 2016; Schans and Komter 2010; Steinbach 2013). Studies have shown that among immigrants from Muslim countries in Europe – the major source of immigration to Western Europe – there is more support exchange between the generations and more frequent contact between adult children and their parents compared to families without a migration background. Moreover, obligations to support older parents are felt more strongly in immigrant families suggesting that filial norms are stronger in these groups (Carnein and Baykara-Krumme 2013; De Valk and Schans 2008; Merz et al. 2009). This emerging literature has thus far emphasised

cultural and ethnic explanations and highlights the strength of family relationships in (non-western) immigrant families.

Although there are differences between migrants and non-migrants, authors have also pointed to heterogeneity within the population of (nonwestern) immigrant families. Some immigrant children will have developed close ties to their parents and see their parents frequently, others may be less close or even have conflict with their parents. Qualitative studies focusing on Asian American families with adolescents who live at home, have pointed to the more problematic side of family ties (Foner 2009). These studies have shown that there are regular conflicts in immigrant families about child rearing practices (Espiritu 2009; Waters and Sykes 2009), about the way children should behave toward parents (Zhou 2007), and about partner choice and sexual matters (Kibria 2009). Other studies focus on the migration process and argue that migration may reduce intergenerational contact and support exchange, despite the fact that migration is often intended as a 'family project' (Heath, Rothson, and Kilpi 2008). Examples of migration-specific factors that may jeopardise family solidarity are transnationalism, marriage migration, and the break-up of families through war and death (Andersson, Obucina, and Scott 2015; Caarls and Mazzucato 2015; Kalter and Schroedter 2010; Landale, Thomas, and Van Hook 2011).

The present study uses new national survey data to present a comprehensive analysis of how the integration process affects the relationships that adult children have with their parents. Using classic typologies of integration dimensions (Alba and Nee 2003; Gordon 1964), we examine how cultural and social aspects of integration affect parent-child relationships. We analyze adult children of Turkish and Moroccan origins in the Netherlands, two important Muslim migrant groups in Western Europe. These two groups constitute about 40% of the non-western immigrants (1st and 2nd generation) (CBS 2013) and have a longer history than most other non-western groups, dating back to the 1960s when Turkish and Moroccan men were recruited to the Netherlands as labour migrants (Jennissen 2013). As outcomes, we study the frequency of contact and the amount of conflict, two central indicators in earlier work on adult intergenerational relations (Lye 1996; Szydlik 2009). The data we use come from a large national survey in the Netherlands that uses a register-based oversample of persons with a Turkish or Moroccan background (De Graaf et al. 2010b).

Background and hypotheses

Previous research

There are two kinds of studies which have examined links between integration and intergenerational relationships in immigrant families. First, there is a literature focusing on *dissonant acculturation* (Basáñez et al. 2014; Foner and Dreby 2011; Rumbaut and Portes 2001). These, mostly psychological, studies focus on the U.S. and are limited to the situation of young adults who live at home. The studies in this subfield sometimes find a negative association between cultural assimilation of children and parent-child relationship quality (Dinh and Nguyen 2006; Smokowski, Rose, and Bacallao 2008; Tardif and Geva 2006), but there are also studies that do not find evidence for such a link (Lau et al. 2005). There has been disagreement in this literature on how to measure assimilation,

with some authors directly asking children about parent–child discrepancies in acculturation and others using difference scores between parents’ and children’s acculturation scores or acculturation typologies (Basáñez et al. 2014). Since the focus is on children who live at home, measures from both parents and children are often available.

A second set of studies is embedded in a larger sociological literature on *intergenerational solidarity* (Bengtson et al. 2002). Central outcomes in this literature are contact frequency, support exchange, conflict, and filial norms. A few studies have used this perspective to study immigrant families. These, mostly European, studies first document overall differences between immigrants and natives. Immigrants from Muslim countries in Germany and the Netherlands more often have contact with their parents and provide more practical support to their parents (Schans and Komter 2010; Steinbach 2013). Some studies also focus on differences within the group of immigrants. Normative obligations to support parents appear weaker in the second than in the first generation and weaker when immigrant children have higher destination language ability (De Valk and Schans 2008; Merz et al. 2009). A study focusing on intergenerational contact and support found that children with more liberal attitudes toward intermarriage had more detached ties to their parents (Rooyackers, De Valk, and Merz 2016). Although the studies in this perspective use a limited number of sometimes indirect indicators of integration, they do suggest that there is a negative effect of integration on parent–child relationship quality.

Theoretical background and hypotheses

To develop hypotheses, we rely on revisionist versions of assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 1997, 2003) and theories of acculturation (Berry 1997). The key question in these perspectives is what happens when a group of people moves to a different country and in both perspectives, a distinction is made between social and cultural dimensions of integration, although the exact terms for these concepts differ. Cultural integration refers to the degree to which immigrant groups and their descendants adjust their norms, values, and ideals to those of the host society. Social integration refers to the degree to which immigrant groups and their descendants interact with the native population on a basis of equality and respect. This dimension explicitly emphasises acceptance on the part of the host society as well as feelings of belonging on the part of immigrants. Both perspectives acknowledge mutual causal influences of social integration on cultural integration and vice versa. In acculturation theories, the combination of cultural and social integration is called ‘assimilation’ and the occurrence of social integration without cultural change is called ‘integration’ (Berry 1997). The link between integration and the family has often been studied in these perspectives, but mostly in terms of how the family of origin affects the integration of children (Huijnk, Verkuyten, and Coenders 2012; Kalmijn and Kraaykamp 2018; Maliepaard and Lubbers 2013). In the present paper, we turn this question around by asking how the integration of children affects the family.

Our first hypothesis focuses on *cultural integration*. Many immigrants in Western Europe come from Muslim countries and in these countries, the norms and values are more traditional than they are in the west (Norris and Inglehart 2002). Support for gender equality in Muslim countries is weak, tolerance of divorce and unmarried cohabitation is low, views on same-sex relationships are negative, and religious doctrines

dominate the norms and values that people adhere to. Migration from Muslim countries to the west will generally lead to increased generational differences in the norms and values. When parents and children migrate together, the children will be more affected by the culture of the destination country than their parents since norms and values are generally more susceptible to outside forces at a younger age. A similar reasoning applies to the case where children are born in the destination: the second generation is on average more liberal than the first generation (Diehl, Koenig, and Ruckdeschel 2009; Kalmijn and Kraaykamp 2018; Maliepaard and Lubbers 2013). Immigrants who migrate without their parents may also adapt to the values of the destination country to some extent and thus become more liberal than their parents who stayed behind (Maliepaard, Lubbers, and Gijsberts 2010; Spierings 2015).

A parent–child gap in norms and values, sometimes called dissonant acculturation (Rumbaut and Portes 2001), may have negative effects on intergenerational relationships. This is in part a ‘normal’ example of a generation conflict over values, in the same way that it existed in the general population during the 1960s and 1970s (Hwang, Silverstein, and Brown 2018; Inglehart 1997). In the migration context, however, it may also be perceived by the parent generation as something that threatens solidarity with the immigrant group (Foner 2009). As a result, parents may feel a growing distance toward their children and this may put the relationship with them under pressure. Our first hypothesis is based on this literature and can be phrased as follows: *the more liberal the norms and values that immigrant children have, the less likely it is that they have strong and harmonious ties to their parents* (H1). The effects may not be the same for contact and conflict. One would expect that when parents and children disagree on moral or cultural issues, children may still feel an obligation to visit. Hence, we would expect weaker effects on contact than on conflict.

One assumption behind this hypothesis lies in the role of the parents themselves. When we are looking at variations in the degree to which children are culturally integrated, we would ideally ‘hold constant’ the degree to which parents are integrated. After all, only *differences* in children’s behaviours and viewpoints vis-à-vis their parents are assumed to be problematic. In psychological studies, the approach has been to either directly ask about parent–child differences in cultural adaptation or to create difference scores in the degree of adaptation of parents and children in case data are available from both (Basáñez et al. 2014). In the present study, the approach is different since the focus is on adult children for whom multi-actor data – data from children and parents who do not live together – are more difficult to obtain.

To work around this issue, two approaches are used. First, we include a control variable that measures the degree of religious orthodoxy of the parents. In including this measure, we indirectly control for how conservative or liberal the values of the parents are. Studies on Muslim populations show strong effects of the degree of religiosity on traditional values about gender, marriage, and sexuality (Diehl and Koenig 2013; Diehl, Koenig, and Ruckdeschel 2009; Glas, Spierings, and Scheepers 2018; Halman and van Ingen 2015). Adjusting the effect of the child’s cultural values and behaviours for the effect of the parent’s degree of orthodoxy in a multivariate model is analytically similar to estimating effects of parent–child *differences* in cultural integration. Because we do not have identical measures of values for children and parents, however, we can also develop an interaction approach. Liberal values and behaviours of children could be especially

problematic for the parent–child relationship when the parents are more orthodox. Although most of the parents in the context that we study will be religious, there is variation in the degree of orthodoxy and it would be plausible that parents are less concerned with what their children believe or think if the parents themselves are relatively moderate. Our hypothesis is that *the effects of children’s liberal norms and values on parent–child ties are more negative when parents are more orthodox* (H2). We test both the additive approach (using parental orthodoxy as a control) and the interactive approach (using parental orthodoxy as a moderator).

The second set of hypotheses is about *social integration*, which can be defined as the extent to which immigrant children engage in contact with natives. Social integration can be studied for so-called weak ties (e.g. neighbourhood contact) as well as for strong ties (e.g. friendships, marriage). Being married to a ‘native’ partner may be perceived as problematic by some immigrant parents. Many studies have pointed to the preferences that immigrant parents have regarding their children’s choice of a partner and to the pressure that parents exert to influence these decisions (Huschek, de Valk, and Liefbroer 2012; van Zantvliet, Kalmijn, and Verbakel 2014). Consequences for parents are also elaborated upon theoretically in the notion of interested ‘third parties.’ Inter-marriage connects the families and networks of two groups and thus implies a change in the networks of the two sets of parents, assuming that they do not already engage in mixed networks (Kalmijn 1998). As a result, parents may find it difficult if their children intermarry and this may lead to conflict in immigrant families (Foner and Dreby 2011).

For integration with respect to weak ties, the effects may be more subtle. If children have much contact with natives in the neighbourhood, for example, this does not have immediate consequences for parents’ own behaviour or networks. If children are strongly integrated into the native community, this may imply a shift away from the immigrant community which can gradually weaken ties to the parental home. It is also possible, however, that well-integrated children maintain ties to two relatively disconnected networks. In the case of strong ties, this is more difficult. When an adult child has a native partner, for example, it is difficult to keep this partner and his or her family away from the own family. Our third hypothesis is as follows: *the more contact immigrant children have with natives, the less likely it is that they have strong and harmonious ties to their parents* (H3). For weak ties, we would expect weaker effects than for strong ties.

In the literature on intergenerational contact, it has been shown that there is a strong association between face-to-face contact and geographical proximity (Shelton and Grundy 2000). Distance is an obvious cost factor that may reduce visiting but the relationship is not necessarily causal since the decision of where to live also depends on the quality of the relationship and the demand for intergenerational support (Heylen et al. 2012; Silverstein 1995). In other words, proximity is endogenous. Still it is interesting to look at how the effects of social integration depend on proximity. Children who are more integrated socially may also live further away from their parents which in turn could explain why they have less frequent contact. From past studies, it is known that the foreign-born on average live closer to their parents than the native born (Malmberg and Pettersson 2007; Michielin, Mulder, and Zorlu 2008) but how this is affected by integration processes is not yet known. Our last hypothesis is: *the negative effects of contact with natives on intergenerational relations are partly mediated by the geographical distance between the generations* (H4).

Finally, we consider one factor that has traditionally been regarded as a key dimension of integration, i.e. education. In studies of native populations, it has been found that higher educated adult children have less frequent contact with their parents than lower educated children while they do not have less affection for or more conflict with their parents (Kalmijn 2006; Szydlík 2016). How education would affect intergenerational ties among immigrants is less clear. Following a traditional view, education can be seen as a sign of economic integration that would strengthen family relationships. Migration is often argued to be a ‘family project’ in which parents not only migrate for themselves but also migrate to foster the economic opportunities for family members. Children’s educational success would then be positively evaluated by the parents and benefit the intergenerational relationship (Foner and Dreby 2011; Heath, Rethon, and Kilpi 2008). Education is not only an economic outcome, however, but also strongly correlated with norms and values, i.e. a cultural indicator. Many studies have demonstrated that more highly educated persons have more liberal values than lower educated persons in a number of life domains (Halman and van Ingen 2015; Treas 2002). This would suggest a negative rather than a positive effect of education on intergenerational relationships, assuming that the norms and values that we measure do not cover all aspects of cultural integration. Yet another view argues that highly educated immigrants more often perceive discrimination and prejudice in the host society, despite their higher levels of cultural and social integration (de Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten 2014; Verkuyten 2016). This could suggest that the higher educated will be more rather than less attached to their community of origin. We examine the role of education but given the conflicting expectations above, we do not suggest an hypothesis beforehand.

Data and measures

Data

To test our hypotheses, most surveys on intergenerational relationships are not useful because they contain too few immigrants. There are special immigrant surveys but these rarely contain questions on parent–child contact, let alone conflict. The present paper uses a new nationally representative survey among respondents in the Netherlands in which people of Turkish and Moroccan origins were systematically oversampled via the registers (De Graaf et al. 2010b). An important additional advantage of the data is that there are good questions on intergenerational relations in combination with detailed measures on multiple dimensions of immigrant integration. The data further contain a comparison group of natives which allows us to describe group differences. The survey was repeated about four years later but in this paper, only the first wave is used. Changes in intergenerational contact are interesting but more suitable for an analysis focusing on specific life events, which is not the topic of the current paper.

The NELLS was based on a two-stage stratified random sample of individual persons aged 15–45 who were residing in the Netherlands in 2006. First, 30 municipalities were chosen that were stratified by region and degree of urbanisation. Second, from the municipal registers, three random samples of individuals were selected: (1) inhabitants who were born in Morocco or whose father or mother was born in Morocco; (2) inhabitants who were born in Turkey or whose father or mother was born in Turkey; (3)

inhabitants who do not belong to group (1) and (2). Respondents were interviewed at home and also filled out a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. The overall response of the survey was 52%, which is about average for face-to-face surveys in the Netherlands. Response was highest for the Dutch (56%), lower for the Turks (50%) and lowest for the Moroccans (46%). Details of the fieldwork can be found in the survey codebook (De Graaf et al. 2010a).

For our analyses, we focus on respondents whose mother or father is alive, who were 15–45 years of age, and who were not living with their father and/or mother. The number of cases varies depending on the outcome measure and the parent but the sample sizes are well over a thousand for all models. The analytical sample includes all immigrant generations that exist in this age group. The respondents can be second generation (36.7%), first generation who migrated with their parents (35.1%), or first generation who migrated without their parents (28.2%). We use these three types as control variables in all models. Note that we also control for whether the father or mother is living abroad. This does not overlap completely with the migration types just discussed: respondents who migrated alone can have parents who migrated later and respondents who migrated with their parents can have parents who returned. Although our main focus is on immigrant families, we also make descriptive comparisons between immigrants and natives. Natives are not included in the regression models since most of the measures are specific to immigrant families.

Measures

Parent–child ties are measured with questions on the frequency of conflict with the mother/father, the frequency of face-to-face contact with the mother/father, and the frequency of telephone contact with the mother/father. Telephone contact includes contact via email, sms, etc. Contact was distinguished in a number of categories (see Table 1) but recoded in three meaningful groups for the models (weekly or more, about monthly, and less often or never). Conflict was also distinguished in three categories (never, rarely/once in a while, and more often). When the parent lives abroad, questions on contact and conflict were still asked. Face-to-face contact will obviously be limited in these cases but as we will see, there is still variance in this respect when the parent is abroad and there is also much telephone contact. Moreover, conflict can still exist when the mother or father lives abroad. Note that the sample is limited to children who are not living with their parents. If the child is living with only one parent, the contact and conflict measures for the other parent are included in the analysis.

Given the large number of independent variables, we describe the variables here briefly and refer to Table 2 for details. To measure the degree of cultural integration, we develop two scales, both based on multiple items. The first is a scale of four attitudes toward marriage and sexuality (divorce, sex before marriage, unmarried parenthood, and homosexuality), ranging from traditional to liberal ($\alpha = 0.72$; Kalmijn and Kraaykamp 2018). Second, we use an index of behaviours that reflect (non)adherence to Islamic rules (eating pig meat, drinking alcohol, not fasting, not wearing a headscarf). For female respondents, the scale is divided by four, for male respondents, the scale is divided by three (because it does not include wearing a headscarf). We do not include measures of the respondent's religiosity since the measures above are more informative of cultural assimilation.

Table 1. Parent-child relations by migrant status among respondents 15–45 living independently.

	Mothers			Fathers		
	Native %	Migrant %	Migrant, parent abroad %	Native %	Migrant %	Migrant, parent abroad %
<i>Face-to-face contact</i>						
Daily	8	28	2	7	20	1
Once or more per week	42	44	5	38	44	3
Couple of times per month	26	16	2	26	16	2
Once a month	15	5	3	13	6	3
Couple of times per year	7	4	19	9	5	21
Once a year	0	2	62	1	4	59
Never	2	1	7	5	4	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	1,741	829	522	1,592	786	458
<i>Phone+ contact</i>						
Daily	14	38	11	7	20	7
Once or more per week	53	37	42	38	38	34
Couple of times per month	20	12	28	28	17	24
Once a month	6	5	14	11	8	14
Couple of times per year	3	1	4	5	3	10
Once a year	0	1	1	1	1	2
Never	4	7	1	10	12	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	1,733	824	533	1,586	782	465
<i>Conflict</i>						
Never	28	33	62	30	37	58
Seldom	50	38	23	51	39	26
Once in a while / often	22	29	15	19	24	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	1,709	821	530	1,510	756	443

Note: Migrant is 1st or 2nd generation with Turkish or Moroccan origins. Weighted percentages (unweighted N's). Sample limited to children who are not living with the parent.

To measure social integration, we use the following variables: (a) the frequency of contact with native neighbours relative to contact with 'ingroup' neighbours, (b) whether or not the respondent has native friends (yes/no), and (c) whether or not the respondent is married to (or cohabiting with) a non-Muslim partner (i.e. a partner whose parents were born in a non-Muslim country). Note that whether the respondent is living with a partner is included as a control variable so the effect of a mixed union is relative to people living with an 'ingroup' partner.

The education of the child is measured as the highest level attained or the current level if still in school. Education is recoded into the internationally comparable ISLED scale, which converts detailed educational categories into occupational status scores associated with the educational categories (Schroder and Ganzeboom 2014). There are two main advantages of ISLED: (a) the measure is linear so that it can be represented by a single effect, even in complex educational systems, and (b) the measure takes into account the value of education in terms of an 'output' value (status) and not in terms of an 'input' value such as years of schooling.

We selected control variables that are potentially relevant for explaining variation in contact and conflict. We use the following characteristics: migrant generation (discussed above), age, sex, marital status, parental divorce, whether the parent lives abroad, and a variable indicating if the respondent is employed or enrolled in school. We also include a variable to capture differences between Turks and Moroccans but the sample is not large enough to estimate models separately for the two groups.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of sample: Children of Turkish or Moroccan descent.

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Count	
Contact with mother	2.33	0.89	1	3	1791	Coded in 3 categories: (1) daily or weekly, (2) couple of times per month or once a month, (3) couple of times per year or once a year or never.
Contact with father	2.26	0.90	1	3	1596	
Phone+ with mother	2.58	0.63	1	3	1330	Coded as contact. Includes sms/email/etc.
Phone+ with father	2.33	0.76	1	3	1214	
Conflict with mother	1.87	0.80	1	3	1792	Coded in 3 categories: (1) never, (2) seldom, (3) often or once in a while.
Conflict with father	1.82	0.78	1	3	1553	
Mother deceased	0.05		0	1	2205	Sample limited to respondents with at least one living parent.
Father deceased	0.16		0	1	2205	
Lives with mother	0.21		0	1	2205	
Lives with father	0.17		0	1	2205	
Woman	0.53		0	1	2205	
Age	30.53	8.89	14	49	2205	
Living with partner	0.57		0	1	2205	
Has children	0.57		0	1	2205	
Parents divorced	0.11		0	1	2205	
Parental orthodoxy (z)	0.00	1.00	-3.31	1.22	2205	Scale of parental behaviours in youth: Mosque attendance, reading the Koran, fasting, not drinking alcohol, and wearing a head scarf (mother). Alpha = 0.73.
Turkish	0.49		0	1	2205	
Second vs first	0.37		0	1	2205	Born in the Netherlands.
Came without parents	0.28		0	1	2205	Born abroad but came without parents
Father abroad	0.23		0	1	2205	
Mother abroad	0.27		0	1	2205	
Liberal marriage/sex attitudes	0.00	1.00	-3.00	2.40	1907	Index of attitudes about: sex before marriage, unmarried parenthood, divorce, homosexuality. Alpha = 0.72.
Violation Islamic rules	0.22	0.28	0.00	1.00	1668	An index of not fasting, drinking alcohol, eating pig meat, and not wearing head scarf (for women). Average taken within sex.
Mixed marriage	0.06		0	1	2205	Married to a partner with parents born in the Netherlands or another non-Muslim country.
Contact majority neighbours	0.00	1.00	-3.15	3.15	1913	The frequency of contact with Dutch neighbours minus the frequency of contact with Turkish/Moroccan neighbours (1-7 scale). Result standardised.
Majority friends	0.77		0	1	1905	Having (any) friends of Dutch origins.
Education level (isled, z)	0.00	1.00	-1.67	2.17	2204	Highest education followed scaled in years of schooling (standardised).
Employed/enrolled	0.74		0	1	2205	Employed or enrolled in school.

Note: Children living at home are included in the descriptives.

An especially important control variable is the degree of parental orthodoxy. To measure this, we asked respondents about the following parental behaviours when the child was growing up: Mosque attendance, fasting, Koran reading, (not) drinking alcohol, and wearing a head scarf (for mothers). This index has a good reliability ($\alpha = 0.73$) and is an appropriate indicator of how culturally tolerant the parents will be toward the child. Cronbach's alpha is reported here since the index includes one interval variable (Mosque attendance). All items were standardised before constructing the scale. Means and standard deviations as well as measurement details can be found in [Table 2](#).

Models

All dependent variables consist of ordered categories and are analysed with ordinal logit models. The results for face-to-face contact with the mother and father are presented in

Table 3, the results for telephone contact are presented in Table 4, and the results for conflict with the mother and father are presented in Table 6. Only migrants are included in the models; natives are used as a comparison group in the descriptive table (Table 1). For each dependent variable, we estimate a model with the main effects of control variables, measures of cultural integration and measures of social integration (Model 1). This model includes our control for parental orthodoxy. In a second model, we add interaction effects of the measures of cultural integration and parental religious orthodoxy (Model 2). We abstain from exploring possible interactions between parental religious orthodoxy and children's *social* integration.

All missing values on the independent variables were imputed using chained regression models in the multiple imputation module in Stata. 50 imputations were performed and these were analysed using Rubin's rules. No fit statistics are available for this estimation procedure. No data were imputed when the dependent variable was missing but the dependent variable was included in the multiple imputation procedure (White, Royston, and Wood 2011).

We explored interactions by gender to see if the effects of social and cultural integration variables are different for daughters and sons. Interactions are entered for all five social and cultural variables and tested in each model. Of the $5 \times 4 = 20$ interactions, only one was significant. We regard this as evidence that integration works similarly for sons and daughters.

Table 3. Ordinal logit regression of parent-child face-to-face contact: Children of Turkish or Moroccan descent living independently.

	Face-to-face contact mother		Face-to-face contact father	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
CONTROLS				
Woman	.204 (.163)	.195 (.184)	.103 (.486)	.083 (.577)
Age	-.010 (.377)	-.008 (.486)	-.026* (.027)	-.024* (.042)
Living with partner	-.074 (.666)	-.102 (.558)	.433* (.016)	.400* (.028)
Parents divorced	-.200 (.380)	-.184 (.421)	-1.477* (.000)	-1.485* (.000)
Parental orthodoxy (z)	.003 (.976)	.304* (.028)	.115 (.188)	.471* (.001)
Turkish	.133 (.378)	.152 (.317)	-.074 (.634)	-.023 (.883)
Second vs first	.405* (.030)	.414* (.027)	.193 (.293)	.220 (.232)
Came without parents	-.641* (.008)	-.602* (.013)	-.827* (.002)	-.784* (.004)
Father abroad			-3.971* (.000)	-4.079* (.000)
Mother abroad	-3.912* (.000)	-4.016* (.000)		
Education level (isled, z)	.065 (.385)	.057 (.445)	.085 (.274)	.071 (.364)
Employed/enrolled	.187 (.276)	.178 (.302)	.173 (.335)	.148 (.410)
CULTURAL				
Liberal marriage/sex attitudes x parent orthodoxy	.028 (.739)	.039 (.642)	.075 (.371)	.086 (.313)
Violation Islamic rules x parent orthodoxy	-1.022* (.002)	-1.215* (.000)	-.621~ (.076)	-.902* (.013)
		-.754* (.003)		-.824* (.001)
SOCIAL				
Mixed marriage	-.446~ (.086)	-.467~ (.074)	-.657* (.018)	-.674* (.016)
Contact majority neighbours	-.156* (.028)	-.167* (.020)	-.185* (.012)	-.201* (.007)
Majority friends	.292~ (.092)	.278 (.111)	.219 (.244)	.212 (.263)
Constant 1	-2.417* (.000)	-2.366* (.000)	-2.630* (.000)	-2.578* (.000)
Constant 2	-1.042* (.029)	-.982* (.042)	-1.268* (.009)	-1.204* (.014)
Observations	1323	1323	1211	1211

p-values in parentheses.

~*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05.

Table 4. Ordinal logit regression of parent-child phone contact: Children of Turkish or Moroccan descent living independently.

	Phone+ contact mother		Phone+ contact father	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
CONTROLS				
Woman	.865* (.000)	.869* (.000)	.351* (.004)	.339* (.005)
Age	-.036* (.001)	-.035* (.001)	-.021* (.026)	-.020* (.036)
Living with partner	.029 (.852)	.013 (.931)	.446* (.002)	.424* (.004)
Parents divorced	-.064 (.774)	-.054 (.810)	-1.303* (.000)	-1.287* (.000)
Parental orthodoxy (z)	.003 (.973)	.301* (.024)	.091 (.223)	.326* (.007)
Turkish	.707* (.000)	.738* (.000)	.499* (.000)	.535* (.000)
Second vs first	-.084 (.656)	-.083 (.661)	.016 (.923)	.023 (.889)
Came without parents	.073 (.723)	.094 (.651)	.489* (.011)	.503* (.009)
Father abroad			-1.024* (.000)	-1.056* (.000)
Mother abroad	-.977* (.000)	-1.042* (.000)		
Education level (isled, z)	.159* (.009)	.155* (.012)	.103~ (.080)	.095 (.108)
Employed/enrolled	.407* (.005)	.396* (.007)	.103 (.466)	.097 (.493)
CULTURAL				
Liberal marriage/sex attitudes x parent orthodoxy	-.214* (.004)	-.212* (.004)	-.189* (.006)	-.187* (.006)
Violation Islamic rules x parent orthodoxy	-.588* (.050)	-.707* (.018)	-.351 (.240)	-.494 (.104)
SOCIAL				
Mixed marriage	.155 (.540)	.130 (.610)	-.164 (.479)	-.180 (.439)
Contact majority neighbours	.024 (.695)	.019 (.755)	-.019 (.750)	-.027 (.654)
Majority friends	.333* (.022)	.330* (.023)	.415* (.004)	.413* (.004)
Constant 1	-3.145* (.000)	-3.093* (.000)	-1.681* (.000)	-1.622* (.000)
Constant 2	-1.079* (.012)	-1.016* (.018)	-.024 (.952)	.043 (.912)
Observations	1329	1329	1213	1213

p-values in parentheses.

~*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05.

Findings

Descriptive findings

In Table 1, we present differences between natives and immigrants with respect to conflict and contact. Natives are defined as persons with two native-born parents. The immigrant group is separated into immigrants whose mother or father is living in the Netherlands

Table 5. Mediation analysis of the effects of social integration via geographic proximity.

	Total effect on contact with mother	Reduced effect	Indirect effect via proximity
Mixed marriage	-.456 (.081)	-.280 (.284)	-.177 (.021)
Contact majority neighbours	-.155 (.032)	-.129 (.074)	-.026 (.713)
Majority friends	.316 (.079)	.383 (.033)	-.067 (.353)
N	1323	1323	1323
	Total effect on contact with father	Reduced effect	Indirect effect via proximity
Mixed marriage	-.661 (.018)	-.597 (.032)	-.063 (.225)
Contact majority neighbours	-.184 (.014)	-.168 (.024)	-.016 (.752)
Majority friends	.242 (.205)	.289 (.130)	-.047 (.356)
N	1211	1211	1211

Note: *p*-values in parentheses; proximity is living in the same neighbourhood as the parent(s). Mediation based on *khb* method in Stata. Face-to-face contact is the outcome and this is analysed with an ordinal logit model.

Table 6. Ordinal logit regression of parent-child conflict: Children of Turkish or Moroccan descent living independently.

	Conflict with mother		Conflict with father	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
CONTROLS				
Woman	.241* (.036)	.252* (.029)	-.212~ (.077)	-.200~ (.097)
Age	-.021* (.023)	-.022* (.016)	-.025* (.008)	-.026* (.006)
Living with partner	-.214 (.111)	-.197 (.144)	-.352* (.014)	-.330* (.022)
Parents divorced	.570* (.003)	.565* (.003)	.319~ (.096)	.303 (.115)
Parental orthodoxy (z)	-.144* (.035)	-.366* (.001)	-.058 (.419)	-.225~ (.051)
Turkish	.542* (.000)	.507* (.000)	.492* (.000)	.460* (.000)
Second vs first	.080 (.593)	.072 (.631)	-.267~ (.079)	-.277~ (.068)
Came without parents	-.233 (.242)	-.253 (.204)	-.336~ (.092)	-.347~ (.083)
Father abroad			-.528* (.004)	-.507* (.006)
Mother abroad	-.649* (.001)	-.606* (.002)		
Education level (isled, z)	.176* (.002)	.183* (.001)	.121* (.041)	.131* (.029)
Employed/enrolled	.137 (.308)	.141 (.294)	-.160 (.263)	-.156 (.277)
CULTURAL				
Liberal marriage/sex attitudes x parent orthodoxy	.201* (.002)	.196* (.003)	.043 (.536)	.042 (.545)
Violation Islamic rules x parent orthodoxy	.591* (.026)	.715* (.008)	.574~ (.055)	.702* (.022)
		.436* (.029)		.335 (.126)
SOCIAL				
Mixed marriage	-.420~ (.063)	-.371 (.101)	-.094 (.684)	-.081 (.729)
Contact majority neighbours	-.088 (.123)	-.083 (.144)	-.009 (.884)	-.005 (.935)
Majority friends	.192 (.165)	.194 (.163)	.185 (.213)	.183 (.218)
Constant 1	-.592 (.117)	-.672~ (.077)	-1.333* (.001)	-1.390* (.000)
Constant 2	1.066* (.005)	.992* (.009)	.291 (.461)	.239 (.546)
Observations	1324	1324	1168	1168

p-values in parentheses.

~*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05.

and immigrants whose mother or father is abroad. We first see that immigrants more often have conflicts with their mother and father than natives. Among natives, 22% of the adult children have occasional or frequent conflict with their mother whereas among immigrant children, this is 29%. The difference is not large and we notice that levels of conflict are modest to begin with. We should keep in mind, however, that conflict is likely to be underreported because it may be socially undesirable. Differences are larger when we look at contact. Of the immigrant children, 28% have face-to-face contact with their mother on a daily basis, among natives this is only 8%. Weekly and daily contact taken together is 72% among immigrants versus 50% among natives.

When we look at transnational families (children whose mother or father is abroad), contact is obviously low. Still, 31% of these migrants see their mother a couple of times a year or more. The phone and digital contact measure is probably more interesting here and shows that 42% of children in these families have weekly contact with their mother abroad and another 11% have daily contact. Interesting is that phone contact is almost as frequent among migrants who have parents abroad as among natives (who do not have a parent living abroad). Keep in mind that these numbers include digital contact (e-mail and sms). In general, the descriptive findings confirm other research showing that adult intergenerational relations are stronger in immigrant families. Conflict is slightly more common in immigrant families, however, suggesting that more frequent contact does not mean that more harmonious.

Regression results for contact

Table 3 presents the ordered logit models for face-to-face contact with the mother and the father. To what extent does cultural integration play a role? One of the two cultural variables has a significant effect in Model 1. When children do not adhere to Islamic rules, they less often have contact with their parents and this applies to both fathers and mothers. The effect size for contact with mothers is -1.022 , which implies that when we compare children who do not adhere to any of the measured rules (a score of 1) to children who adhere to all the rules (a score of 0), there is a 63% decline in the odds of weekly versus monthly contact (and this is similar for monthly versus less frequent contact). For contact with fathers, contact is reduced with 46%. These are substantial effects. The attitude scale has no significant effects on face-to-face contact with parents.

The effects of these cultural variables are controlled for the effect of parental orthodoxy, which by itself has insignificant effects on contact. In Model 2, we add an interaction of parental orthodoxy and the two cultural measures. We find a significant and negative interaction with the violation of Islamic rules. The effect of these behaviours on parent-child contact is more negative when parents are more orthodox, in line with expectations. The magnitude of the interaction is substantial. The orthodoxy scale is standardised, so a one standard deviation increase in parental orthodoxy, leads to a 62% increase in the effect of the violation of Islamic rules ($-.754/-1.215$). For contact with fathers, the interaction is similar. For the other cultural measure – attitudes toward marriage and sexuality – we find no significant interaction but the main effect was insignificant to begin with.

We now turn to the effects of social integration on face-to-face contact. First, we see that children who are married outside of their group less often have contact with their parents, in line with our hypothesis. The effect is marginally significant for mothers and fully significant for fathers. We further see significant effects of integration into the neighbourhood. Respondents who have more contacts with native neighbours relative to migrant neighbours less often have contact with their parents and this applies to both fathers and mothers. Friendships with natives do not have the expected effect on parent-child contact.

Telephone contact with the mother is the first dependent variable in **Table 4**. The results are partly similar, partly different. First, we see stronger effects of the cultural variables. The violation of Islamic rules is associated with less telephone contact (Model 1). The interaction of parental orthodoxy and rule violation in Model 2 is again significant showing that this association is stronger when the parents are more orthodox. A new result is that for this outcome, the attitude scale also has an effect. The more liberal the children are about issues of marriage and sexuality, the less often they have telephone contact with the mother. The two social variables that had significant effects on face-to-face contact do not appear to affect telephone contact. This suggests that social integration may be associated with living or moving further away from parents, something that would affect face-to-face but not telephone contact. Having native friends is positively associated with telephone contact, something that was not expected. The results for telephone contact with the father are similar.

To test the role of proximity we present a formal mediation analysis of the effects of the social integration variables on face-to-face contact in **Table 5**. This analysis is based on a comparison of the model as presented in **Table 3** and a similar model in which proximity is included. Proximity is measured with a simple binary variable indicating whether or not

the child lives in the same neighbourhood as the parents (this applies to 16.9% of the children). Table 5 shows (a) the initial effect of integration on contact, (b) the effect after controlling for proximity, and (c) the difference, which is equal to the indirect effect (Kohler and Karlson 2012). In three of the four cases where the initial effect is significant, there is no mediation of integration by proximity. There is one significant indirect effect which confirms the mediation hypothesis: children in a mixed marriage less often have contact with their mother because they are less likely to live close to the mother. This is in line with expectations but overall the evidence for the mediating role of proximity is limited.

We now discuss the other variables that are included. We see substantial generational differences. Respondents who migrated without their parents less often have contact with their parents than respondents who migrated with their parents. This suggests that moving away from parents can be detrimental for family cohesion, but we should note that this effect is adjusted for whether or not the parent is living abroad. Probably the effect also reflects a longer history of geographical separation between the generations. People who move without their parents may also be a more selective group of migrants. We further see that second generation respondents more often have contact with their mother than first generation respondents who came with their parents. There is less contact with the father when the parents are divorced, in line with research among natives. We do not see an effect of the child's gender, however, in contrast to what research among natives has shown (Rossi and Rossi 1990). A surprising finding is the absence of an effect of education. Among natives, it is usually found that the higher educated less often have face-to-face contact with their parents, but this appears not to be true in immigrant families. We checked whether the measures of cultural and social integration suppress an educational effect but even when these five variables are dropped from the model, there is no significant effect of education on contact with the father and the mother. We come back to this finding in the conclusion.

Regression results for conflict

The models for conflict with the father and mother are presented in Table 6. When looking at the cultural variables, we see a substantial impact. Specifically, conflict with the mother is more common when immigrant children have more liberal attitudes toward issues of marriage and sexuality. For each standard deviation increase in liberal values, the odds of more rather than less frequent conflict increase by 22%. We also see an increase in conflict with the mother when children do not adhere to Islamic rules. The effect size implies an 81% increase in the odds of conflict when comparing the most liberal to the most orthodox child. For conflicts with the father, the violation of Islamic rules has the expected effect but attitudes toward marriage and sexuality do not. Perhaps mothers talk more about these issues with their children, which would explain why the effect is only present for mothers. In Model 2, we again find partial support for the interaction hypothesis. The violation of Islamic rules has a stronger effect on conflict with the mother when the parents are more orthodox. For fathers, the interaction effect is not significant but the tendency in the expected direction.

While the cultural hypothesis receives much support for conflict, the hypothesis about social integration is not supported for this outcome. There are no effects of the integration

measures on conflict with the father or mother. We see one marginally significant and small effect in a direction that was not hypothesised. Hence, social integration is more strongly linked to contact than to conflict with parents.

Of the other variables, we see a number of significant effects. The most interesting finding lies in education. We see positive and significant effects of the child's educational attainment showing that higher educated children more often have conflict with their parents than lower educated children. This is in contrast to findings for natives where usually there are no educational differences in conflict. This was checked with the present data as well and education was not associated with parent–child conflict among natives. We discuss these findings further in the conclusion. We also observe that children have less conflict with their father when they have children and when they are living with a partner. When parents live abroad, conflict is reduced, which is plausible since conflict requires contact. This is an interesting finding since one could also expect that parents who live abroad are more traditional than parents who were exposed to the norms and values of the destination country (Spierings 2015). This would lead to more conflict with parents who are abroad but the opposite is true. When parents are divorced, there is more conflict with the mother, in line with earlier studies. However, only small effects are found on conflict with the father, possibly because contact is already reduced so much with the father in divorced families. People of Turkish origins report more conflict than people of Moroccan origins. There are no strong generational differences with respect to conflict.

Conclusion and discussion

This paper used new survey data from the Netherlands to explore the link between immigrant integration on the one hand, and intergenerational relations on the other hand. We used a large range of variables to measure cultural and social integration and we focused on both positive (contact) and negative (conflict) dimensions of intergenerational relations. Our findings show that when adult children are more integrated culturally and socially in the host society, they generally have weaker ties to their parents. This is manifested in more conflict with especially the mother when children have liberal family attitudes, more conflict and less contact with both parents when children do not adhere to religious rules and regulations, less contact with parents when children have more frequent contact with non-migrant neighbours, and less contact with parents when they are married outside of the immigrant group. These findings are broadly in line with our hypotheses. Moreover, we find that cultural integration matters for both contact and conflict whereas social integration matters primarily for contact and not for conflict.

Our findings are theoretically relevant in that they point to the more problematic consequences of migration for families. Much of the literature on migration has emphasised the strength of families – e.g. migration as a ‘family project’ – and many studies have pointed to the high degrees of familialism in Muslim immigrant groups. Our findings add a caveat to these traditional assumptions and suggest that in so far as immigrant children are oriented toward integration into the host society, this may be problematic for their family. This unintended outcome of the migration process may be difficult for both parents and children and suggests in a new way that the home environment can

be an important restriction for the degree to which immigrant children integrate (Kalmijn and Kraaykamp 2018). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the descriptive evidence. While there was much more frequent contact between parents and children in immigrant families than in native non-migrant families, in line with the traditional view of familism among non-western immigrants, there was somewhat more conflict with the parents, at least when the parents are living in the destination.

These findings make a contribution to debates about integration problems in the west. Much of the debate, including the debate in the Netherlands, has focused on the role of larger societal forces, such as the state, the neighbourhood, the school, ethnic communities and organisations, the labour market, and the ‘receiving’ public with its attitudes and prejudices (Duyvendak et al. 2013; Koopmans 2013; Penninx 2005; Verkuyten 2016). In these debates, smaller contexts such as the family are rarely mentioned. We show that the family can play a problematic role. Prior micro-level studies have shown that parents may hinder cultural integration via the socialisation process (Kalmijn and Kraaykamp 2018). The current study shows that when this socialisation process is not successful – and children have become more liberal in their views and their behaviours – family ties may become strained. The dilemma this creates for the two generations will make integration more difficult, especially given that familistic norms are strong in immigrant families.

Although it was not a central aim of the paper, we also studied with some special attention the role of children’s education. Education has a double meaning in the current context. On the one hand, education is associated with more liberal values, on the other hand, a higher education is a sign of economic success which may be something that immigrant parents are proud of. In the Dutch case, there is also evidence that the higher educated are less likely to integrate into the host society because they are more likely to perceive discrimination and prejudice (Verkuyten 2016). We found no educational effects on contact with parents but we did find strong positive effects on conflict with parents. Since such effects are usually not found for natives, we believe they say something about integration problems. More frequent family conflicts among higher educated children may be related to the more liberal values that they have but it may also be related to the integration paradox, which suggests that there may be debate with parents about issues of migration and integration.

Some limitations need to be mentioned regarding our data and design. The link that we found may arise from causal processes in two directions. Our theoretical discussion has emphasised the path from integration to parent–child relationships but there are also studies suggesting that the path goes from parenting to integration, at least for cultural values (Huijnk, Verkuyten, and Coenders 2012). In this latter interpretation, socialisation of children and adolescents by parents into more traditional values is assumed to be more effective when children feel closer to their parents and other family members. We focus on adult children for whom the socialisation process has largely ended so that this reverse path is less plausible. It is likely, however, that there will be a self-reinforcing process where values gradually change and parent–child relationships gradually become more distant. The main point is that the two domains are negatively related.

Another limitation of our study is that we have no parallel data on parents’ degree of integration. Some psychological studies have asked children themselves to compare their own integration or acculturation to that of their parents but we believe this is not an ideal

approach. Other psychological studies have data from both parents and children but these studies focus on children who live at home and are usually based on small and local samples. In the absence of multiactor survey data on adult children and their parents, we followed two strategies. First, we control for concrete and measurable parental traits that can be used as proxies for the parents' degree of orthodoxy. We found no main effects of this variable, suggesting that 'the action' lies primarily in what the children believe, think, and do. This strengthens our interpretation of the findings. We also showed that parental orthodoxy has an interactive impact, at least for one of our two cultural indicators. The child's violation of Islamic rules has a more negative impact on intergenerational ties when the parents are more orthodox. This interaction effect closely matches notions of dissonant acculturation in families. In some cases, we only found evidence for a main effect and no evidence for an interaction effect. For example, liberal attitudes about marriage and sexuality are associated with less positive relationships with the mother, regardless of how orthodox these mothers are. This suggests that issues of marriage and sexuality may be a more general point of debate in families, not only for immigrants but also for natives.

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