

**Partner choice of the second generation:
the importance of individual and neighbourhood characteristics**

Suzanne Loozen^c, Helga A.G. de Valk^{a,b}, Elma Wobma^c

October 2011

Preliminary DRAFT: Please do not cite or quote

Contact details:

^a Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, The Hague the Netherlands

^b Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Interface Demography, Brussels Belgium

^c Statistics Netherlands, Taakgroep demografie

All correspondence to:

Helga de Valk

Email: valk@nidi.nl

**Partner choice of the second generation:
the importance of individual and neighbourhood characteristics**

Suzanne Loozen, Helga A.G. de Valk & Elma Wobma

Abstract

In many European countries the second generation is coming of age and increasing numbers of those in the marriageable ages are of immigrant descent. The traditional framework for studying marriage patterns among immigrants has therefore to be revisited. With the growing second generation, marriage choices are not only determined by homogamous marriages with a partner of the same origin from the country of origin or heterogamous marriages with a native partner from the country or residence. Increasingly the second generation has the option of choosing a second generation from the same or different origin living in the countries they reside in. In this paper we first study the partner choices of the second generation from the largest immigrant groups in the Netherlands taking this diversity of partner origin options into account. Second, we question to what extent the neighbourhood (as potential meeting place) is important for the partner chosen. Data from the Dutch marriages statistics, including all marriages contracted between 2004 and 2008 are used to study the type of partner and marriage timing among the second generation of Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese and Antillean origin. The data from the marriage statistics are enriched with individual and neighbourhood characteristics from the Social Statistics Database (SSB) in order to be able to test effects of individual and neighbourhood characteristics for partner choice among the different second generation groups. Bivariate analyses provide insight in the types of partner chosen by those of different origin and by sex. In addition we study whether timing of marriage differs between those with partners of different ethnic origin. Via multinomial regression analyses the importance of the diverse individual and neighbourhood factors on the four partner options are assessed. Finally we build multilevel models to get insight in the importance of neighbourhood for in- or out-group marriages.

Partner choice of the second generation: the importance of individual and neighborhood characteristics

Introduction

Intermarriage is often seen as the most important indicator for integration of migrants in the receiving society (Gordon 1964). Existing literature mainly covers intermarriage between migrants and natives or level to which migrants choose a partner from their own origin group. Intermarriage then often is perceived as the final step of integration (Gordon 1964; Lieberman & Waters 1988) and indicating limited group boundaries (Kalmijn 1998; Alba & Nee 2005). Marriage to a partner from the country of origin on the other hand is often associated with the importance of continuation of group specific values and norms and maintaining group differences (Gonzalez Ferrer 2006; Kalmijn & Van Tubergen 2006; Lievens 1999; Strassburger 2003; Çelikssoy et al. 2003). Most of these studies however mainly study the marriage behaviour of first generation migrants. For the second generation of immigrant descent intermarriage, however, has a different meaning. The exclusive focus on endogamy or exogamy seems less applicable for this group of immigrant descent as for this group in particular the option of finding a partner from the same origin who was just like themselves born and raised in the country of residence is an important alternative option. Previous work based on survey data has indicated that a substantial share of for example the Turkish second generation in Europe already choose a second generation partner from the same origin (Huschek et al. 2010). These relations between two second generation partners can be expected to become more important with the growing share of second generation young adults in many European countries. In addition, given the increased ethnic diversity in many European countries, also the option of marrying a person of another ethnic origin is becoming an important alternative. We should thus distinguish between four different types of partnerships: first generation partners of the same origin, second generation partners of the same origin, second generation partners of another ethnic origin, and native-majority group partners.

In this work we add to the relatively few studies on union formation of the second generation in Europe that up to now are predominantly based on survey data. Our analyses are new as we cover all marriages contracted by the second generation in the Netherlands between 2004 and 2008. Second, we not only focus on one origin group but cover the four most numerous second generation groups in the Netherlands: those of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean origin. Third, we not only look at intermarriage with natives but distinguish between four different partner origins and its link with timing of marriage. Finally, the unique data allows for testing the importance of neighbourhood characteristics (in terms

of socio-economic and ethnic composition) on union formation choices in multivariate models and separate multi level analyses on the neighbourhood level.

Data and analyses

We analyze the type of partner and the timing of the marriage for the second generation residing in the Netherlands and married between the years 2004 to 2008. The information we draw upon are the marriage registers, including all marriages contracted in the study period. For the purpose of the study the marriage data have been linked to the Social Statistics database of Statistics Netherlands adding a wider range of individual and neighbourhood characteristics. We thus include all those who got married in the indicated time period and have information on a wide range of different background characteristics related to the partners, the marriage and the neighbourhood of residence (before marriage).

For our analyses we select the second generation based on country of birth of the person and that of the parents. All those who have at least one foreign born parent are assigned to the origin of birth of that parent. In case parents have two different origins, country of mother is used first. We distinguish between those of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean origin and a group of other non-western second generation.

Partner from the country of origin are perceived as marriage migrants when they have settled in the Netherlands maximum a year before the marriage was contracted. We refine our analyses only to those who enter a married union for the first time. This results in a total number of slightly more than 12 thousand women and 11 thousand men who married in the 2004 to 2008 period. All neighbourhood characteristics are measured for the neighbourhood in which the person lived one year before marriage.

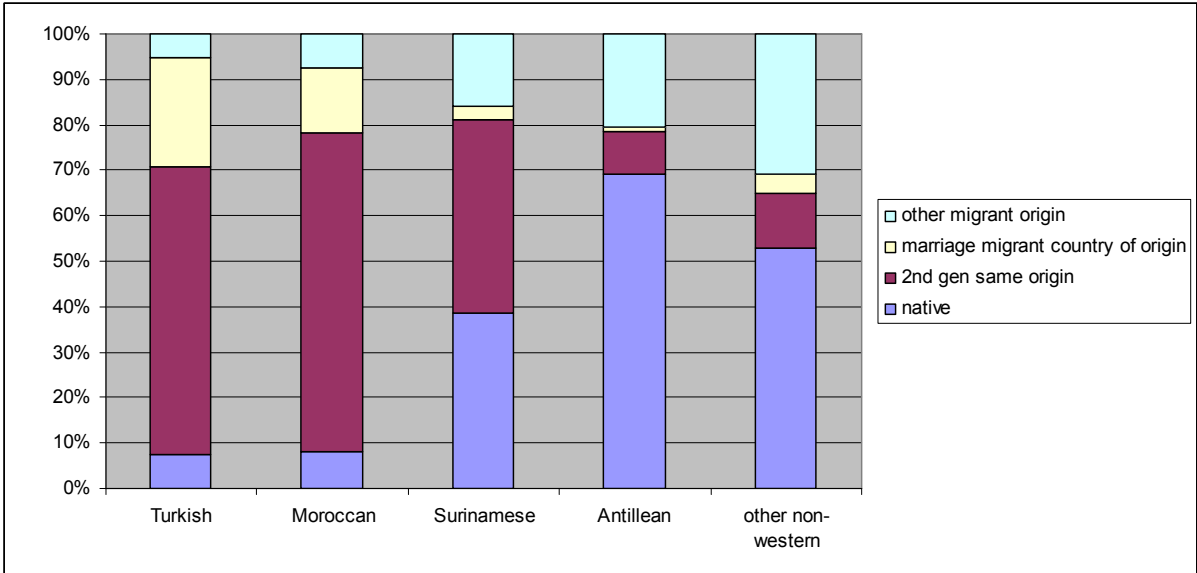
The analyses proceed in several steps. First we describe marriages of the second generation by (four) partner types, by origin of the person and for men and women separately. Second we study the timing of marriage by partner type again by origin and gender. The first step in the multivariate analyse is a multinomial regression taking the four partner types as the dependent variable to assess the role of individual and neighbourhood in the type of partner chosen. In a second step we select those neighbourhoods in which at least 100 marriages were contracted in the 2004-2008 period and study individuals clustered in these neighbourhoods.

Preliminary findings

Analyses of the partner choice among the second generation of diverse origin in the Netherlands reveal a clear dichotomy between the origin groups. Figure 1 shows the data for women married in the 2004-2008 period. From these data it is clear that only a minority of Turkish and Moroccan women (around 9% for both groups) marry a native partner. At the

same time, the majority of Antillean and other non-western second generation migrants as well as a large share of the Surinamese second generation opt for a native partner. For both the Turkish and Moroccan women a partner from the same second generation origin is the most common partner chosen. Also for the Surinamese second generation women this is a relevant option but much less so for the Antillean and other non-western group. Unions with a marriage migrant are most common for the Turkish second generation women (about a fifth of all new marriages) followed by the Moroccan second generation (around 14%). For all other origins marriage migration is very infrequent. And although marriage with a partner from another migrant origin refers to a small percentage of Turkish and Moroccan women it is relatively common among the other origin groups. All in all these findings suggest that in terms of in- and outmarriage the Turkish and Moroccan second generation are most inclined to marry with a partner from the own origin group. However, contrary to marrying with a first generation marriage migrant partner from the country of origin, marriages among two second generation partners are predominant in the studied period. For the other origins on the contrary outmarriage is much more important: either to a native partner or a partner from another migrant origin. Comparison of these marriage data to those of men reveals that Turkish and Moroccan second generation men outmarry more often than women but inmarriage with a second generation partner of the same origin also predominate also among them.

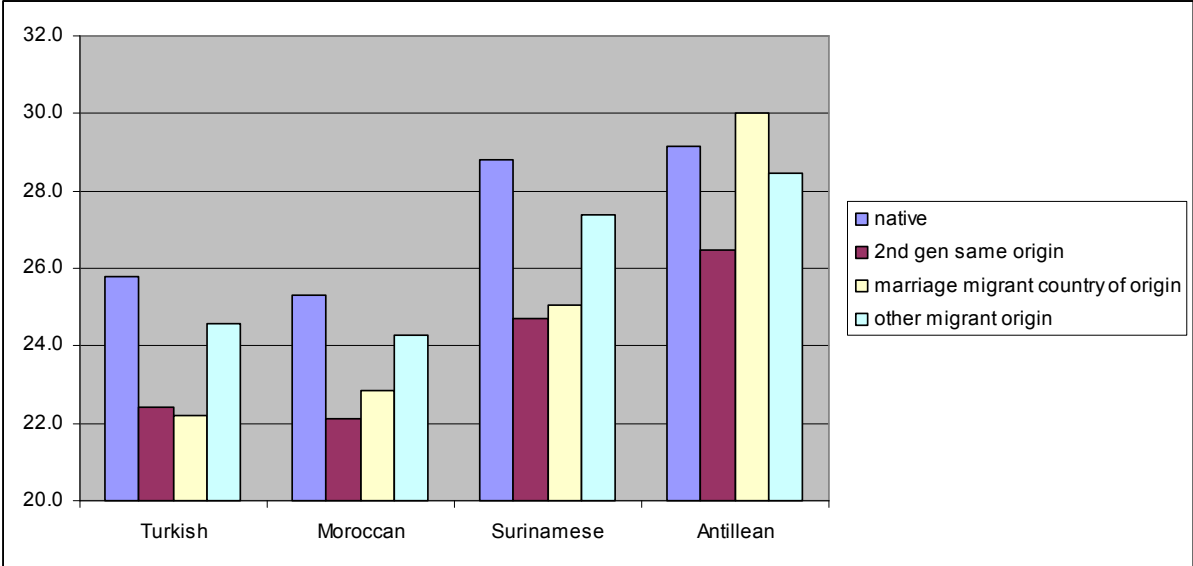
Figure 1: Partner choice of second generation women by origin of the person and partner, Netherlands 2004-2008



Source: Marriage register Statistics Netherlands

In a second step of the descriptive analyses we explore to what extent timing of marriage differs by partner chosen. First of all Turkish and Moroccan women marry substantially earlier than is the case for second generation women from Suriname and the Antilles/Aruba (Figure 2). Furthermore timing of marriage seems to differ by partner type. However, marrying a second generation partner is not resulting in later ages at marriage when compared to a first generation marriage migrant partner. On the contrary: those marrying with a first generation partner from the country of origin do so at later ages than those who marry a second generation partner. As is obvious from the data (Figure 2), those women who marry a native partner are in all cases substantially older than those who marry another partner. This finding holds for all groups with one exception: Antilleans who marry a marriage migrant from the Antilles are even older than those who marry a native Dutch partner. These findings suggest that outmarriage (either with a native or another migrant origin partner) is associated with higher ages at marriage. Interestingly enough marriage with a second generation partner is not linked to later marriage when compared to marriage migrants for women. In the multivariate analyses we will explore this further when controlling for a range of background characteristics as well as study the patterns we find for men among each of the groups.

Figure 2: Age at marriage of second generation women of different origin by origin of the partner, Netherlands 2004-2008



Source: Marriage register Statistics Netherlands

References

- Çelikaksoy, A., Nielsen, H.S., & Verner, M. (2003). Marriage migration: Just another case of positive assortative matching? Aarhus: Department of Economics Working Paper 03-27.
- González-Ferrer, A. (2006). Who do immigrants marry? Partner choice among single immigrants in Germany. *European Sociological Review*, 22(2), 171-185.
- Gordon, M. (1964). *Assimilation in American life: the role of race, religion and national origins*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Huschek, D., De Valk, H.A.G. & Liefbroer, A.C. (2010). Partner Choice Among the Second Generation: The Influence of Peers, Parents and Context. *Poster presentation at the 2010 Annual conference of the Population Association of America*, Dallas April 15, 2010.
- Kalmijn, M. (1998). Intermarriage and homogamy: Causes, patterns, trends. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 395-421.
- Kalmijn, M. & Van Tubergen, F. (2006). Ethnic intermarriage in the Netherlands: Confirmations and refutations of accepted insights. *European Journal of Population*, 22, 371-397.
- Liebertson, S., & Waters, M.C. (1988). *From many strands: ethnic and racial groups in contemporary America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Lievens, J. (1998). Interethnic marriage: Bringing in the context through multilevel modeling. *European Journal of Population*, 14, 117-155.
- Strassburger, G. (2003). *Heiratsverhalten und Partnerwahl im Einwanderungskontext - Eheschliessungen der zweiten Migrantengeneration türkischer Herkunft*. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag.