The development and socialization of children's ethnicity-related views in the Netherlands

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General introduction

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, protest movements such as "Black Lives Matter" in North America and Western Europe and "Black Pete is Racist" in the Netherlands have drawn attention to how people are affected by ethnic prejudice and stereotypes. Large-scale studies confirm that discrimination, one of the consequences of ethnic prejudice and stereotypes, is a widespread issue that many people of color face. For example, approximately half of the Turkish-, Moroccan-, Antillean-, and Surinamese-Dutch who participated in a large representative national survey reported experiencing discrimination in 2020 (Andriessen et al., 2020). Children are not spared from these issues. Studies suggest that the awareness of ethnic stereotypes (Pauker, Ambady, & Apfelbaum 2010) and the development of ethnic prejudice (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011) start in early childhood. Theories on the development of children's ethnicity-related views (e.g., prejudice, stereotypes, and feelings about one's ethnic group) suggest that children's developing knowledge about the social world is closely linked to the socialization agents they are exposed to (Grusec & Davidov, 2010; Nesdale, 2004). Unfortunately, research on children's ethnicity-related views is rare in the Netherlands. Understanding the development and socialization of children's ethnicity-related views is crucial for identifying ways to improve interethnic relations in the Netherlands and elsewhere. This dissertation covers studies into the development and socialization of children's ethnicity-related views in the Dutch context. In this dissertation, I (with co-authors of Chapters 2 through 5) contribute to this sparse literature through a series of studies that focus on the development and socialization of children's ethnicity-related views through three socializing agents; wider society (Chapter 2), textbooks (Chapter 3), and parents (Chapters 4 and 5).

KEY CONSTRUCTS AND DEFINITIONS

Before discussing the theoretical framework of this dissertation, several key constructs regarding children's ethnicity-related views will be defined. Firstly, prejudice refers to an unjustified negative orientation towards individuals simply because they are a member of a particular group (Allport, 1954; Brown, 2010). Secondly, stereotypes refer to widespread beliefs about particular groups and their members (Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, 2018). These concepts are closely linked. Children and adults often use stereotypes to justify prejudice towards particular groups (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Rutland, Killen & Abrams, 2010). Lastly, ethnic affirmation refers to feelings about one's ethnic group, and can be either positive or negative (Phinney, 1993). The first two studies in this dissertation describe children's exposure to ethnic stereotypes in wider society (Chapter 2) and in textbooks (Chapter 3). The last two studies describe the role of parents in the development of children's ethnic prejudice (Chapter 4) and ethnic affirmation (Chapter 5).

Throughout this dissertation, certain definitions are used to describe groups and their group-based socialization efforts. We recognize the contested nature of these terms, which is why this section provides the reasoning behind the preferred terms used in this dissertation. Ethnicity and race are often used interchangeably in academic literature (Hughes et al., 2006). Both terms refer to social groupings based on cultural heritage, regional origin, and physical appearance (Brown & Langer, 2010). However, ethnicity is broader and emphasizes a group's shared cultural heritage, regional origin, language, and religion, whereas race is more specific and emphasizes the physical appearance of a group (Richeson & Sommers, 2016). In Europe, the term ethnicity is more commonly used than race (Berg et al., 2014). The term race fell into disuse in Europe after the horrors of the Holocaust due to being associated with Nazism (Berg et al., 2014). As a result, ethnicity has broadly replaced the term race in European academic and governmental discourse (Lentin, 2008). In line with this convention, this dissertation refers to children's group-based stereotypes and prejudice as being ethnicity-based (rather than race-based) throughout this dissertation, except for Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, I opted for the use of the term ethnic-racial in line with the convention of the preferred publication outlet. Secondly, another term used throughout this dissertation is people of color. People of color is an umbrella term that refers to populations of non-European descent that face systemic ethnic prejudice (APA, 2019). In the Netherlands, people of non-European descent have historically faced systemic discrimination (Lentin, 2008), which is why the term people of color, while imperfect, is fitting to describe these populations. Lastly, the term ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) is used to refer to how parents transmit messages about ethnicity or race (Hughes et al., 2006). Because of the lack of European academic literature on this topic (and, therefore, the lack of a convention for an alternative term), I followed the predominantly American literature and opted for using the term ERS.

THE DUTCH CONTEXT

The Netherlands is a particularly relevant cultural context for examining the development and socialization of children's ethnicity-related views. Approximately a quarter (27%) of young to early adolescent children have a non-Western background (i.e., are recent descendants of migrants from the Global South and Turkey, Statistics Netherlands, 2022). These children of color are usually the (grand) children of migrants (and residents from the Dutch Caribbean) who arrived in the preceding decades. The social exclusion that some of these children experience could be ethnically motivated. In 2017, a higher proportion of non-Western children were bullied online than Dutch children without a migration background (Stevens et al., 2018). For these children, educational settings can be particularly distressing. According to a representative large national survey in 2019, more than half of Turkish-, Moroccan-, Surinamese-, and Antillean-Dutch adolescents and young adults experienced discrimination

at secondary school or university (Andriessen et al., 2020). According to the same survey, approximately half of Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch (i.e., the largest Middle-Eastern-Dutch groups) and Surinamese- and Antillean-Dutch (many of whom are Black) people report experiencing discrimination in the last 12 months (Andriessen et al., 2020) due to their religion, ethnic background, or skin color. The prevalence of ethnic discrimination in Dutch secondary schools highlights the need for research on how aspects of the Dutch educational system may play a role in the socialization of children's ethnicity-related views.

Stereotypes about people of color in the Netherlands resemble those about people of color in the US. For example, the Turkish- and Surinamese-Dutch tend to be stereotyped as deviant (e.g., lazy and unemployed) and working-class (Hagendoorn & Hraba, 1989). Many Asian-Dutch people report being stereotyped as high-status model migrants (Broekroelofs & Poerwoatmodjo, 2021). Dutch adolescents also tend to see the White Dutch as higher in status than people of color. For example, a study found that White Dutch preadolescents (aged 10-12) rank White Dutch people at the top of the ethnic hierarchy (i.e., ethnic groups perceived position in society), followed by the Indonesian- (e.g., Asian-Dutch subgroup) and Surinamese-Dutch (many of whom are Black) in the middle, and the Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch (who make up the majority of the Middle-Eastern-Dutch) at the bottom (Verkuyten & Kinket, 2000).

Considering the particular focus on topics related to Black people in the Netherlands in Chapters 2 and 5, I will describe their unique position in Dutch society in more detail here. Most Black people in the Netherlands are migrants (and descendants of migrants) from Africa, South America, or the Caribbean. Black people have lived in the Netherlands since the 1600s (Van Dijk, 2020), albeit in small numbers. However, from the early to mid-1900s, increasing numbers of Black people migrated to the Netherlands. At first, most Black migrants to the Netherlands came from the former Dutch colonies of Suriname and the Dutch Caribbean, where a large proportion of the population are the descendants of enslaved Africans. Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, West African labor migrants arrived, mainly from Cape Verde and Ghana. Finally, after the 1990s, many Black refugees arrived, mostly fleeing conflicts in the Horn of Africa (e.g., Somali, Ethiopia, and Eritrean migrants; Appiah & Gates, 1999).

Additionally, there has been a growing awareness of how ingrained some forms of prejudice are towards Black people in the Netherlands in the last couple of years. The data presented in this dissertation was collected after the Black Pete is Racist protests received widespread national attention. These protests are focused on the famous Black Pete figure portrayed by mostly White volunteers in blackface during the children-focused festivities of Sinterklaas (Santa Claus), a widely celebrated holiday. The figure's appearance and lore (e.g., a Black servant of a white saintly figure) allude to ethnic stereotypes of Black people, making the Black Pete figure one of the earliest ways children in the Netherlands are exposed to ethnic stereotypes. However, Black

Pete is not considered racist by most Dutch people despite widespread protests in favor of changing the figure's appearance (Klapwijk, 2019; Lubbe, 2020). In fact, most Dutch people consider the children's holiday an important part of Dutch culture (Strouken, 2010). A study confirms that the resistance to the figure's appearance is partially driven by people's identification with Dutch culture (Tjew-a-Sin & Koole, 2018). However, public discourse suggests that for many Dutch people, a desire to maintain cultural dominance or social hierarchy may play a role (Cankaya, 2016). For this reason, children's repetitive exposure throughout their childhood to dominant attitudes regarding Black Pete's controversial appearance, national identity, and cultural dominance is likely one of the earliest ways that this generation of Dutch children are exposed to ethnicity-related views.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S ETHNICITY-RELATED VIEWS

Since Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), theoretical perspectives on the development of children's ethnicity-related views have flourished. Most theoretical perspectives can roughly be described as belonging to the social learning, cognitive, or social-cognitive approach, as summarized by Levy & Hughes (2009). Theoretical perspectives that employ a social learning approach agree that children learn ethnicity-related views through their social environment. However, children's ethnicity-related views also go through age-related changes, which suggests that cognitive development affects how children process ethnicity-related information. For this reason, theoretical perspectives that employ a social-cognitive approach integrate the combined influence of social contextual and cognitive factors at play in the development of children's ethnicity-related views. One such theoretical perspective is Social Identity Developmental Theory (SIDT; Nesdale, 2004).

SIDT describes the development of children's ethnicity-related views in relation to children's developing social knowledge, group membership, and cognitive skills. According to SIDT, children's ethnicity-related views pass through four sequential phases; undifferentiated, ethnic awareness, ethnic preference (or affirmation), and ethnic prejudice. Early on, during the undifferentiated phase, infants tend to prefer the faces of members of their own (vs. other) ethnic groups (Bar-Haim, Ziv, Lamy, & Hodes, 2006; Kelly et al., 2005; Kelly et al., 2007). This trend sets the stage for the ethnic awareness phase; around age 3, children's ability to categorize people as belonging to particular ethnic groups emerges (Williams et al., 2020). Then, through communication with adults and exposure to other socializing agents, children's ability to connect verbal cues to physical appearance develops further (Nesdale, 2004). For example, by the age of 5-6 years, about half of Black and White American children can accurately categorize children by skin color (Pauker et al., 2017). Although such studies have not been performed in the Netherlands, these patterns do suggest that at a young age children develop the ability to differentiate and name physically distinct

(e.g., based on skin color) ethnic groups relevant to their national context.

Children's ethnic awareness lays the foundation for the development of ethnic affirmation. As children age, they continue to learn information (e.g., stereotypes) that emphasizes the distinctiveness of their group from other groups. This information is internalized and forms a central piece of a child's social identity and self-esteem (Nesdale, 2004). For some children, ethnic affirmation's emphasis on distinctiveness sets the stage for the development of ethnic prejudice, especially when negative comparative information is used (e.g., one group is somehow better than the other; Nesdale, 2004). Ethnic prejudice fluctuates throughout childhood. According to a meta-analysis, in countries with White majorities, the ethnic prejudice of White children and children of color towards outgroups of color initially increases from early (2-4 years) to middle childhood (5-7 years), followed by a decrease from middle to late childhood (8-10 years). However, children of color's ethnic prejudice toward White people tend to increase from middle to late childhood (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). Again, these patterns have mostly been found in American studies. To better understand the difference in this developmental trend between White children and children of color, more research is needed into the role that different social contextual factors play, such as national context or the role of parental socialization, which are topics explored in Chapter 4. In studies with children from dominant ethnic groups, ethnic affirmation is often investigated in relation to their ethnic prejudice (Nesdale, 2006). However, for non-dominant ethnic groups, ethnic affirmation is also considered a protective factor against the harmful effects of ethnic discrimination and ethnic stereotypes on mental health (Neblett, Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2012). Although developmental studies on children of color's ethnic affirmation before adolescence are rare, a few studies suggest that young children of color tend to have relatively positive ethnic affirmation (Byrd, 2012), which increases throughout middle to late childhood (Byrd, 2012; Witherspoon et al., 2016). However, in late childhood, children of color become more aware that people of color (and by extension, themselves) face widespread discrimination due to their ethnic background or skin color (Brown, Alabi, Huynh, & Masten, 2011). There is a lack of studies on children of color's ethnic affirmation performed in the Netherlands. Understanding how children of color outside the US maintain a relatively positive ethnic affirmation despite being exposed to ethnic stereotypes is essential. Taken together, the SIDT describes the development of children's ethnicity-related views in relation to children's developing social knowledge, group membership, and cognitive skills. Past early childhood, children's knowledge regarding their own and other groups plays a vital role in how they view themselves and others. An understanding of basic socialization processes is needed to understand how social contextual factors play a role in the development of children's ethnicity-related views.

SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN'S ETHNICITY-RELATED VIEWS

According to Grusec and Davidov (2010), socialization refers to the complex process by which children acquire social views, and this process happens in five different domains that refer to the form of social relationships that a child has with a socializing agent. As children's cognitive skills develop, different socialization domains emerge, overlap, and become avenues through which children learn social information that may influence their ethnicity-related views. Early in infancy, the Protection Domain is the primary domain of socialization. Infants desire a sense of security from caregivers. Socialization research in the Protection Domain is typified by research based on attachment theory, which emphasizes the evolved need for close bonds between children and caregivers (Bowlby, 1973). The goal of the Protection Domain is for children to develop a secure sense of self in order to explore their surroundings. A person's felt security (i.e., attachment security) is not only associated with variations in how people approach interpersonal relationships, but also their views of outgroups (Carnelley & Boag, 2019). In infancy, the Reciprocity Domain also emerges. This domain refers to caregivers recognizing and complying with children's reasonable needs, described as caregiver sensitivity by attachment theorists (Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974). The goal of the Reciprocity domain is for children to develop the ability to trust and cooperate with others. This early development of trust and cooperation tendencies is likely to have a downstream effect on the development of ethnicity-related views. For example, various studies have found that higher distrust of outgroups is associated with more ethnic prejudice (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2002). Taken together, the Protection and Reciprocity Domains are relevant to the development of individual affective tendencies relevant to intergroup relations.

As children's cognitive skills develop, the socialization process becomes more complex. The Control Domain emerges around the age of 2 years, when children learn to verbalize their needs and come into conflict with their parents. Through punishment, caregivers can pressure children into aligning with their parental goals. The goal of the Control Domain is for children to learn to internalize social norms even when they conflict with personal desires. Social norms refer to the common attitudes and behaviors in a social group (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Children from controlling parents have long been theorized to be likelier to adopt their parents' non-inclusive social norms than children from non-controlling parents (Allport, 1954). For example, growing up in with controlling parents is associated with children's higher ethnic prejudice (Odenweller & Harris, 2018). Towards the end of the age of 2 years, the Guided Learning Domain emerges. This domain refers to socializing agents supporting children's learning of cognitive, emotional, and social skills. In this domain, socializing agents try to consciously pass on (age-appropriate) skills to children by providing information and feedback. The goal of the Guided Learning Domain is for children to learn socioemotional and cognitive competencies needed to navigate social

relationships and their surroundings. Besides being related to how children navigate interpersonal relationships, these developmental changes in socioemotional and cognitive skills are also associated with variations in children's ethnicity-related views (Aboud, 2008). Lastly, the Group Participation Domain emerges when children are 2-4 years. Due to the focus of the Group Participation Domain on explicit and implicit processes of socialization, this domain is particularly relevant to the socialization of children's ethnicity-related views.

The Group Participation Domain (Grusec & Davidov, 2010) is inspired by the social learning approach and complements Social Identity Developmental Theory's framing of the development of ethnicity-related views (SIDT; Nesdale, 2004). The goal of the Group Participation Domain is for children to adopt the social norms of their group. This domain relies on three assumptions. First, the central assumption is simple: children acquire many views by being a part of a larger social group. The second assumption is that children are inherently motivated to adopt social norms (Grusec & Davidov, 2010). This inherent motivation originates in humans (and other primates) evolved desire to be part of social groups that can offer assistance and resources (De Waal, 2012; Brewer, 1999). Finally, the third assumption is that adopting social norms is often not an explicit process and happens through repetitive observations (such as observing media or parents; Crandall & Stangor, 2005), social interactions, and participation in certain activities (Grusec & Davidov, 2010). These assumptions are useful for identifying how key socializing agents play a role in the development of children's ethnicity-related views.

A major key socializing agent shared by children growing up in the same country is that country's dominant social norms. Children learn about dominant social norms during childhood and adolescence by repetitively communicating with adults and engaging in social and cultural activities (Grusec & Davidov, 2010). Social norms in a country relevant to interethnic relations can help shape children's ethnicity-related views. For example, a study on cross-national differences in adolescents' prejudice suggests that in France, adolescents' ethnic prejudice is driven more by identity concerns, while in Italy, adolescents' ethnic prejudice is driven more by economic concerns (Bergamaschi, 2013). The authors hypothesize that this difference is due to France's identity-driven public discourse regarding migration compared to Italy, where the public discourse regarding migration is more focused on economic threat (i.e., migrants taking jobs from native Italians; Bergamaschi, 2013). Similarly, another study suggests that cross-national differences in ethnic prejudice in Europe are explained by cross-national differences in the tolerant social norms present in educational systems (Hello, Scheepers & Gijsberts, 2002). These findings highlight that to better understand the socialization of children's ethnicity-related views in the Netherlands, there is a need to examine dominant social norms relevant to interethnic relations that children are repetitively exposed to throughout their childhood.

A useful avenue for examining such dominant social norms in the Dutch context is the controversy regarding the children's focused Sinterklaas festivities and the Black Pete figure. As mentioned earlier, the resistance to changing the Black Pete figure's appearance seems driven by identity concerns and a desire to maintain cultural dominance (Cankaya, 2016; Tjew-a-Sin & Koole, 2018). For this reason, Chapter 2 focuses on adults' attitudes regarding Black Pete's controversial appearance, national identity, and social dominance orientation (i.e., a preference for social hierarchy; Pratto et al., 1994), a widely used measure of general intolerance towards marginalized groups.

Similarly, media (e.g., television shows, children's books, textbooks) also functions as a socialization agent shared by children growing up in the same country. Repetitively seeing subtle patterns of ethnic stereotypes and prejudice in media may shape children's ethnicity-related views (Crandall & Stangor, 2005). Not surprisingly, studies suggest that media socialization) may be one of the main sources of people's ethnic prejudice and stereotypes. For example, ethnic stereotypes and underrepresentation of people of color in media are related to people's attitudes regarding ethnic groups (e.g., Tukachinsky, Mastro, & Yarchi, 2015). For this reason, it is important to examine the subtle ethnic stereotypes that children are exposed to. Unfortunately, such research is relatively sparse in the Netherlands. Chapter 3 addresses this gap and focuses on the presence of ethnic stereotypes (and related topics) in textbooks that all Dutch children are repetitively exposed to throughout their childhood: textbooks.

Parents expose children to social norms as representatives of their particular social groups. This exposure could be, on the one hand, indirect, such as children growing up in a family environment in which specific attitudes and socialization goals are stressed (what parents find important in parenting; Darling & Steinberg, 1993), which may guide what socialization agents parents expose their children to (e.g., schools, role models, television shows). On the other hand, this exposure to social norms could also be more direct, such as through messages (e.g., discussions about ethnicity or race-related topics) and behaviors (e.g., activities with their children; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). For example, studies suggest that children's ethnic prejudice is related to direct and indirect exposure related to parental attitudes goals, messages, and behaviors that touch on ethnic prejudice and hierarchical views of society such as social dominance orientation (e.g., Costello & Hodson, 2014; Meeusen & Dhont, 2015; Odenweller & Harris, 2018). However, these prior studies focused only on White families in Europe and the US, making it unclear if these findings regarding are generalizable to families of color. Chapter 4 examines why such relations may differ in families of color.

Parents of color can also expose children to social norms that may protect against the harmful effects of discrimination and ethnic stereotypes on mental health (Neblett, Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2012). Much of the research on ethnic-racial socialization

(ERS) is focused on examining children of color's exposure to parental attitudes, goals, messages, and behaviors aimed at passing on ingroup pride and resilience (e.g., Caughy, Nettles, & Lima, 2011; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020). These aspects of ERS are related to more positive ethnic affirmation in children of color (e.g., Neblett, Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2012). However, most ERS studies focus on children of color in the US. There is a complete lack of studies on ERS in families of color in Europe. For this reason, Chapter 5 examines maternal ERS and children's ethnic affirmation in Black families in the Netherlands.

OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

In this dissertation , I examine the development and socialization of children's ethnicity-related views through three socializing agents; wider society (Chapter 2), textbooks (Chapter 3), and their parents (Chapters 4 and 5). Firstly, **Chapter 2** describes a study that investigates if White Dutch adults' national identification and social dominance orientation (i.e., a preference for social hierarchy; Pratto et al., 1994) are related to attitudes towards Black Pete and Sinterklaas, figures in a very popular children's holiday festivity. Secondly, **Chapter 3** examines ethnic representation and stereotypes in first-year secondary school textbooks from two core subjects: math and Dutch. This chapter specifically examines if characters of color in the texts and images were under- or overrepresented and if they were portrayed stereotypically in terms of competence and status. Thirdly, **Chapter 4** focuses on how mothers' views on social hierarchy and the family environment are related to young children's (6- to 10-year-olds) ethnic prejudice in White, Turkish-, and Afro-Dutch families. Specifically, this chapter examines relations between maternal social dominance orientation, socialization goals, and children's ethnic prejudice towards marginalized outgroups. Fourthly, **Chapter 5** focuses on a mixed-methods pilot study covering how Black mothers in the Netherlands approach ethnic-racial socialization (ERS). This study analyses how frequently mothers engaged in cultural socialization (i.e., transmitting ingroup pride), preparation for bias (i.e., preparing children for discrimination), and color-conscious practices (i.e., openly discussing ethnicity and race), and how these aspects of ERS relate to their children's ethnic affirmation using quantitative analyses. Additionally, this study analyzed how mothers describe their ERS goals, messages, and behavior using a qualitative analysis. Lastly, **Chapter 6** summarizes the main findings of these studies from the Group Participation Domain perspective and discusses future directions for research.

POSITIONALITY

This dissertation covers social issues that have been especially salient to the wider public in the last couple of years due to the growing anti-racism movement (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Black Pete is Racist). Whether qualitative or quantitative, no social research is value-free (Holmes, 2020). For this reason, I would like to discuss my personal views and aspects of my background relevant to this dissertation. Being the target of ethnic prejudice or stereotypes is unpleasant and linked to adverse (mental) health outcomes, such as anxiety, stress, and self-doubt (Major & Schmader, 2008). Because of these links, the studies described in this dissertation were partially motivated by hopefulness to reduce the prevalence of ethnic prejudice and stereotypes in society. My personal experiences fueled this motivation.

As a cisgender male with a bicultural background (i.e., Black Kenyan and White Dutch), I have personally experienced what it feels like to be part of an underrepresented group (Black people in the Netherlands) while also being a part of a native Dutch family on the other hand. Furthermore, while my early childhood to early adolescence was spent in the Netherlands, most of my middle to late adolescence was spent in the US. I lived in ethnically diverse areas in the Netherlands and the US and attended ethnically diverse and majority White schools. As a result, unfortunately, I experienced direct (e.g., slurs) and indirect forms (e.g., police violence) of ethnic prejudice in both countries. This wide array of experiences makes this dissertation an academic exploration of topics deeply personal to me. Because of my background, I am both an insider and an outsider (i.e., part of the ingroup and outgroup; Holmes, 2020) to the participants in this study (White, Turkish, and Black Dutch).

As part of an ethnically diverse team, our various ethnic backgrounds helped us develop culturally sensitive procedures and measures to the best of our abilities. Nevertheless, our various backgrounds also likely influenced the research questions that were formulated, our preferred methods, and how findings were interpreted. Overall, it is safe to say that all the co-authors involved in writing the various chapters of this dissertation are implicitly motivated to reduce ethnic prejudice and stereotypes in society, and conduct research that can yield new insights to achieve this.