Educational endeavors: children of immigrants in education in the Netherlands, 1980-2020

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Chapter 4 - A literature review of educational positions of the second generation in the Netherlands between 1980 and 2020

Introduction and theoretical background

Education is an essential indicator for the socio-economic integration of children of immigrants across the globe. The education of children of immigrants has therefore been researched extensively in various European countries (for comparative research among Western-European societies see (Crul et al., 2012; Dustmann et al., 2012; Heath et al., 2008; Levels & Dronkers, 2008). In the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a substantial gap in the performance level between second-generation children of immigrants and children without a migration background has repeatedly been shown for the Netherlands. In international comparison, several countries, among which most notably Nordic countries, appear to have smaller educational gaps than the Netherlands (OECD, 2015, 2018). Possible explanations of this disadvantage offered in PISA reports are – relatively - early tracking, socio-economic background, and school segregation in the Dutch educational context.

This chapter zooms in on the vast scholarly literature published in the last decades on the educational positions of children of immigrants to gain a better understanding of the insights and knowledge gathered thus far. To that end, it answers the second sub-research question: how did the explanations of educational trajectories of children of immigrants shift during the last forty years? This will be done through examining which topics surface and which explanations prevail in explaining the educational positions of children of immigrants in various stages of their education.

Many researchers studied the multifaceted educational positions of children of immigrants in the Netherlands (for example see: Baysu et al., 2018; Bol et al., 2014; Crul, 2009, 2018; Driessen, 2004, 2013; Driessen & Dekkers, 2008; Driessen & Merry, 2014; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003; Ledoux, 1996; Levels & Dronkers, 2008; Nygård, 2017; Oomens et al., 2003; Pásztor, 2010; van de Werfhorst & Heath, 2019; van de Werfhorst & van Tubergen, 2007; Wolbers & Driessen, 1996). These scholars have researched the education of children of immigrants in various stages of education in the Netherlands as well as in comparison with neighboring countries with a variety of indices and have provided diverse factors to explain educational inequalities. Test scores tend to be the main outcome variable for studies in primary school and for secondary education this is track placement. Family and

migration background are mentioned as explanations of educational inequalities throughout the three stages of education.

More than 11 percent of the Dutch population has a second-generation migration background and among school-aged children and youth, i.e., below the age of 25, this is more than 20 percent. Children of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Antillean immigrants are traditionally the most studied groups in migration and educational research, although research on the education of children of 'newer' groups such as refugees from Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, or Syria or children of recent immigrants from Poland or Bulgaria has grown over the years (Crul et al., 2016; Dagevos et al., 2018; Damen, Huijnk, et al., 2022; Dourleijn et al., 2011; Vogels et al., 2014). To examine how this sizeable share of Dutch children and youth fares in education it is thus of major importance to understand how the socio-economic integration of immigrant families in the Netherlands evolves. In 2020, almost half a century since many labor and colonial migrants settled, it is a good moment to take stock with a literature review of the results that the extensive research field has yielded.

This literature review systematically examines how the educational positions of children of migrants, in the Netherlands, have been researched in the Netherlands between 1980 and 2020. More explicitly, this literature review studies which educational inequalities or disadvantages of children of immigrants have been analyzed and which explanations have been provided for these inequalities. Among the main explanations of educational inequalities in the Netherlands, socioeconomic and migration background and resources of immigrant families are key (Oomens et al., 2003; Roelandt et al., 1990; van de Werfhorst & Heath, 2019; Wolbers & Driessen, 1996)

Reviews of this type are rather scarce. There are only two studies that have reviewed the socioeconomic background and educational inequalities among children of immigrants in the Netherlands (Rijkschroeff et al., 2005; Stevens et al., 2011). Rijkschroeff and colleagues (2005) examined the educational policies targeted at minorities between 1970 and 2002, whereas Stevens and colleagues (2007) included the academic literature and policy up to 2007. This literature review takes a broader approach and thus also includes academic publications dated between 1980 and 2020 concerning empirical and policy evaluation studies. Moreover, this literature review uses systematic literature review methods to enable transparency.

This chapter consists of four sections. First, the methods of this literature review will be introduced. Second, the literature regarding children of immigrants will be reviewed in the three stages of education. Literature on children of immigrants in primary, secondary, and tertiary education will be analyzed with specific attention to the main research questions, methods, data, research population, and outcomes. Third, drawing from the literature review a synthesis will discuss the main

explanations for educational inequalities among children of immigrants. Last, the main conclusions and reflections that arose from this literature review can be found in the discussion.

Data & methods

The first step in the methodology of a literature review is the definition of the problem according to Badger and colleagues (Badger et al., 2000): this review aims to examine what the main trends and theories regarding the educational positions of children of immigrants were and how the gaps in educational positions are explained between 1980 and 2020. The protocol provides a concise and structured overview of the methods employed here – see Appendix B - and follows the guidelines of the PRISMA Statement (Liberati et al., 2009; Moher et al., 2009) which was originally developed in the domain of healthcare interventions, but also serves as a proper guideline for systematic reviews in other fields. The procedure of this literature review is explained in five steps.

First, the eligibility criteria are defined, which determine the characteristics of the study. Thematically, research should focus on the education of children of immigrants, meaning the educational performance, decisions, or level measured in primary, secondary, or tertiary education. The research context should be the Netherlands and the studies should employ data between 1980 and 2020. The population of the research should specifically include children of immigrants in their research. Children of immigrants refer to the second generation and the 1.5 generation. The four most studied migrant groups in the Netherlands have a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Antillean background, although studies that included children with other migration backgrounds have also been considered in this chapter. *Qualitative*, *quantitative, or review studies* were eligible for inclusion. *Additional restrictions* for inclusion concern language and publication status: exclusively English-language and Dutch-language studies and academically published research will be included.

The second step is to describe how and when the information sources were searched for relevant articles and chapters. First, multiple research databases were researched: ERIC, Sociological Abstracts, and Psych Info in late February 2020 and early March 2020. Additional journals and publishers were also mined for relevant articles, such as the Social Science Research, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, SAGE, Routledge, and Elsevier publishers (for an extensive list of additional journals and publishers searched see Appendix B).

The third step was to lay out the executed search strategy which describes the combination of search terms and the limits imposed on the search. The databases and additional journals were

searched on combinations of education, migration background, socio-economic background, and the Netherlands, and synonyms of these terminologies. The search in the three databases yielded 1293 records and the search in the additional journals yielded an additional 206 records, resulting in a total of 1499 records.

The fourth step was to prune the harvest that the search yielded by deleting duplicate records which reduced the number of studies to 1308. Next, these studies were screened for eligibility based on the title and abstract. The following criteria had to be met: the focus on education at primary, secondary, or tertiary levels among children of immigrants; in the Netherlands; with data gathered between 1980 and 2020; including children of immigrants, either second generation or generation 1.5, and reporting in English or Dutch. This resulted in 65 studies that were included. The fifth step was to code these 65 studies. Each publication was coded based upon a variety of variables such as studied years, theme, included groups, operationalization of SES and migration background, dependent and independent variables. The secondary literature was studied by first selecting the studies that examine primary schools, second examining which themes, groups, and explanations are discussed over which years, and what commonalities can be found. The same steps were then taken for secondary and tertiary education.

Databases and queries

The main theoretical concepts in this literature review are *education and family background*. The research population are children of immigrants and the research context is the Netherlands. Hence, literature that examines education of children of immigrants in the Netherlands in relation to their family background should be included in this chapter. The main keywords words are thus: family background, education, migrant groups and the Netherlands. Obviously various synonyms, operationalizations, and spelling differences are prevalent for these keywords. The final list included, for family background: family*, socio-economic*, socioeconomic*, social*, education*, occupation*, income*, capital*, support*, investment*, mobility*; for education: education*, academic*, school*, scholastic*, studies; for migrant groups: immigrant*, migrant*, migration*, ethnic*, second generation*, second-generation*, Turk*, Morocc*, Surinam*, Antill*; and for the Netherlands: the Netherlands, Dutch, Holland. Per main keyword field entry, the listed keywords could be used interchangeably – i.e. using “OR”. The Dutch equivalent of these words were used too: familie*, socio-economisch*, socioeconomisch*, social*, onderwijs*, beroep*, inkomen*, kapitaal*, mobiliteit*, for education: onderwijs*, academi*, school*, educatie*, studie*; for migrant groups: immigrant*,

migrant*, migratie*, etnisch*, tweede generatie*, Turk*, Marokk*, Surina*, Antill*; for the Netherlands: Nederland.

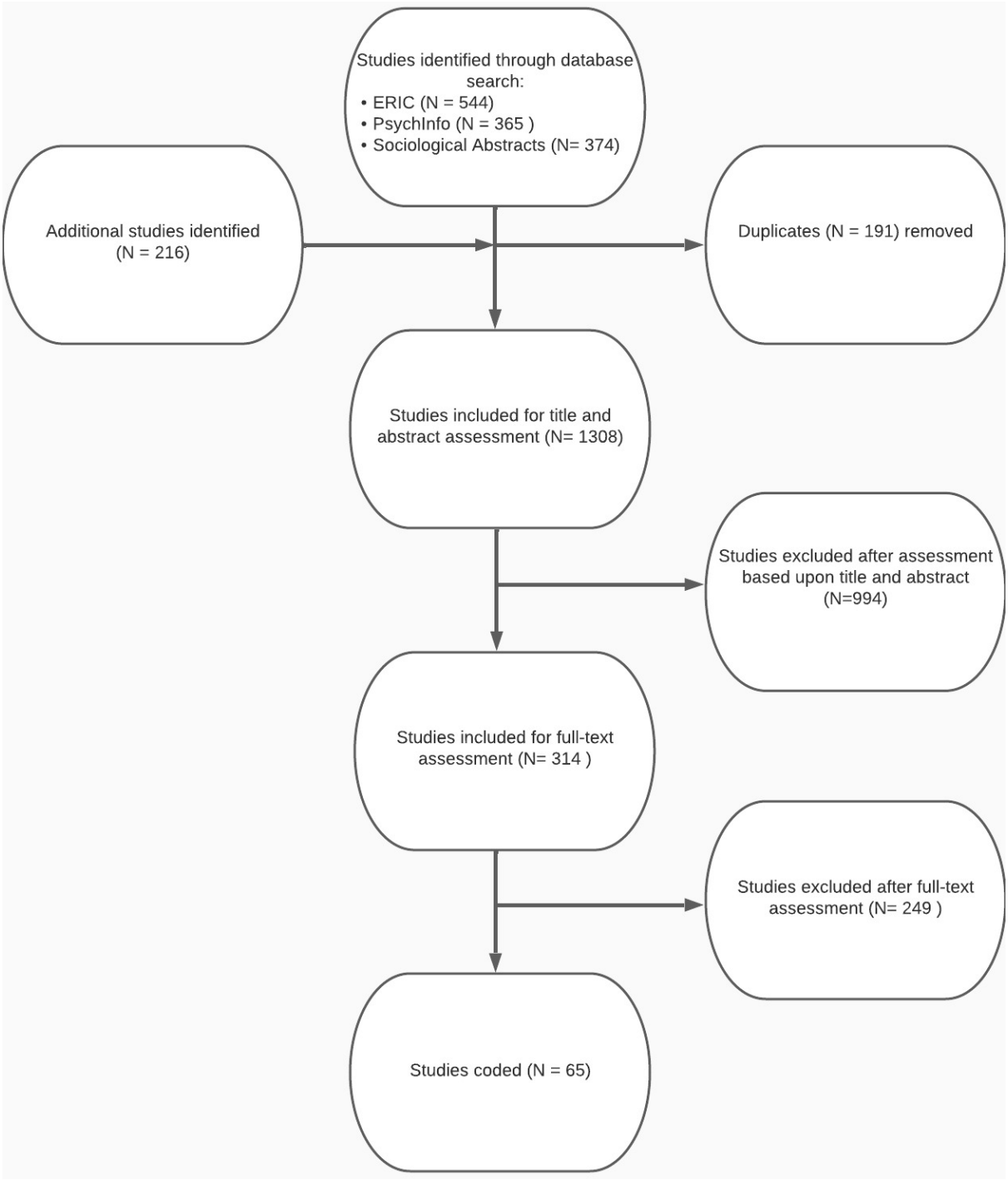
Three databases were searched. First, ERIC, which stands for Education Resources Information Center and is funded by the U.S. Department for Education, was searched with the keyword field entries as described above. This database was searched on February 26, 2020. The queries can be found in Appendix B. This yielded 554 results. Second, PsychInfo (by the American Psychological Association, via EBSCOHOST) was searched on February 26, 2020. Like the search in ERIC, I searched with these four entries. The third entry regarding education targeted the title, to search for papers that concerned education as main theme instead of other psychological topics. This yielded 365 results. The exact queries used can be found in the Appendix B. Third, Sociological Abstracts was searched on March 2, 2020, again with the four entries. The first entry regarding family background targeted the title, to search for papers that concerned social and family background as main themes instead of other sociological topics that are researched in relation to education. This search yielded 374 records. The queries can be found in Appendix B. In addition, as a more detailed search, the specific relevant English-language and Dutch-language journals were searched on February 27 and 28, 2020. These outlets were searched with the same queries as search in ERIC. The journals were researched in groups based upon their publisher. The list can be found in Appendix B. The total number of records from the databases and the journals was 1499. Duplicate records (N = 191) were removed. This resulted in 1308 records.

Study selection and inclusion

These 1308 studies were screened for eligibility based on the title and abstract. The following criteria had to be met: (1) academically published studies with a quantitative, qualitative or review approach with a focus on (2) education at primary, secondary, or tertiary levels among (3) children of immigrants; (4) in the Netherlands; with (4) data gathered between 1980 and 2020; and (5) reporting in English or Dutch. A total of 994 records were removed because they did not meet these criteria. After full-text assessment another 249 records were removed, which resulted in 65 studies that were included and coded. See Figure 4.1 for the flowchart with the steps of the search strategy and inclusion.

Figure 4.1

Flow chart of search strategy



Coding

The fifth step was to code these 65 studies. The coding scheme addressed study identifiers (authors, year, title, abstract), stage in education (primary, secondary or tertiary), type of study, type of data and data collection (e.g. quantitative vs. qualitative), sample characteristics (data source, sample size; migrant groups included), explananda (educational performance such as test scores, exams, degrees; educational choices) and explanans (micro level: parental migration and/or SES background; meso-level: schools, networks or peers; macro-level: educational system, segregation or school choice). Specifically, the types of operationalization of migration background or SES. See Table 4.1 for the coding scheme. After coding the first five studies as a pilot, the differentiation in operationalizations of the explananda – i.e. educational performance vs. choice – stood out as well as the operationalization of some explanans, specifically migrant background and socio-economic background. Therefore, these categories were added to the coding schema.

Table 4.1

Coding scheme by category and subcategories

Category	**Sub categories**
Type of study	Quantitative
	Qualitative
	Mixed
	Review
Stage in education	Primary
	Secondary
	Tertiary
Type of data and data collection	Quantitative vs qualitative; cross-sectional vs longitudinal; interviews; focus groups etc.
Data source	PRIMA, VOCL etc.
Migrant groups studied	Turkish; Moroccan; Surinamese; Antillean;
Sample size	
Explananda	Performance (test scores, exams, degree)
	Choices

Operationalization explananda	Individual level: migrant background; socio-economic background
Explanans	Meso level: schools, networks, peers Macro level: educational system, educational policies, segregation, school choice Migrant background: parental place of birth, citizenship, generation, language spoken at home
Operationalization explanans	Socio-economic background: parental education level, types of capital Education system: track mobility and permeability;

The literature review is structured along the three stages of education. Discussing the literature on a specific stage of education allows for comparison between explanans shining light on similar explananda. The various explanations of education stage-specific outcomes can thus be contrasted. In the synthesis, I zoom in on the various explanans and how these explained differences in educational performance and choice across educational stages.

Literature review

Primary education

Primary education in the Netherlands starts at age 5 and is completed around age 12. The main focus in research on primary education among children of immigrants is either the starting position or the outcome in the last grade, relatively few studies examined education over time. In research on primary schools, language proficiency issues and track placement advice, and performance testing in the final primary school grade are emphasized. Migration-related explanations given in these studies for educational gaps among children of immigrants are language proficiency and integration of the parent into the host society.

Language proficiency

Research in primary schools focused on the language development and proficiency of children of immigrants in both the parental mother tongue and the Dutch language. On the one hand, studies analyzed the development and skills in the parental native tongue. In the 1980s and 1990s, primary

schools offered language courses in the parental mother tongue (i.e., *Onderwijs in Eigen Taal en Cultuur* and later *Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen*, Minority Language, and Cultural Teaching), which aimed at developing a positive self-concept and self-awareness, to close the gap between school and home environment and to contribute to intercultural education (Broeder & Extra, 1999; Driessen, 1996; Extra & Yagmur, 2006; Rijkschroeff et al., 2005). The focus of these policies has shifted from preparing children for remigration to contributing to the integration and education of children of immigrants (Driessen, 1996), even though the evidence for these contributions has been ambiguous (for various arguments see: Driessen, 1996; Lucassen & Köbben, 1992) and this language curriculum was no longer offered in schools from 2005 on (Extra & Yagmur, 2006).

On the other hand, studies focused on language development and skills in Dutch. Children of immigrants are shown to have lower language proficiency upon entering the school system at age five. Speaking minority languages at home is assumed to be one of the explanations for this. Even before entering primary school, preschool programs are offered to children from lower socio-economic families or families with a migration background to prevent and combat educational disadvantages, such as language discrepancies upon starting school (Driessen, 2018). Only small effects and even sometimes equivocal empirical evidence on the effectiveness of preschool have been found (Driessen, 2018; Fukkink et al., 2017). As children with lower Dutch language proficiency obtained lower scores on Dutch language tests throughout primary school (Van der Slik et al., 2006), the importance of Dutch language proficiency from a young age onward has been stressed. Nonetheless, other studies demonstrated that in the first years of primary school children of immigrants who spoke another language besides Dutch at home, can speed up their lexical skill development, yet this still resulted in lower lexical skills when compared to children who spoke Dutch at home (Appel & Vermeer, 1998; Driessen et al., 2002). Lower Dutch language proficiency and reading skills may also have a spillover effect on test performance in other subjects such as mathematics, in which assignments must be read and interpreted correctly for successful completion as argued by (Latuheru & Hessels, 1996). Moreover, differential item functioning and item bias are prevalent in performance testing among children of immigrants. Differential item functioning refers to items in a test function differently for certain individual pupils or groups of pupils regardless of cognitive abilities due to 'construct-irrelevant' factors such as unnecessarily difficult wording in arithmetic test items or profiting from prior or extra-curricular knowledge that does not reasonably correspond with the grade curriculum. Differential item function has been shown in the standardized test taken in the final year of most primary schools, i.e. *CITO Eindtoets Basisonderwijs*, among children with a Turkish and Moroccan migration background (Van Schilt-Mol, 2007). Differential item functioning was also found regarding

language that hindered these children for some items, yet for others, pre-existing knowledge benefitted these children (Uiterwijk & Vallen, 2003, 2005).

Parental integration into host society

The second migration-related explanation for educational positions is the extent of integration of the parents into the host society. Generally, parental integration is assumed to be linearly associated with the education of children. In short, the more integrated the parents are, the higher the educational outcomes of the children. Yet, the integration of parents is measured in various ways. Driessen (2004) focused on parental years of residence and demonstrated very weak effects of paternal and maternal years of residence on children's mathematics and language performance in primary school. Driessen & Merry (2011) concluded that the more integrated the parents, the higher the language and numeracy skills of the children were. They measured integration in socio-economic terms of education level and employment status, socio-cultural terms of language spoken with children, command of Dutch, number of children, and secularism (Driessen & Merry, 2011). These measures of integration explained more variance in language than in numerical skills and the measure of parental education turned out to be the most influential. Their conclusions are remarkable as almost a decade earlier Oomens and colleagues concluded that the extent to which the parents are integrated was barely associated with the math and reading performance of their children. Integration was measured both socio-economically (education level and employment status) and socio-culturally (proficiency in Dutch and native tongue and orientation towards ethnic community) in this study (Oomens et al., 2003). As such, the integration of parents has a stronger effect on language skills than on math skills and it seems to be getting better with time.

Socio-economic background of the family

A vast body of literature examined the trade-off between migration and family background influences in the education of children of immigrants. Family background can refer to the socio-economic position of the family or the parental involvement in the education of their children. The assumption is that immigrant families often have relatively lower *socio-economic positions* in the host society, and that this lower parental socio-economic position is negatively associated with the education of their children. Some scholars thus argued that educational disadvantages in performance and track placement advice can be explained by the lower parental socio-economic position rather than by the migration background (de Jong & van Batenburg, 1984; Driessen, 1990; Dronkers & Kerkhoff, 1990). In other words, these authors argued that the educational positions of children of immigrants in primary school were like those of children without a migration background from families with lower socio-economic positions. Driessen (2013) demonstrated higher math and reading performance levels

of children of immigrants than that of the children without an immigration background with comparable, lower, education levels. Moreover, while accounting for parental educational level, the trends over time in the educational performance of children of immigrants surpassed the performances of the majority children. However, parental education level as the operationalization of socio-economic position has been widely debated. Driessen (1990), de Jong (1987), Kerkhoff (1988), and Tesser (1989a) all stipulated provisos to this operationalization, such as the limited comparability of parental education level between immigrant and majority families and the possibility of an interaction between socio-economic position and migration background, which will be elaborated upon in (1) the section on secondary education in this chapter and (2) in the synthesis. Another measurement of the socio-economic position of the family can be the financial or economic resources available to support the education of the children. Oomens and colleagues (2003) demonstrated that children from more affluent immigrant families perform slightly better in math and reading.

Both parental involvement and aspirations were not associated with the math and reading performance of children of immigrants according to the study by Oomens and colleagues (2003). Therefore, the fact that Denessen and colleagues (2007) concluded from interviews with primary school principals that the involvement in primary schools by immigrant parents was experienced as rather difficult (Denessen et al., 2007) is interesting, but does not automatically offer an explanation.

Track placement advice

The practice of *track placement* advice is another explanation of educational positions and disadvantages and is related to the family background. An important debate in research on track placement advice is how this advice practice relates to meritocratic principles (Driessen et al., 2008a; Luyten & Bosker, 2004; Tolsma et al., 2007; van der Slik et al., 2006). In other words, to what extent is the track placement advice based on test performance or the teacher's assessment of background characteristics of the pupil - such as family background, migration background, or gender? Biased track placement advice can work in two ways: over-advising and under-advising. The practice of over-advising was widely studied in the 1980s and 1990s, the dominant perception was that children of immigrants would be recommended a higher track placement than their test performance indicated, i.e., a higher track placement would be recommended to children of immigrants than to children without a migration background with an equal test performance (Driessen, 1991, 2006b; Jong, 1987).

Over-advising was perceived as a practice of positive discrimination (Driessen, 1991). It challenged the meritocratic approach to track placement advice in which test performance was complemented with motivation and academic potential. Driessen and colleagues (2008a) argued that the meritocratic ideal of exclusively considering performance-level variables in track placement advice

overlooked the importance of effort and motivation, which were variables measured with greater difficulty. This cohort study that covers the years 2002 to 2008 did not find evidence of over-advising for children of immigrants. Students from various migration backgrounds with equal performance levels received similar track placement advice, with an exception for the slightest over-advising for the miscellaneous category of 'other minority pupils' (Driessen, 2006b; Driessen et al., 2008b). Timmermans and colleagues (2018) concluded this as well in their longitudinal study from 1995 to 2007: the practice of over-advising diminished over time. Thus we see that the practice of over-advising diminished around the turn of the century.

Over-advising and under-advising are relative terms, the question is to whom children of immigrants are compared. Both concepts describe an advice practice in which the track placement advice in the last grade of primary school does not completely align with the performance level as measured by standardized CITO score. The question is, however, to what extent over-advising befell children of immigrants more often than children without a migration background? Some studies have shown that under-advising was found among children without a migration background as well: given equal performance levels, children from lower social classes received lower advice than peers from higher social classes (Luyten & Bosker, 2004; Mulder, 1993). Timmermans and colleagues (2018) concluded that under-advising for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds in comparison with similarly able peers remains over time (1995-2014), whereas over-advising for children of immigrants diminished over the same period.

The causes of over-advising were found at the student level, the class level, or the school level. At the student level, test performance would only indicate the current capabilities, whereas children of immigrants could have more potential for development that was not yet manifested due to prohibitive and disrupting effects of migration, such as lower language proficiency or later entrance into the Dutch school system (de Boer & van der Werf, 2015; Driessen et al., 2008; Timmermans et al., 2018). Over-advising would allow children of immigrants with more potential, as observed by the teacher, to optimally develop this potential in secondary school. On the class or school level, the evaluation of children's school performance is affected by the relative performance level of their peers in the class or school (Driessen, 2015; Timmermans et al., 2015). With high levels of segregation in immigrant communities in the cities, children of immigrants run a high risk of being segregated in schools and classes, with lower performance levels (Driessen, 2015; Timmermans et al., 2015). Hence, children of immigrants who stood out in terms of their performance levels in their - segregated – class context and thus received higher track placement advice might not stand out to the same extent in a new school context in secondary school. This has also been described as the frog-pond effect which refers to the evaluation of a pupil's performance dependent upon the class or school context; a pupil

might be evaluated more positively in a lower-performing context than the same pupil in a higher-performing group.

School context characteristics

The school context characteristics include school and class composition. Socially and ethnically segregated schools and classes are assumed to negatively affect the educational performance of the children. Driessen (2002a) demonstrated that children in schools in which more than half of the pupil population has a migration background performed lower on math and especially on language tests in grade 4 (approximately 8-year-olds) than schools with a majority of Dutch majority children, even when accounted for cognitive abilities, gender, age, ethnic background, and parental education (Driessen, 2002). Ironically, no performance gap was found between children of immigrants and Dutch majority children in schools where pupils with a migration background dominate (Driessen, 2002). Contrarily, Veerman and colleagues (2013) showed that the proportion of children of immigrants in a class was negatively related to the language and math performance for Dutch majority children, but less so for children of immigrants. Gijsberts (2006) concluded similarly that math and language performances are aggravated when half or more of the pupil population has a migration background (Gijsberts, 2006). Contrary to Driessen (2002), Gijsberts (2006) and van der Slik (2006) concluded that the socio-economic characteristics of segregated schools prevail in negatively affecting school performance over migration background characteristics. On the class level, Luyten and colleagues (2009) concluded that upon entering primary school, classes with many pupils from a lower socio-economic background and immigrant families had a lower performance level in both language and math tests than classes with predominantly Dutch pupils, regardless of socio-economic position. The gap in language test performance disappeared in the subsequent primary school grades, while the gap in math persists throughout primary school grades (Luyten et al., 2009).

Free school choice and access to state-funded denominational and philosophical schools are other explanations for school segregation. Next to public schools, religious – such as Christian, Islamic, Jewish, or Hindu - and philosophical schools - e.g., Montessori, Jenaplan or Steiner schools - are state-funded in the Netherlands. Karsten and colleagues (2003) demonstrated how free school choice, next to residential segregation, fosters school segregation: immigrant parents consider other characteristics of schools to be essential in their choice of enrolling their children and prefer schools with differentiation in curriculum and good academic reputations whereas Dutch majority parents looked for a “match” in the home and school environment (Karsten et al., 2003), preferring schools with children from their own social background. The degree of differentiation, the academic standard of the school, and distance to the school were the most important motives for parents who had had

little schooling, and these factors became less important as the level of education of the parents increased.

In the debate on school segregation, specific attention has been devoted to denominational schools. The combination of free school choice and state funding for both public and denominational schools allows parents to decide to enroll their children in a school that matches their religious beliefs. This has been offered as an explanation for school segregation among Islamic (Moroccan and Turkish) immigrant families. Some Islamic primary schools have been evaluated as 'weak' by the Dutch Education Inspectorate and this was expected to negatively affect the education of the children enrolled in these schools among whom are many children of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. Driessen and colleagues (2016) demonstrated that Islamic schools had lower math and language performance levels than other denominational schools, yet pupils in Islamic schools made the most progress from the first to last grade in primary education (Driessen & Bezemer, 1999).

Secondary education

Secondary education in the Netherlands starts at age 12 and lasts four to six years depending on the track. The main emphasis in research on the second education among children of immigrants is either the impact of family and migration background, tracking, early school leave, or dropping out on educational performance.

Socio-economic background of migrant families

Wolbers and Driessen (1996) argued that socio-economic background prevailed over migration background as a determinant of the educational outcomes of children of immigrants. Specifically, the parental educational level as the operationalization of socio-economic background was an important predictor for track placement advice and test performances. Hustinx (2002), however, showed that children of immigrants were "less successful in their school career if we equalize the groups on 'lower social background' " When compared with Dutch majority children from lower socio-economic position families, children of immigrants "receive lower advice and are found in lower types of education during the first five years following the transition to secondary education" and have a much higher drop-out rate (Hustinx, 2002, pp. 181–182). However, Hustinx (2002) argued that the operationalization of "lower social background" skewed the picture for immigrant families drastically as the lowest category of parental education was a collapsed category, in which immigrant parents were overrepresented among those having had "only primary school". Thus, after equalizing for "only primary school", children of immigrants were shown to have higher performance levels, i.e., track

placement. Moreover, he concluded that track placement advice seemed not to have negative consequences for children of immigrants. Similarly, Van de Werfhorst & van Tubergen (2007), using a later cohort than Hustinx (2002), concluded that children of immigrants "attend lower levels of education and score lower on achievements test". Again, these ethnic gaps were found to be related to the socio-economic background as the achievement differences disappeared and track placement differences decreased (van de Werfhorst & van Tubergen, 2007). Moreover, after accounting for socio-economic background, children of immigrants were found to choose higher tracks in secondary schools.

Migration background has also been found to affect the educational outcomes of children of immigrants in secondary schools. Van de Werfhorst and Heath (2019) showed how the educational outcomes - test performance and track placement - of second-generation children of immigrants were affected by migration background. More precisely, a positive selection effect impacted secondary school outcomes, i.e., children from immigrant communities who were positively selected performed better in secondary school than peers from immigrant communities who were negatively selected. Selection was measured as a selectivity index that compares the education levels of first-generation migrants to the same birth cohorts in the population of the country of origin. For the Netherlands, the positive selection effect was found for children from Surinamese and Antillean families and not for the communities of Turkish and Moroccan origin due to the rather unfortunate timing of family reunification that coincided with the economic recession following the oil crisis. Additionally, they noted how these findings were amplified by the stratification of secondary education, in countries with stratified, or tracked, secondary education, such as the Netherlands (van de Werfhorst & Heath, 2019).

Combinations of family and migration background that affect educational outcomes in secondary school were also found by various scholars. When it comes to the 1980s Roelandt, Martens, and Veenman (1990) demonstrated how the differences in performance level are affected by the socio-economic background of the family and migration background-related characteristics. Generational differences played an important role, children of immigrants born in the country of origin and who entered the Dutch educational system past the age of 5 years were found to have lower track placement and diplomas in secondary school than second-generation children. Orientation towards the host country's society and familiarization and proficiency in the Dutch language seems to play an important role in these generational differences. In addition, they argued that the role of socio-economic background should not be overlooked either, children of lower socio-economic families, still, had lower performance levels (Roelandt et al., 1990). A decade later Dekkers and colleagues (2000) studied the interactions between gender, socioeconomic background, and migration

background over time. They concluded that girls with a migration background have similar education levels six years after entering secondary school as Dutch majority girls, irrespective of socio-economic background, but that children of immigrants with higher socio-economic backgrounds slightly outperformed lower socio-economic background children of immigrants. For Dutch majority peers, the difference between low and high SES was larger. Moreover, girls from immigrant families and, from higher socio-economic backgrounds families "choose a technical or agricultural specialization (instead of caring or commerce) far more often than other girls given their performance and arithmetic at age 12" (Dekkers et al., 2000, p. 73). Boys, either from immigrant or higher socio-economic backgrounds families, chose the most science subjects, contrary to co-ethnic boys from lower SES families and co-ethnic girls regardless of SES. Latuheru and Hessels (1996) argued socioeconomic and migration backgrounds were interconnected. They demonstrated how multicollinearity issues, i.e., existing associations between the independent variables socio-economic and migration background in multiple previous studies, hinder straightforward conclusions on whether socioeconomic background prevails over migration background in predicting school outcomes, or vice-versa. They concluded that the separate, or unique, effects of either socioeconomic or migration background on school outcomes are rather small or not significant (Latuheru & Hessels, 1994).

Stratification

Another important explanation for differences in educational outcomes of children of immigrants in secondary school is stratification. Specifically, tracking is a widely studied explanation for the educational outcomes of children of immigrants in secondary schools in various countries (Baysu et al., 2018; Nygård, 2017). The timing and permeability of tracking are the main issues that have been studied. The Dutch secondary education system can be assessed as stratified, with its three main tracks, and a multitude of sub-tracks that prepare students for specific tertiary education (Baysu et al., 2018; Bol & Van de Werfhorst, 2013; Crul et al., 2012; Dronkers & Fleischmann, 2010). In international comparison, it is not as comprehensive as Sweden and not as rigid as Germany. Nevertheless, this intermediately stratified system in the Netherlands affects the educational outcomes of children of immigrants negatively.

Track placement happens at a relatively young age of 12 in the Netherlands. Early tracking affects aspirations and enables persisting gaps in track placement and performance levels of children of immigrants. Nygård (2017) showed that early tracking negatively affected the educational aspirations of children of immigrants in the Netherlands: children of immigrants in vocational tracks perceive incongruity in aspirations between what one hopes to achieve and what one thinks one can

achieve. This incongruity was not as prevalent among children of immigrants in Sweden, which has a more comprehensive educational system and where tracking takes place at age 16, four years later than in the Netherlands. The timing of tracking has far-reaching consequences for the school trajectories of children of immigrants. Baysu and colleagues (2018) showed how differentiation in educational trajectories of children of specifically Turkish immigrants and majority peers diverged around the first moment of tracking. In the Netherlands, the first moment of tracking upon entering secondary school and the first gaps in educational trajectories between children of immigrants and majority peers emerged in the first year(s) of secondary school, i.e., and led to the overrepresentation of children of Turkish immigrants in vocational tracks. This gap persisted throughout the educational trajectories into tertiary education.

A possibility to challenge these gaps is *track permeability* or track mobility. Track permeability is usually difficult in stratified educational systems because the differences between the track curricula tend to be more rigid. The intermediately stratified Dutch educational system allows some track permeability. Changing or "stacking" tracks is a well-known strategy for children of immigrants, and children from lower socio-economic strata, to attain higher education levels in the Netherlands. Baysu and colleagues (2018) demonstrated how children of immigrants more often follow "the long route" to tertiary education by moving on to an academic track after completing a vocational one in secondary school or by moving tracks in tertiary education, for example from MBO to HBO or from HBO to university. Contrarily – and fifteen years earlier, Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (2003) studied how tracking permeability can have negative consequences for children of immigrants in secondary school. They showed how children of immigrants were more likely to be downwardly mobile in secondary school than their majority peers. This downwardly mobile path leads to school drop-out for children of immigrants more often than for majority peers. Dropping out of secondary school, or early school leave is another phenomenon that is often studied in the secondary education of children of immigrants. Studies that focus on the 1990s, like Bosma and Cremers (1996), Dekkers and Driessen (1997), and Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (2003), examined how children of immigrants tend to be two to five times more likely to drop out of secondary school than majority peers, similarly to findings by Hustinx (2002). Even more so, boys with a migration background have a significantly higher drop-out rate than girls (Dekkers & Driessen, 1997).

The interaction between stratification and family background was also examined by some scholars (Baysu et al., 2018; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003). Baysu and colleagues (2018) accounted for additional characteristics and concluded that gaps in attained track in severely stratified educational systems between children of Turkish immigrants and majority peers were affected by family background, more specifically parental education level and employment status, although not by

individual characteristics such as age and gender. In the Dutch context, when accounted for family background, the differences in educational trajectories between Turkish and majority peers decreased although they did not disappear entirely (Baysu et al., 2018). Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (2003) concluded that accounting for family background, the dropout rate of children of immigrants was 1.8 times higher than the majority of peers, whereas this was almost three times higher without taking family background into account. Moreover, family background prevailed over entry-level ability in explaining the discrepancy in dropout rates between children of immigrants and majority peers (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003). For downward mobility another picture arose: when the parental background was held constant, children of immigrants were less likely to be downwardly mobile than Dutch majority peers. They concluded that when the family background was accounted for, children of immigrants were more likely to drop out, whereas the majority of peers were more likely to be downwardly mobile (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003).

Individual and family characteristics beyond socio-economic stratification

In addition to family and migration background-related explanations of educational discrepancies among children of immigrants in secondary education, other explanations arise from the literature as well. Luyten (2004) concluded that track placement in the first and fourth year of secondary education is explained merely by performance (test scores and GPA) and effort (track placement advice and truancy) and barely by background variables including the socio-economic position of the family, migration background and gender. Moreover, parenting style and parental support have been shown to contribute to successful secondary school achievements (van der Veen, 2003; van der Veen & Meijnen, 2001; van der Veen & Meijnen, 2002).

Van der Veen (2003) studied which factors contribute to successful secondary education among children of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants, where success was defined as attending HAVO or VWO in the fifth year of secondary school. She concluded that next to the education level of the parents, the parents' high mobility orientation played an important role in the educational success of children of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. In another study on the educational success of children of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants, van der Veen and Meijnen (2001) showed how a competitive attitude was the best predictor for successful educational careers among these children – more so than other social psychological constructs such as a strong ethnic identity, autonomy, or conformity. Van der Veen and Meijnen (2002) demonstrated how successful children of Turkish and Moroccan parents were subject to a less authoritarian parenting style than the less successful co-ethnic peers. The relationship between successful students of Turkish and Moroccan origin and their parents was less satisfactory than the one between less successful co-ethnic peers and their parents. This could be

due to the educational success that increased the social gap between parents and successful students. Many findings on the secondary education phase of children of immigrants are based upon studies before the turn of the century – and thus concern different birth cohorts than the studies in the 2000s and 2010s. These conclusions should thus not be interpreted as representing the indisputable positions and explanations of children of immigrants in secondary education as more recent studies have painted a somewhat more optimistic picture.

Tertiary education

Studies or reviews on the education of children of immigrants in the Netherlands rarely examined tertiary education. However, this provides vital insights into the final education levels and what the educational trajectories of children in tertiary education looked like. Tertiary education in the Netherlands has three main branches: vocational tertiary education (MBO) which is sub-tracked into four levels, higher professional education (HBO), and university (WO).

The longer route through education

The 'longer route' describes a longer trajectory to the final obtained educational level than a nominal trajectory in which students pursue another, often higher, degree after obtaining the initial degree. This longer route has been studied as an opportunity for children of immigrants to obtain higher education levels despite the lower educational tracks in secondary (Crul, 2015; Crul & Schneider, 2009; Pásztor, 2014a; Schnell et al., 2013). In numerous studies, children of immigrants are interviewed on successfully obtaining a higher education degree by reconstructing their educational trajectories. The longer route was an avenue to this higher degree for several successful higher educated children of immigrants (Crul, 2015; Pásztor, 2009; Schnell et al., 2015). Schnell and colleagues (2013) shed light on the importance of various resources in succeeding in the long route among children of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. Teachers specifically were found to be vital supporters of the upwardly mobile educational trajectories of these children, even more so than supportive parents, siblings, or peers (Ledoux, 1996; Schnell et al., 2013). Crul (2015) pointed out how the longer route in the Netherlands provided opportunities for children of immigrants who were disadvantaged in secondary school, though strong determination and perseverance played a key role in succeeding in a longer route. Even more than a decade before this elaborate study by Crul, Hofman and van den Berg (2003) demonstrated how students with a migration background who attended pre-university education in secondary school performed better in higher education than their same ethnic peers who followed a long route through education levels.

Family background: social-economic status, attitudes and agency

The role of family background in the stories of attaining higher education among children of immigrants was widely studied. Hofman and van den Berg (2003) showed that the parental education level correlated with higher education enrolment of their children: almost 60 percent of Dutch majority children in university had at least one parent that attained higher education, whilst this was less than 50 percent (i.e. 48%) for students with an Antillean or Surinamese migration background and even 25 percent of students with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background. Ooijevaar (2010) examined whether students obtained their higher education degree within eight years after the first enrolment, how many years it took to obtain their degree and concluded that parental background (measured as income and intact parental union), as well as other predictors such as gender, high GPA in secondary school and time investment in their education, explained the gap between students with a migration background and Dutch majority students. However, these predictors did not explain the gaps between Dutch majority students and students with a migration background when the latter group was differentiated by specific migration background (i.e., Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, or Antillean).

Ooijevaar suggested that other factors could explain this gap in study success better, such as segregation or attitudes toward education. Pásztor (2014b) concluded that attitudes towards the education of Turkish immigrant families varied across national contexts and over time: from a sojourner perspective – i.e., upholding orientation to country of origin rather than to host country- to a family mobilization perspective. She demonstrated through interviews how the attitudes towards education became more upwardly mobile oriented in the Netherlands over time whereas the lack of labor market returns shaped the negative attitudes towards Turkish families in Austria and highlighted the importance of ethnic community or 'niche' for employment opportunities instead (Pásztor, 2014b). Almost twenty years earlier Ledoux (1996) concluded similarly that Turkish and Moroccan parents have high aspirational levels for their children from an idea of migration as a family mobility project, whilst these first-generation parents were not able to support the educational careers of their children emotionally or in terms of resources. Noteworthy is the conclusion of Pásztor (2010) that the importance of education in the family mobilization perspective did not counteract the negative impact of lower socio-economic background in immigrant families. Pásztor (2009) found divergent trends in the choice patterns in higher education: children of Turkish immigrants with a higher socio-economic status background, i.e., higher educated parents or middle-class status families, were 'embedded choosers' whereas children of immigrants who lacked this parental support and expectation pattern were 'contingent choosers', meaning that they are less likely to progress on to higher education. The educational trajectories of embedded choosers were characterized by the importance of schooling

and the support parents provided either directly themselves or indirectly through engaging their network, whilst for contingent choosers 'loopholes' or 'back doors' in the school system such as the 'long route' were essential in attaining higher education.

Social contexts: teachers, peers and networks

Another resource to support the educational trajectories of children of immigrants is the social context. Severiens and Wolff (2008) studied first-year university students and concluded that the quality of contact with teachers and peers in higher education was alike for minority and majority students. However, they concluded that "the same learning environment can have different effects on each group of students and can set different types of mechanism in motion" (Severiens & Wolff, 2008, p. 264). An explanation might be that high-quality contact with teachers in higher education functioned differently for low and high-performing minority students, i.e., formal contact between teachers and low-performing students and informal contact between teachers and high-performing students. Wolff (2013) examined the importance of social resources in higher education among children of immigrants and concluded from qualitative data such as from interviews that good and frequent contact with teachers and students on the one hand and a structured and guided study program, especially in the first year, on the other hand, were unmistakably part of the school success among the children of immigrants who obtained a higher educational degree. He also considered parents a social resource, however, the support in considering and choosing a higher education program was more limited compared to Dutch students (Wolff 2013). Nevertheless, the extrinsic motivation to study certain programs by children of immigrants should be noted. Wolff (2013) mentioned how immigrant parents see migration as an intergenerational socially upward project in which the 'status' or 'prestige' of the study program matters in choosing higher education programs among their children. Hence, the family support in choosing a program is focused on status or social mobility rather than intrinsic motivation of children of immigrants (Wolff, 2013).

Crul and colleagues (2017) described the importance of new social contexts and social capital gathered by students over time as the 'multiplier effect'. This is "a "self-triggering" element produced during the pathways of the climbers" among successful children of immigrants through which they "take more advantage of opportunities in education and on the labor market than their peers of native descent" (Crul et al. 2017). These opportunities are exponential in the educational and labor market careers of socio-economic climbers. Hence, the gap between the successful and less successful co-ethnic children of immigrants increases over time. The successful children of immigrants thus climb the social ladder mostly with support from the 'new' social and cultural capital they gained by entering new socio-economic circles and less so due to the family's social and cultural capital. One of the new

social circles that is mentioned by minority students to be of importance for their higher education experience are minority students' organizations (Slootman, 2019). This is in addition to the idea of Pásztor (2014b) that social integration of students in higher education supported better outcomes but that minority students employed individual strategies such as "joining existing networks, creating new networks, or simply, keeping old high school friends throughout university" (Pásztor, 2014b, p. 9).

Despite the increasing number of higher educated children of immigrants, the transition from education to the labor market comes with hindrances (Allen & Belfi, 2020; Khoudja, 2018). Allen and Belfi demonstrated how higher education attendance expanded over the last decades in the Netherlands and this positively affected the graduate skill levels and labor market returns for graduates (Allen & Belfi, 2020). Graduates with a non-Western migration background, i.e., children of immigrants in this study, and female students did not profit from this expansion to the same extent as similarly educated male Dutch majority students: students with a migration background had higher chances of unemployment than their majority peers. Similarly, Khoudja (2018) demonstrated the persistence of ethnic employment gaps, specifically for women in tertiary education.

Synthesis

This synthesis discusses the main explanatory mechanisms for educational gaps and trajectories of children of immigrants in the Netherlands that arise from the literature described for the three stages above. Roughly, explanations of the educational outcomes of children of immigrants can be found on three levels: family background, school context, and institutional context.

Family background

As to family background, the main explanations pertain to the parental level. The majority of studies discussed either the socioeconomic status or migration background as the source of the educational inequalities of children of immigrants. Penninx (1989) described these two explanations of differences in the educational careers of children of immigrants by distinguishing between the *disadvantaged perspective* and the *immigration perspective*. The disadvantaged perspective focused on the lower socio-economic position of immigrant families in the Netherlands and how this impacts the educational careers of their children. As described by Boudon (1974) the family's socioeconomic position affects performances and choices in education, i.e., the primary and secondary effects. This divide in performance and choice can also be found in the research on the education of children of immigrants in the Netherlands. Concerning primary effects, socioeconomic position influences educational performances via intergenerational transmission of human, cultural, or economic capital.

First, *human capital transmission* is by far the most studied of these three., and these operationalize human capital as parental education level or occupation level, concluding that this negatively affects their children's education or that children have higher performance levels despite their lower parental socio-economic position. The question for these studies however remains to what extent this negative association between socio-economic background and educational performance is due to a problematic and inaccurate operationalization of socio-economic background for first-generation parents. This issue of unmaterialized human capital is certainly contentious and often mentioned by researchers (e.g., van de Werfhorst & van Tubergen 2007; van der Veen 2003; Pels & Veenman 1996) but these studies utilized these biased operationalizations for human capital in immigrant families, nevertheless.

Second, *cultural capital* as described by Bourdieu (1973) emphasized 'habitus', such as cultural codes, practices, and norms that parents transfer to their children. Immigrant families might not have the cultural capital that is evaluated positively in the Dutch educational system, yet in studies this is mostly discussed regarding language proficiency and barriers (Broeder & Extra, 1999; Driessen, 1996; Extra & Yagmur, 2006; Rijkschroeff et al., 2005) caused by immigration and not as lower cultural capital. The studies that examined the role of integration of parents for their children's education tended to indirectly measure cultural capital by parental language proficiency or residence period, i.e., the longer the parents lived in the Netherlands, the more knowledge they would have about the Dutch society and educational system (see for example Driessen, 2004; Driessen & Merry, 2011; Oomens et al., 2003). However, these studies found weak or no effects on test scores. Moreover, they studied integration in combination with variables that measure socioeconomic status, such as parental education. Siblings, peers, or teachers are found to provide additional resources to help children of immigrants navigate their educational pathways (Crul et al., 2017; Ledoux, 1996; Pásztor, 2014b; Schnell et al., 2013; Severiens & Wolff, 2008; Wolff, 2013).

Third, *economic capital* refers to the economic support of parents for their children's education. Relatively few studies operationalize parental socio-economic background by income among other measures (for exceptions see: Ooijevaar, 2010; Oomens et al., 2003) and yield divergent conclusions. Oomens and colleagues (2003) concluded that a higher income was positively associated with test scores in primary school, while Ooijevaar (2010) showed that parental income was not associated with higher education success for students with a migration background.

Stratification and agency in tracking

Secondary effects of socioeconomic position on children of immigrants' education concern educational choices, e.g., tracking decisions or pursuing the long route. The central assumption is that children from higher social status families would make more ambitious educational choices. This can be driven by either the rational choice perspective or risk aversion theory. The most obvious educational decisions in the Netherlands concern tracking in secondary school and 'stacking' diplomas in the 'longer route'. Contrarily to these theories of rational choice or risk aversion, various scholars (Ledoux, 1996; Pásztor, 2009; Pásztor, 2010, 2014b; Schnell et al., 2013) described how immigrant parents, often with lower socio-economic background, encouraged and supported their children in following and choosing educational trajectories that were upwardly mobile. Yet this was not to reassert or maintain the relative socio-economic standing of the family but to improve it, which is in line with the idea of immigrant optimism, which is part of the immigration perspective.

This brings us to the *immigration perspective* which emphasizes the immigration-related factors that influence the education of children of immigrants such as differences in cultural and social capital between the country of origin and country of destination/host society, for example lower language proficiency or little knowledge on the educational system in the Netherlands. Immigration-related factors in a family can positively influence the education of the children. Immigration optimism or the family mobilization thesis (A. F. Heath et al., 2008; Kao & Tienda, 1995) describes families striving for upward social mobility through the education of their children and especially by choosing certain tracks or schools. In the literature examples for this family mobilization thesis are put forward by Pásztor (2009; 2010; 2014b) and Ledoux (1996). They show that first-generation parents in the Netherlands see the education of their children as the way for them to move up the socioeconomic ladder. Specifically, the labor market returns of higher education were mentioned by various parents (Pásztor 2010; 2014b) with a higher education degree expected to help their children in the labor market. This family mobilization thesis seems to only arise from the stories of successful higher education students with a migration background (Ledoux, 1996; Pásztor, 2009; Pásztor, 2010, 2014b) and this mechanism does not function similarly for children of immigrants in lower tracks. The higher aspirations of parents might not match the achievement of these children, which has been described as the aspiration-achievement paradox (Heath et al. 2008). Nygård (2017) demonstrated the discrepancy between what secondary vocational students hope to aspire to and what they think they can obtain.

School characteristics and factors

Segregation, school, and *class composition* played a key role in research on the school level for primary schools mostly. The literature provided mixed results on the effects of school and class composition. Children in schools and classes with a high proportion of children of immigrants tend to have lower test scores (Driessen, 2002). However, this did not negatively impact children of immigrant and majority peers alike in mixed schools (Gijsberts, 2006; Veerman et al., 2013). Segregation in schools was linked to residential segregation and free school choice with the options of choosing denominational schools such as Islamic schools (Karsten et al. 2003) whilst various scholars demonstrated that segregation on socio-economic characteristics impacted the performance of children more than migration-related characteristics.

The stratified educational system was regarded as the main explanation for differential educational trajectories of children of immigrants at the institutional level. The track placement advice, timing of tracking, and track permeability were discussed as essential in shaping educational trajectories. For children of immigrants, the track placement advice has frequently been found to not match the ability level (Driessen, 1991, 2006b, 2015; Driessen et al., 2008b; Jong, 1987; Luyten & Bosker, 2004; Mulder, 1993; Timmermans et al., 2018). The practices of over-advising and under-advising stem from a divergence in the teacher's expectations and the child's ability level. This contradicts the ideal of meritocracy: children should be evaluated by their performance and not by their background characteristics. Track placement is very important for the development of the educational trajectory of the pupil, as demonstrated by Baysu and colleagues (2018) whose work shows that initial track placement gaps persist throughout educational trajectories. The advice by the teacher is thus highly influential for the educational trajectories of children of immigrants. Moreover, the relatively *early tracking* at the age of 12 limited opportunities to overcome possible socio-economic and migration-related disadvantages and translate this into performance. The *permeability of tracking* provides opportunities to switch to higher tracks (i.e., upwardly mobile) yet at the same time it enables downward educational mobility. Children of immigrants who followed a "longer route" to higher education utilized track permeability by stacking diplomas (Crul, 2015; Crul & Schneider, 2009; Schnell et al., 2013), whereas for others downward mobility is enabled by track permeability (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003), with early school leave or drop-out as a consequence. This divergent trend of upward and downward mobility through track permeability corresponds with the concepts of segmented assimilation in which subgroups differentiate in their path of integration.

Conclusions

Several conclusions arise from this synthesis. First: the operationalization and definition of migration background vary widely. Most studies included children of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, or Antillean immigrants. In early studies, children of immigrants were lumped together in a single category not allowing any differentiation between migration backgrounds. This overlooks intragroup differences in the effects of migration background and SES as well as other explanans. In more recent studies, groups were differentiated by migration background and thus included mainly children of immigrants from Turkey, Moroccan, Suriname, or the Dutch Antilles. Specifically, children of Turkish immigrants were frequently chosen as research population in both Dutch-focused studies and internationally comparative ones (Baysu et al., 2018; Crul et al., 2017; Pásztor, 2009; Pásztor, 2010, 2014a). Despite this differentiation between groups, the general picture was one of contrast with Dutch majority peers rather than between groups, generational status, or cohorts.

The predominant operationalization of migration background is the parental country of origin. However, the generational status of the children of immigrants varied throughout the studies. Early studies barely distinguished between the generational statuses of children of immigrants, whereas contemporary studies pay more attention to changes over time, as the population of children of immigrants grew significantly over time, enabling researchers to distinguish between first-generation, 1.5-generation, and second-generation status. Similarly, differentiation between cohorts became more apparent in recent years and painted an optimistic picture: the more recent the cohort, the higher their educational efforts.

Do different operationalizations of migration backgrounds yield different conclusions? The short answer is yes. The elaborate answer suggests that the explanations for educational inequalities among children of immigrants vary between migrant groups. The studies that examined language proficiency in primary school tend to focus on children of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants whereas children of Surinamese and Antillean origin were often assumed to have linguistic and cultural capital due to the Dutch educational system in the (former) colonies, and thus are not included in these studies. Moreover, segregation and Islamic schools were mostly examined for Turkish and Moroccan children. This might be related to the increased attention to (Islamic) Turkish and Moroccan communities after the turn of the century – see also immigration pessimism mentioned by Lucassen and Lucassen (2015) – with 9/11 and the murders of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh as important triggers.

The second conclusion regards the divergent conclusions of qualitative and quantitative studies. The qualitative studies examined the educational trajectories of children of immigrants

retrospectively. Moreover, qualitative research studied mostly successful higher education students and thus focused on the "longer route" and educational upward mobility. In contrast, quantitative research examined the education of children of immigrants statically (i.e., on the singular moment) and occasionally longitudinal. The conclusions of quantitative studies seemed to paint more negative pictures of the education of children of immigrants than qualitative studies.

Discussion

Children of immigrants are a diverse group in their migration and socio-economic backgrounds and generational statuses. Against the background of an increasingly polarized public and political debate on migration and integration over the last forty years, children of immigrants navigated their way through the Dutch educational system. This chapter provides an overview of the literature on the education of children of immigrants in the Netherlands between 1980 and 2020. Through a structured literature review, the main trends and theories in this field of research were examined. In the literature on the primary school phase, a ubiquitous explanation for gaps in educational positions was language proficiencies as an extension of parental migration background. Additionally, track placement advice was another widely studied phenomenon with an emphasis on the role of both socioeconomic and migration backgrounds. In the literature on secondary education, the track placement in the first year and the tracking throughout secondary school gained a large share of the attention, this was both influenced by socioeconomic and migration background. In tertiary education, the focus was on retrospective interviews of successful higher education students and on how they described their educational trajectories. As for the "longer route", the family mobilization thesis and additional help from teachers and other social contacts were key in their successful educational trajectories. These are mostly educational outcomes focused on performance, whereas track placement and tracking are framed as educational choices. The question remains though to what extent track placement is a process of choice rather than selection. The "longer route" could be a mechanism including choice in which higher-able students obtain a higher education by perseverance and deciding to keep on studying.

Thus, a polarized picture emerges. On the one hand, the retrospective interviews of successful children of immigrants in higher education painted a hopeful story that with support from parents, siblings, teachers, and others upward mobility can be realized through education. On the other hand, children of immigrants remained overrepresented in the lower tracks and have higher dropout rates. This dichotomy hints at the idea of segmented assimilation in the segregated American context in which various subgroups have distinctly upward or downward educational paths. The question is

whether family background exclusively can account for these differences. Research that examined multiple mechanisms such as family background, effort, and performance to predict educational outcomes were scarce, which impeded comprehensive conclusions on the importance of family background. Moreover, the influence of tracking in the stratified Dutch education system should not be overlooked.

Furthermore, socio-economic and migration background seem to function in interaction rather than as a trade-off in the educational trajectories of children of immigrants. Some processes of intergenerational transmission may be disrupted or weakened in immigrant families and are thus hard to compare with the intergenerational transmission of capital and attitudes that take place in majority families (Kwak, 2003; Nauck, 2001b, 2001a). Moreover, these processes can vary between children of immigrants depending on their migration background. For example, language-related studies tend to focus on Turkish and Moroccan families and not Surinamese or Antillean as, due to the colonial history, they speak Dutch frequently. Lumping all children of immigrants together and comparing them in a one-on-one comparison with Dutch majority families is therefore debatable.

A multitude of research examined the disadvantaged educational positions of children of immigrants in comparison to the majority children, sometimes accounting for socio-economic status, whereas other studies focus on the progress and development of the educational careers (and cohorts) of children of immigrants over time. Both approaches deal with the educational position of children of immigrants, yet the question is a matter of perspective: should the educational position of children of immigrants be held on par with majority children or their (co-ethnic peers) starting position at the age of 4?