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# Passing the torch to a new generation: Educational support types and the second generation in the Netherlands

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## Abstract

This study is based on 86 in-depth interviews with second-generation people of Turkish and Moroccan background in the Netherlands who have achieved upward educational mobility. We used an inductive approach to analyze their perceptions with respect to received parental educational support and the educational support they provided to the younger generation. House's (1981) social support typology was applied combined with a body of literature on immigrant aspirations and educational success of children of immigrants. Despite lacking informational support the interviewees value the received parental support, consisting of emotional and instrumental support. Their higher education, familiarity with the Dutch education system, socialization with the dominant culture, and received parental support influence their giving of support, which mainly consists of informational support.

**Keywords:** Second generation; Parental support; Intergenerational support; Social support theory; Education

## Introduction

As descendants of immigrant workers, the Turkish and Moroccan second generation are among the most disadvantaged minority groups in the Netherlands in terms of educational attainment (Baysu, 2011; Heath, Rethon, and Kilpi, 2008). Scholars often have linked this to parental characteristics, specifically to their migration and low socio-economic background and their low educational level (Baysu and De Valk, 2012; Crul, 2000; Lessard-Phillips and Ross, 2012; Lindo, 2000; Schnell, 2014; Van de Werfhorst and Van Tubergen, 2007). These parents are often unable to assist their children with their homework assignments or to give them guidance concerning educational matters. Growing up in disadvantaged neighborhoods and attending schools in those same neighborhoods where generally the number of children with "educational difficulties" is high, are other unfavorable correlates that have frequently been put forward (Crul, 2000; King, Thomson, Fielding, and Warnes, 2004).

However, we can observe a slow but steady increase in their higher education attendance. Recent studies have shown that over a quarter of the Turkish and Moroccan second generation in the Netherlands are either enrolled in higher education or have already obtained a higher education degree (Crul et al., 2012; Loozen, Valk and

Wobma, 2012). The disadvantaged position of these two largest minorities in the Netherlands, combined with the pioneer position of those of the second generation who are able to achieve higher education against all odds, makes studying those high achievers even more relevant. As the men and women of the second generation reach adulthood, and achieve higher education and occupational statuses, they also become the new nexus of support for young people in their surroundings. The current study aims at answering the following three questions: *what types of parental support played a role during the educational pathways of the higher educated second generation of Turkish and Moroccan background? What types of support do they give to the younger generation within their own social environments (younger relatives, children of friends and acquaintances and neighbors)? And can we observe a link between the support they received and the support they provide?*

While the support the second generation gives to young people is an understudied field, the body of literature on the educational mobility of the second generation addressing the role of parents is rapidly increasing. This is especially due to American scholars, who focus on the high aspirations of immigrant parents and their optimism regarding the future of their children. They generally underline the relevance of the emotional and moral support parents provide their children and the emphasis parents put on education as a means to avoiding the manual labor of the parents (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters and Holdaway, 2008; Louie, 2012; Portes and Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Smith, 2008). Also Dutch scholars have studied the factors behind the growing second generation's progress. Keskiner (2013) found that Turkish immigrant parents with a lower educational background were able to provide their children a financial safety net and support them emotionally until graduation, leading to smooth labor market transitions. Crul (2000) showed that the higher educational levels of relatives could be significant for explaining the educational success of children of low-educated immigrants. However, despite the availability of conceptual frameworks for studying types of social support (Malecki and Demaray, 2003), these scholars do not break support down into specified types. Categorizing different forms of support can provide a deeper understanding of support processes (id.).

In the following study, we make use of 86 in-depth interviews with upwardly educationally mobile second generation of Turkish and Moroccan descent who live in the cities of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. We will combine a conceptual framework developed for studying different types of social support with the body of literature on immigrant and second-generation advantage and immigrant aspirations. Distinguishing different forms of support has enabled us to gain an overview of what types of parental support the second generation received and what types they give to the younger generation.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **Second generation and support**

There is an increasing body of literature discussing the role of immigrant parents and the educational mobility of their children (See Crul and Doomernik, 2003; Keskiner, 2013; Louie, 2012; Meeuwisse, Born and Severiens, 2011; Portes and Fernández-Kelly, 2008). In the Netherlands when guest worker migrants abandoned their return plan to their country of origin and started to become aware of the relevance of educational

credentials for achieving upward social mobility, they adjusted their ambitions for their children accordingly. Young marriages and long school routes made room for making full use of the Dutch opportunity structures, such as educational opportunities (Coenen, 2001; Crul, 2009; Pásztor, 2010). As scholars studying aspirations and optimism of immigrant parents in the US have addressed (See Kao and Tienda, 1995; Louie, 2012; Portes and Fernández Kelly, 2008; Raleigh and Kao, 2010; Smith, 2008), Dutch academics have observed that being supported morally and emotionally by parents has a positive influence on the educational achievements of the second generation of Turkish and Moroccan origin (Crul and Schneider, 2010; Nanhoe, 2012; Pásztor, 2010). According to Zhou et al. (2008) high family educational expectations can have encouraging effects that promote positive academic outcomes. Within the bounded networks among parents and other adults surrounding the children the values, beliefs and expectations regarding the benefit of education are preserved and passed on (Bankston, 2004). The particular norms that are being reinforced by those networks contribute to beneficial outcomes for educational attainment (Coleman, 1990). Shoho (1994)<sup>1</sup> shows how parental educational involvement changes throughout generations. The first generation of Japanese Americans in Hawaii were low educated and had an enduring belief in the benefits of education for their children. They provided emotional support and offered a stable and educationally encouraging environment, which was their most important contribution. Each subsequent generation became more active and more directly involved in their children's education. The second generation's involvement mainly consisted of extracurricular activities, while the third generation – who were more often higher educated – were also academically involved. The study of Shoho (id.) shows many parallels with the outcomes in this paper.

Aside from support offered by parents, a number of studies observe the significance of support from older siblings, extended family members, and other adults for the educational achievements of children of immigrants (Crul, 2000; Crul, 2009; Portes and Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Stanton-Salazar and Spina, 2003). The higher educational level of older siblings and of other relatives is sometimes a better predictor of success for children than the low educational level of their parents (Crul and Doomernik, 2003). However, we have been unable to find studies that focus on the types of support the second generation gives to the younger generation within their social environments.

### **Social support typology**

The majority of studies described above examine overall social support and do not specify types of support. In this paper we attempt to categorize different forms of support. The social support typology developed by House (1981) proved to be relevant given the goal of our study. He distinguishes between four types of support: informational, emotional, appraisal, and instrumental support. Informational support encompasses the provision of advice or information to assist one to solve a problem. Emotional support refers to providing care, trust, empathy, and love. Appraisal support consists of providing information that is significant for self-evaluation. Instrumental support involves concrete assistance by dedicating one's time or one's skills, or by offering money or

other materials (House, 1981; Malecki and Demaray, 2003). Malecki and Demaray (2003) have applied House's support typology to the educational context. In a quantitative study they examined the types of support adolescent students received from different sources. They found that emotional support from parents, such as caring and listening, was perceived as most important.

We have made certain adjustments to House's categorization (1981) to realize a better fit to our findings. As we shall see later parsing out the support our respondents received from their migrant parents and the support they give to the younger generation in their social environment, has allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the support mechanisms and of the relation between these two directions of support.<sup>2</sup>

### **Methodology**

In-depth interviews were held with 86 upwardly educationally mobile children of guest worker migrants living in the two largest Dutch cities, Rotterdam and Amsterdam. All our respondents have a BA or MA degree (or both) and have parents who had attended lower levels of education, or had no formal schooling. The respondents were born in the Netherlands, with one or both parents born in the country of origin, thus they are second generation. Their origins lie in Turkey (N = 44, 23 female and 21 male) or Morocco (N = 42, 21 female and 21 male). They are between 23 and 43 years old and the vast majority grew up in a disadvantaged neighborhood with a population of mainly migrant background.

Our interviewees were selected from the respondents of the Pathways to Success Project (PSP) (Waldring, Crul and Ghorashi, H., 2014), which principally aimed at gaining insight into how children of guest worker migrants, against all odds, are able to achieve success in education and on the labor market. For this project a team of approximately twenty interviewers conducted 114 interviews with descendants of migrants from Turkey and Morocco living in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. The interviews mainly took place at the respondents' homes and work offices. Respondents had to meet at least one of the following criteria for success: having a higher education degree, and working in a job corresponding the obtained educational level; working in a position managing at least five employees; earning a salary exceeding €2000 net monthly. Our definition was aimed at objectifying the concept of success (id.). The interviews took approximately 75 min, and were both voice recorded and transcribed. They were coded using the qualitative data analysis program 'Kwalitan'.

For this study, we analyzed the answers of our 86 respondents concerning questions on the support they received during their educational pathway, and on the support they gave to children within their environment of family, friends and acquaintances. We applied an inductive approach based on an issue-focused analysis (Weiss, 1994). The typology of House (1981) together with research evidence on the educational mobility of the second generation as presented in the theoretical framework were used to analyze our interviewees' experiences, perceptions and emotions concerning received and given support.

### **Findings**

In this section we describe the types of support our respondents perceived to have received from their parents during their educational pathways. We then explain the

educational support they perceived to have given to young people within their social environments. We follow with explaining the link between received and given support.

### **Receiving parental support**

Most interviewees underlined the importance their parents placed on (higher) education, mainly as a means to achieving upward social mobility (See also Coenen, 2001; Louie, 2012; Pásztor, 2010). The different types of support they provide originate from this notion. Generally parental support mainly consisted of emotional support, and to a smaller extent of instrumental support. Informational support was commonly lacking. House's appraisal support (concerns feedback important for self-evaluation) was not observed as a separate kind of support. Our interviewees commonly mention this support type together with or as part of emotional or informational support. The analyses show that parents often made use of their combined migration and working-class life story for giving emotional support. Below, we will describe each type of received support in further detail.

### ***Receiving informational support***

“When we had homework, we couldn't go to my mom or to my dad like: “what does this mean? I don't understand”. We really had to do everything on our own. So I also felt like: “when I have kids, I don't want that...” [...] But real help from my parents concerning what they could do for me...yes, I did receive support [emotional support, SR], but really helping me with homework and things like that, I never had that.” [Verda, woman of Turkish origin]

Informational support includes helping with homework or with preparing for an exam, giving advice on homework planning and study skills and giving advice on important educational decisions. Commonly our interviewees express not having received informational support from their parents. They explain this by relating it to the parents' lack of knowledge of the educational system, their low level of education, and poor Dutch language skills (See also King et al., 2004; Louie, 2012; Nanhoe, 2012). The interviewees emphasize that their parents gave great importance to education but that they could not really grasp what school life entailed. The few cases of support that could be labeled as informational support mostly concern strict rules around doing homework, attending class, or the choice of friends. This is reminiscent of the stern discipline described by Portes and Fernández-Kelly (2008) in “No margin for Error”, where they discuss the role of strong family discipline in the educational pathways of successful children of immigrants in the United States (See also Louie, 2012). Anbar's account illustrates this:

“At the time she was pretty strict, actually. She would always pay attention to whether I did my homework. She would always attend teacher meetings and stuff. But she would also take the initiative, just to phone, like: “how's my daughter doing?”. She would do that a lot, but also, try her best to help me with homework and, ... It was just very important to her. And if, for example, I had a 5 on my school report, she would find that really [...] horrible. Then I really had to make sure that

the period after I would get a good grade. For my mother it was just very important. Yes, and also, just concerning school schedules, my mother always had my schedule. So, go home directly after school, first homework and if you want to go out, then only after you are done. That sort of thing. So, yes, she was actually on top of things." [Anbar, woman of Moroccan origin]

In the Netherlands the most important decisions during an educational career concern choosing an elementary school, choosing a high school, the decision of the secondary education track and choosing the educational direction in higher education.<sup>3</sup> The majority of our interviewees report little assistance from their parents when having to make such decisions. When specifically talking about making their study choices, some of the higher educated second generation explain that their parents had a preference for traditional prestigious professions such as medical doctor, or lawyer (See also Wolff, 2013). According to the respondents what mattered most to the parents was that their children would enter higher education, and that they considered the study choice a decision best left to the children themselves (See also Auerbach, 2006; Louie, 2012). Their parents would explain their attitude by expressing that the children were the ones who eventually would have to work in that type of occupation, thus it would be wise if they would decide themselves what direction they wanted to take. Another explanation why parents do not give advice is that they lack the knowledge due to illiteracy or low educational level, poor Dutch language skills, and little experience with and knowledge of the Dutch education system. Commonly our interviewees demonstrate having a pragmatic attitude towards the lack of informational support from their parents. Although they are very much aware of it, and know or assume that children of middle class native Dutch background can appeal to their parents for help in such matters, they do not express feelings of resentment. They generally express understanding their parents' attitudes, and state that it was not caused by unwillingness but by lacking capabilities (Cf. Louie, 2012).

#### ***Receiving emotional support***

"Look, my mother is actually illiterate, so she couldn't, for example quiz me. But she could tell me that I was really smart, that I was going to pass that test, like: "You can do it! You can do it!" [Basma, woman of Moroccan origin]

Respondents often underline the relevance of the emotional support they received from their parents. Nader (male respondent of Moroccan origin) talks about his parents motivating him, being involved, showing interest in his school performance, and how they always stood by him. Interviewees further explain that their parents would demonstrate confidence in their abilities, and would encourage them to do their best and to persevere when things got tough. Frequently our interviewees speak of the emotional support they received from parents that consisted of family messages emphasizing the hardship of their migration and working-class life story. These three family messages functioned as a significant source for motivating and encouraging their children in their educational pathways. The importance of education for accomplishing social mobility is passed on most explicitly via this way (See also Pásztor, 2010).

“My parents would always say: “we’ll work till we drop. You kids have to go to college! You just go to college!” [Tara, woman of Turkish origin]

This short quote of Tara illustrates how parents passed on the family message of a joint intergenerational mobility project: working together for the social mobility of the children. The parents will work hard and sacrifice themselves and the children should study hard and achieve social mobility. This “immigrant bargain” (Smith, 2008) refers to the expectation that children redeem the sacrifices made by immigrant parents through accomplishing success (See also Louie, 2012). In a similar vein Tepecik (2009), based on her study on educationally successful women of Turkish descent, considers the migration of many Turkish families to Germany as a “family migration project” intended to achieve upward social mobility. When this aim is not realized by the first generation, the project is passed on to the children. Since the parents consider their children a continuation of their own lives (Rivas, 2008), by accomplishing higher education the parents’ migration project can still be considered successful (Tepecik, 2009). As Abad explains, the interviewees can feel obligated to redeem the sacrifices parents have made.

“Look, my father didn’t have a very easy youth, and when you see that that man during his whole life went to school for only one year or so, and still learned to read and write two languages and so on. Yes! Then you do start getting a bit of respect for that. And above all, it’s like: “okay, you know? If they want it, then it’s a small effort to make”.” [Abad, man of Moroccan origin]

Conversely, the difficulties their parents have been through gives the interviewees the confidence that they – given their much more favorable circumstances – will be able to fulfill their parents’ ambitions. As Ikram (woman of Moroccan origin) points out: “for us it’s easier, so why not try your best?”

Our interviewees repeatedly emphasize that their parents would often tell them about their low wages and the low prestige of their work while doing physically very demanding work. They would relate this and their unfavorable labor prospects to their lack of education. In this way parents use themselves as negative role models in order to encourage their children to pursue an educational career, and to not end up like them (See also Pásztor, 2010). This second family message resembles Louie’s (2012:89) “shared *immigrant* working-class cultural model of education that is based on moral and emotional support and that conveys, often in ethnic or folkloric terms, the importance of studying hard and deferring gratification to avoid the parents’ lives of manual labor”. It is also reminiscent of the “motivating fear of failure” described by Portes and Fernández-Kelly (2008) in which migrant parents bestow their children with the advice that education is the only escape from the circumstances of their parents (See also Coenen, 2001; Pásztor, 2010).

“Yes, school was first priority, because my parents had not been given the opportunity to go to higher education. So at home I was always told: “go to college, otherwise you will end up unemployed like your father”. It’s a traditional standpoint, but it is true that for me it was the most important reason actually.” [Ozan, man of Turkish origin]

According to our respondents, their parents frequently compared the educational opportunities that exist in the Netherlands with those in their country of origin in order to make their children realize and appreciate the advantages they have. They tell their children about the accessibility of the higher educational system in the Netherlands, and repeatedly remind them that in the country of origin such opportunities are only given to a small section of society. The parents of our respondents underline that they were never given such opportunities, and encourage their children to seize them, in order to assure better employment prospects. Immigrants have a mentality of optimism that originates from using the country of origin as a frame of comparison for evaluating their lives in the new country. Because of this comparison they are even more hopeful about the upward mobility chances of their children (Kao and Tienda, 1995; Louie, 2006). By using their country of origin as a frame of comparison parents provide the children a “dual frame of reference”, which creates a sense of optimism about their opportunities and prospects and motivates them to accomplish educational success (Kao and Tienda, 1995; Louie, 2006; Zhou, Lee, Vallejo, Tafuya-Estrada and Xiong, 2008).

Our findings on parental emotional support based on life stories are consistent with explanations of immigrant optimism and aspirations that, in spite of their language barrier and unfamiliarity with the education system, they are able to transmit the importance of education (Louie, 2012; Raleigh and Kao, 2010).

#### ***Receiving instrumental support***

Parents would give instrumental support to their children by supporting them financially. Another way was by offering goods and services that create a pro-study environment, in general an environment that promotes the performance of school tasks. A way of helping the children with financial resources is to pay for tutoring classes. Dalila:

“When I was younger I did have problems with subjects like Economics and Mathematics. So my parents made sure I could get tutoring. Everything else didn’t matter, as long as I could get tutoring. Even if we had to live only on bread! I had to get tutoring because I had to get my degree.” [Dalila, woman of Moroccan origin]

Our respondents also explain how their parents would support them financially so they would not have to find a job and thus would have more time for school tasks. This is a striking finding since working in a part-time job is very common among students in the Netherlands and it thus underlines the importance the parents of our respondents give to the educational mobility of their offspring. According to Keskiner (2013) the vast majority of the second generation of Turkish heritage who grew up in a low-income family had to rely on part-time jobs for their financial needs. While our interviewees were enrolled in education the financial situation of most of the parents was precarious. Nevertheless, they commonly prioritized the educational career of their children over other needs.

Parents’ priority of education is also reflected in the accounts of respondents on the efforts parents made to create a pro-study environment. The interviewees would tell us about how their parents would make sure it was quiet and calm at home when their child needed to study, for example by not inviting guests. Some interviewees also talk about how their parents would exempt them of household chores. Kamila’s account demonstrates these efforts well:

“If I came home and I had exams and I said: “I don’t want to hear you for a whole month. I just want to get food, and be left alone”. Because I would always get stressed out during exams, well, then I really wouldn’t see my parents for a whole month. They would leave me alone in the living room, and they wouldn’t watch TV for that matter. And I would hear my mother tell my little brother: “Be quiet! Kamila is studying. Quiet!”. [...] That my clothes were washed,...that I had peace of mind when I was home. And that is the greatest gift my parents could have ever given me. [...] What you learn is: “Hey, I just have got to do this!”. [...] For myself and also a bit for them.” [Kamila, woman of Moroccan origin]

The parents of Kamila tried their best to create the space, time and tranquility their child asked for to be able to dedicate herself to her studies. Talha (man of Turkish origin) summarizes the support he received from his parents as follows: “Good food, always taking good care of me, no problems [...] creating conditions, to study”. The interviewees interpret such efforts – “the small things”, as Kamila calls them - made by their parents as demonstrations of support for their educational progress and of the importance parents give to education. This resembles the finding of Shoho (1994) that first generation parents contribute to their children’s educational pathways by providing them a stable and educationally encouraging environment.

#### **Giving support to the younger generation**

Nearly all our respondents express giving educational support to young people in their direct environment. Almost all of these respondents mention informational support. This is the support type they scarcely received from their parents, but for which they are very well equipped because of their higher education level and their familiarity with the educational system. These characteristics are also put into use when attending teacher meetings of the children (defined in the current study as giving instrumental support), which they mention doing repeatedly. Moreover they regularly speak of providing emotional support. They have taken over certain family messages that their parents had passed on to them and now transmit these in their own particular way to the youth, which has been influenced by their own life experiences.

Generally they seem to consider it self-evident to give support when a young person in their environment needs it. The interviewees are aware that they fulfill a task that the parents are often unable to do, which is a motivation for their actions. Lale explains:

“I would always tell her [a younger friend, SR]: “Some things I had to discover on my own. I had to learn the hard way, and I’m sharing this with you, so you won’t have to make the same mistakes”. And I really felt: “Isn’t it great to have someone like that?!” Because I never had anyone who would tell me: pay attention to that, watch for that. So I’m like: “I will take on that role for her”.” [Lale, woman of Turkish origin]

When analyzing who the young people are that receive support, we observe that they mostly consist of younger siblings, cousins, nephews and nieces. Also children of friends, acquaintances, neighbors or other children in the neighborhood receive support from our respondents. Giving educational support to the younger generation

seems to not be restricted to a certain period in their lives; it generally starts during the second half of high school and continues during higher education and all the way through their working life. They often explain being involved in the educational careers of several children simultaneously. Concerning the frequency of given support, we observe that sometimes it happens on a more regular basis, while other times it is more sporadic. This seems to be related to how busy their schedule is, to the physical distance to the children, to how often they meet in social settings, and to the need for support. Some tell us about intervening at crucial moments, such as when a young person is likely to drop out, or is at risk of being transferred to a lower level.

#### ***Giving informational support***

Our respondents often help young people with homework and with preparing for exams. Darous (man of Moroccan origin) explains that even though he has moved out of his parental house, his brother still contacts him when he needs help. The interviewees also help and advise the younger generation concerning study and planning skills, for which they rely on their own experiences.

“He had an agenda, but he wasn’t using it. He didn’t understand how he was supposed to study and how to do his homework. My nephew is sometimes a little slack. His parents ask me to help him. And I give them advice: ask if he has done his homework, and that he should be sitting in a quiet room. Stuff they don’t realize themselves.” [Dalila, woman of Moroccan origin]

Furthermore the respondents often explain giving advice on important choices in education, such as with tracking decisions or choosing schools or educational directions in higher education. Based on their accounts, their aim is to motivate the young people to make well-informed choices, and to encourage them to think about what their own capabilities and study interests are. They advise them to not choose a certain study just because a friend did, and to neither be pressured by what parents or other adults desire for them, but to focus on what they themselves want. They also express their desire to not influence the young people too much. The respondents talk about explaining to the youth what certain jobs entail, looking for information on the internet together, accompanying them to information meetings in high school, colleges and universities, or introducing them to an acquaintance who works in or studies for the profession the young person is interested in. They make these efforts to prevent the young people from the risk of making unfortunate choices, which could lead into having to change their educational trajectory or even dropping out of education entirely. Kenza expresses a common view:

“I really feel it would be a shame if after three years they’re thinking: “Well, I don’t want this after all”. Because it happens so often that people don’t know what they want and then they just choose something.” [Kenza, woman of Moroccan origin]

The respondents are aware of the existence of such risks, be it through own experience or through the experiences of peers. The difference is that many of the second generation had to learn it the hard way. Having had little informational support influences the support they provide to young people. They try to pass on know-how they

acquired on how things work in schools, on how to make important decisions, they help the young people with their homework, and pay attention to their Dutch language skills. These are forms of assistance they felt they were missing during their own educational careers.

### ***Giving emotional support***

The respondents express showing interest in the school careers of the younger generation, they motivate them to do their best, and encourage them when they are going through difficult times. Lale:

Lale: “My sister-in-law and my brother would say – just when he [the supervisee, SR] was leaving the room, so he could still hear it –: “Oh, he is so smart! He’s going to go to university, just like his aunt”. And then I would react like: “Yes, for sure, he is really smart. He really studies hard!””

Interviewer: “To try to motivate him?”

Lale: “Yes, and it really helped, so to say. He’s now in the last year of VWO [highest level of High School in the Netherlands, SR]. I have twelve nephews and nieces in total, so...But I, I also ask them: “How are things in school? Are there things you’re struggling with?” And I also always look at their school reports. So basically I show interest in their school careers.” [Lale, woman of Turkish origin]

This quote of Lale also illustrates how the interviewees set an example with their own achievements and serve as role models. Lale also gives a peek into the extent of the reach a higher educated child of immigrants can have among the younger generation. As explained earlier the respondents are rarely involved in the educational pathway of solely one young individual.

The family messages that the parents of the second generation transmitted to them, using their own guest worker story, are not applied in the same way by the second generation. However they adopt some of these messages to convey the notion of the relevance of education for obtaining a middle class socio-economic position. An important element that they pass on is their fear of becoming an unskilled worker, which was conveyed to them by their own parents. Seda, being aware of the consequences of dropping out, explains how she and her husband tried to transmit this “motivating fear of failure” (Portes and Fernández-Kelly, 2008) to her nephew to motivate him to stay in school.

“We have a nephew who’s going through puberty. [...] both my husband and I have been very engaged with him. [...] He had to double a year. Well, that can happen, but at one point he had to leave school. That’s a whole different story. Then you try to encourage him, [...]: “You have to persevere! Because you won’t make it without a degree!” So at least he doesn’t completely drop out! Because then [...] they’ll end up with a menial job in some grocery store. That’s a fact! That’s just how things go.” [Seda, woman of Turkish origin]

Seda, echoing sentiments expressed by other respondents, pleads for obtaining an educational degree, being it in higher education or in a lower form of tertiary education. The respondents also put into use the joint intergenerational mobility project,

when talking about the emotional support they gave to younger siblings. In the narratives of the second generation, they are expected to continue the already achieved upward mobility in order to maintain the success of their parents' "family migration project" (Tepecik, 2009).

"Yesterday, he [younger brother, SR] very proudly showed me his school report. He had an average grade of 8, so he's really trying his best. [...] Well, he also has to prove himself to us. After all we're a family with quite a high level of education and he can't stay behind." [Darous, man of Moroccan origin]

In the life story messages they transmit to the younger generation they combine the messages passed on to them by their parents, with their own knowledge of the educational system and their socialization within society. An evident result of this is that they underline the importance of education for obtaining "a decent job, and a good position in society" but at the same time they urge the young people to "do what you enjoy" (Cem, man of Turkish origin). They encourage the children they mentor to principally consider what their own capacities and study interests are when choosing a study or profession.

#### ***Giving instrumental support***

We have defined the instrumental support the respondents give as attending teacher meetings because, following the description of House (1981), this is a form of concrete assistance in which one gives tangible aid.

Respondents who accompany parents to children's teacher meetings, explain that they mainly do so because parents feel more secure when they are accompanied by someone who has a better knowledge of the language and the educational system. Concerning meetings about their siblings or other close relatives, another motivation to attend is that they are interested in different issues than the parents. This is how Oumnia describes this discrepancy:

"Yes, my parents always go to parents-teacher meetings, and I always try to be present. Also because I need to translate a bit, but also often I can go deeper into matters which the teacher wants to discuss, for example if we're talking about his socio-emotional development. [...] They're kind of like: "That will come in time", and I actually believe it's very important. So I ask his teacher how he's exactly developing in that aspect. My father mostly looks at whether he improved his grades, but stuff like his socio-emotional development, that's the kind of stuff I ask about." [Oumnia, woman Moroccan origin]

Since the respondents have attended school in the Netherlands themselves, they are familiar with the children's developmental aspects that schools pay attention to, and their perceptions of issues that are relevant resemble those of the teachers. They also express their critique of parents in dealing with teachers and schools. They find the parents too passive and indulgent concerning the judgments and opinions teachers have of the children. This attitude could be because of their negative experiences with study advice given by teachers and with unfortunate educational choices, as Crul (2000) argued, but it could also have been influenced by their familiarity with the

education system and their socialization with the dominant culture. Their attitude towards teachers and schools is in fact very similar to that of higher educated people of native Dutch origin. Kenza, a pedagogue and a person very familiar with the education field through her work, accompanied her sister to a teacher meeting about her niece. She is very ambivalent towards the plans the school has for her niece and of the way her sister deals with the situation.

“I had a meeting once with the teacher of my niece because they wanted her to go to special education [this would mean a downgrading in her educational level, SR]. But I couldn’t find that in her school report. You can’t just send someone to special education. That’s something you do after an interview with a psychologist, and then you’ve got a long list of conditions you’ve got to meet [...]. And my sister, she’s very much like: “Well, the school knows best. I’ll go along with it”. But I’m not like that. I want to see those files. “What do you base that conclusion on? What’s your argumentation?” Then it turned out that they didn’t have a report. I said: “Well, so how do you want to get that indication?”, because you really do need a Psychological Research to get an indication for special education. “Yes, we were going to do that”. So I tell them: “First do the PR, and then we’ll see”. But they didn’t do that neither, so now she’s still attending regular education. So that was a time that I intervened...but that was more because I felt: “something is wrong here”. So I wanted to pursue it because I felt my niece deserved more than that.” [Kenza, woman of Moroccan origin]

We do not know what would have happened to her niece if Kenza would not have felt the need to intervene. However, this does show how the higher educated second generation is very much capable of advocating for the young people. Compared to the immigrant parents of the respondents it’s a world of difference.

The support the second generation gives to the younger generation has been influenced both by the support they have received from their parents and by the support their parents were unable to provide. It was also influenced by their familiarity with the Dutch education system and with higher education, and by their socialization with the dominant culture. First of all their motivation for giving support, just as their parents’, is their acknowledgement of the relevance of education for socio-economic prospects in society. And like their parents, they give emotional support and also make use of the “motivating fear of failure” and the joint inter-generational family project, passed on to them by their parents. However this is adjusted to their own life experiences, thus creating their own life story messages. They stress the importance of education and at the same time they advocate for following one’s dreams. The support they mainly give is informational support, which is in fact the support type their parents were not able to give them. As is illustrated in quotes of Lale and of Verda, they are aware that they missed out on this relevant support type. Consequently, they had neither parental help with doing homework nor parental guidance with making important educational decisions. Nevertheless, the respondents consider their parents as the most important actors in their educational career and do not express feelings of resentment towards their

parents for the lack of this support type, because they could not have expected more from their parents.

## Conclusion

In this study, we have examined the perceptions of the higher educated second generation with respect to the educational support they received from their guest worker immigrant parents, and to the support they have given to the younger generation. We have interpreted our findings using the support typology of House (1981) as well as notions stemming from research on immigrant aspirations and the educational success of children of immigrants. Below the research questions are answered and reflected on, and some suggestions for future research are given.

Parental support, which mainly consisted of emotional support, was considered by respondents to be highly relevant for their educational achievements. Within the framework of emotional support, immigrant parents make use of their immigrant and working-class life story to motivate their children to achieve social mobility through education. This is in line with the literature discussing the aspirations of immigrant parents and the educational success of their children (Crul and Schneider, 2010; Kasinitz, et al., 2008; Louie, 2012; Nanhoe, 2012; Pásztor, 2010; Portes and Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Raleigh and Kao, 2010; Smith, 2008). They also created an environment that promotes the performance of school tasks and helped their children in financial ways (instrumental support). Providing emotional and instrumental support suggests that they were compensating for their lack of capability to assist their children with homework assignments and important educational decisions (informational support). Future comparative research at the level of educational mobility should examine the types of parental support the second generation received, and the implications of different types of parental support for the second generation's ability to accomplish educational mobility.

Concerning the support the respondents gave, they were almost without exception supporting young people in their educational pursuits. They predominantly provided informational support, which is precisely the support type they missed out on. This implies – and by some respondents it is stated explicitly – their consciousness of the relevance of this support type for educational success. They reach out to the younger generation, because they know from experience how difficult it is to go through education with little to no information. This is one of the ways in which a link between receiving and giving support was found. They also accompanied the parents of the younger generation to parents-teacher meetings (instrumental support). They are familiar with the aspects teachers and schools pay attention to in the development of school children. They criticize the indulging attitude of the young people's parents towards teachers and schools, and are good at advocating for the young people. These practices and attitudes seem to be primarily influenced by their educational experiences. A second finding showing the link between giving and receiving support concerns the application of emotional support. In the emotional support the respondents give they combine messages passed on to them by their parents (the “motivating fear of failure” (Portes and Fernández-Kelly, 2008) and the “family migration project” (Tepecik, 2009) with their life experiences (education and socialization with dominant culture) into their own life story messages. Similar to their parents, they give importance

to higher education, which they believe can grant a better socio-economic position in society. The difference in the messages compared to their parents is their belief that it is not only through traditionally prestigious jobs like lawyer or doctor that one can achieve such positions. They believe the young people should also choose the study they feel affinity for. They know that such jobs can also provide for a decent living. Hence, the messages that are preserved within bounded networks do not stop at the second generation. They continue to be passed on to the next generation, but in an adapted way. These findings shed some light on the slow but steady increase in the higher education attendance of (grand) children of migrants of Turkish and Moroccan heritage. Our results point into the direction that the support of the highly educated 1.5 and second generation could provide an important contribution to that success. Further work needs to investigate more closely the role of their support in the steady improvement of the younger generation's educational pathways.

House (1981) developed his support typology for the work environment. Until now it had not been applied to the educational support of children of migrants but it turned out to be fruitful in this context. Both in receiving and giving support, informational and instrumental support types could be clearly distinguished. However, in this group of respondents, emotional support turned out to be a more complex type compared to the original description. First of all, emotional and appraisal support were often mentioned in conjunction. Secondly, emotional support was often applied using the immigration background in three different ways. Parents transmitted the family message of a joint intergenerational mobility project: parents assist their children in the ways possible to them and the children should bring this project to a success. Parents also used their own living and labor circumstances as negative examples and relate it to their low educational level. This "motivating fear of failure" (Portes and Fernández-Kelly, 2008) and the joint migration project would also be applied by the second generation to motivate the younger generation, however in an adapted way. A third family message we have found is how parents make use of a "dual frame of reference" (Kao and Tienda, 1995), that is comparing the opportunities in the country of origin with the opportunities in the new country to emphasize the benefits of the latter.

Most Dutch studies focus on parents' low educational level and migration and working-class background, and conclude that they lack in assisting with homework and with educational decisions. We contribute to a recently growing strand of studies that focus on how migrant parents do give their children relevant educational support. Immigrant parents making use of the abilities they have, give emotional and instrumental support to their children who consider them to be the most important actors in their educational careers. Compared to their parents the upwardly mobile second generation is much better equipped to provide educational support; they are socialized in the dominant culture, are highly educated, and know the Dutch education system well. Driven by the significance of education for social mobility transmitted to them by their parents, combined with the relevance they give to the capacities and affinities of the young people, they give the support types they can. These primarily consist of informational support, and furthermore of instrumental and emotional support. The future will demonstrate whether we will be able to speak of a third-generation advantage.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Kao and Tienda (1995) find that the second generation fares better than the third generation due to optimism of their immigrant parents. See also Kasinitz et al., 2008.

<sup>2</sup>Categorizing different types of support can provide insight in support processes that might escape a global approach. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that though it is possible to conceptually make distinction between types of support, in practice they are generally related to each other (Cohen and Wills, 1985).

<sup>3</sup>When entering higher education in the Netherlands one has to choose a clear educational direction starting from freshman year, e.g., Law, Psychology, etc. Thus making the right decision at that moment is fundamental since changing direction generally means starting again in the first year. Parental involvement at this stage through informational support (giving advice and helping the student to gather information) can guide one into the right direction.

## Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## Authors' contributions

All four authors contributed to the conception and design of the manuscript. MC designed the questionnaire. SR coordinated the acquisition of data, analyzed and interpreted the data, and drafted the manuscript. All authors revised the manuscript critically for important intellectual content. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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