

# **INVISIBLE VICTIMS?**

Ethnic differences in the risk of juvenile violent delinquency  
of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys

**Esmah Lahlah**



The studies described in this dissertation were performed at the International Victimology Institute, Tilburg Law School, Tilburg University, The Netherlands.

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Prof. Dr. A. J. R. van de Vijver

*Wij hebben de mens op het hart gedrukt betreffende zijn ouders,  
zijn moeder droeg hem in zwakte op zwakte,  
en zijn zogen nam twee jaren in beslag.  
Zeg Mij en uw ouders dank, tot Mij is de terugkeer.  
[ Quran - Soerat Luqman - vers 14 ]*

Voor mijn ouders en Sziza Fatna (*Allah Yarhamha*)



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# Preface





## PREFACE

A mom is standing at the door of her son's bedroom: Completely covered with his Harry Potter blanket, only his brown curly hair peeking out. Her heart filled with love and pride, how sweet and cute he looks. Softly she strokes his hair and she wonders what will become of him. Will he follow his dreams and become a professional skateboarder? Will he be developing computer games, a great hobby of his? Or...a sudden fear is clouding her pleasant thoughts; she knows that the odds are against him. Moroccan-Dutch boys don't do well in Dutch society. The image of Moroccan-Dutch boys is far from bright and one in four has a police record. What can she do to prevent this from happening?

This PhD dissertation tries to explain the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in juvenile violent offending by looking at ethnic differences in the risk for juvenile violent delinquency among Moroccan-Dutch and Dutch adolescent boys. This project was funded by Province of North-Brabant and by Avans University for applied Sciences. I am grateful to the Province of North-Brabant and to the board of Avans, in particular Frans van Kalmthout, for the funding provided and making this project possible.

My scientific journey and the realization of this book could not have been finished without the help and support of many people. I am happy to acknowledge those who contributed to the completion of this work, although I know I cannot do them all justice. First and foremost I owe my sincere gratitude to the former dean of the Faculty of Social Studies, Ine van Zon, who planted the little seed of a possible PhD research in one of the first talks we had with each other. These talks led to concrete steps and finally a research proposal. Together with lector Sietske Dijkstra, she convinced the board of Avans of financing this project. What a teamwork they displayed at the farewell reception of Ria Wijnen. Thanks to you both. I am also thankful to my colleagues at the Faculty of Social Studies, who continued showing their interest in my dissertation and informing me about the ins and outs of daily work at Avans. One I would like to thank in particular. Mariëlle, thank you for our weekly gym exercises, the many nice mini breaks, but most importantly your friendship. I am happy you agreed to be my paranymph.

I am indebted to my supervisors Stefan Bogaerts and Leontien van der Knaap whom, without hesitation, stepped in and took over the task of supervision in my final years. Stefan, although you joined my project at a later stage, I benefited a lot from your broad expertise and critical comments. Leontien, thank you for your help, encouragements and confidence. I would like to express my thanks to Marc Groenhuijsen, the director of the institute, for his passion for the institute and for the issues of Victimology. I would also like to thank Rianne Letschert for her inspiration and her insightful lectures and discussions. Rianne, I appreciate your accessibility and the endless energy and time you give to research in general and your staff in particular. My thanks go also to all the other members of Intervict for their invaluable discussions during the several stages of my research in particular all PhD students, those

who finished and the ones who still yet have to complete their dissertations, for sharing their experiences with me and for the cheerful work environment. Among them are Suus, Felix, Hannah, Anneke, Ruby, Pinar, Fanny, Lorena, Malini, Karlijn, Annemarie, Mark and Alphonse. Thanks are also due to the department secretaries, Karen van den Hout and Anneke Overbosch who were always there for help. Special thanks go to my roommate and friend Kim Lens, with whom I shared the ups and downs of conducting research. It was and still is a pleasure to work together, discussing ideas and methodological issues, attending the conference in South-Africa and many courses together. Our fruitful discussions on the reproduction system of larva's ended most of the times in 'more thinking' and great laughs ;). Kim, the combination of sharing so many things, being roommates for years and our many common interests led to a close friendship. With you as my paronymph, I am sure nothing can go wrong.

In conducting the fieldwork, I received the assistance of many. My special thanks go to all the boys, teachers, schools and the probation officers' teams both in Breda and Tilburg for their cooperation and help. I gratefully acknowledge the group of research assistants who helped in collecting the data. I particularly mention Bahadir Bahtiyar, Maartje Couwenberg, Janne van Doorn, and Fayrouz ElMohamadi.

I am also very grateful to the manuscript committee: Maja Deković, Sietske Dijkstra, David Finkelhor, Stefaan Pleysier and Fons van de Vijver. I, myself, have read and learned from publications of these experts in the past four years. It is an honor to have each member take the time to read and comment on my own work.

To my family and friends I would like to say thank you for your patience and understanding when I was often too busy to visit you in the last couple of years. I promise I will do better the coming years. I owe a tremendous debt to my parents. Dear mom and dad, I will be eternally grateful for everything you have done for me. Thank you! My dear Çziza Fatna (*Allah Yarhamha*), if I close my eyes, I imagine you sitting here at my defense on the front row, arms crossed, with a proud look in your face. I still miss you. My sisters Mika and Mariëm, thank you so much for all your encouragements, your faith in me and always there if I needed someone to listen. Ilyes en Noor, lieve smurfen, wat hebben jullie veel te verduren gehad. Eerst papa promoveren en daarna mama. Misschien wel fysiek aanwezig maar zeker niet altijd mentaal. Lieve Ilyes en Noor, mijn stoere jongen en lieve meid, wat ben ik trots op jullie! Eindelijk is het zover: mijn werk is af. Vanaf nu heb ik meer tijd om leuke dingen met jullie te doen: gezellig samen kletsen, al jullie vragen zo goed als ik kan beantwoorden, samen spelletjes doen, naar het bos gaan, boekjes lezen, knutselen, sommen maken, fietsen, nageltjes lakken en natuurlijk skaten. Ga je me die nollie varial heelflip nog leren 😊. Ik verheug me erop!

Last and most importantly, a final word of thanks to my dear Mohammadi. I cannot express how grateful I am to you. Without your help and feedback, this process would be so much more painful and lonely. Since we met, we are running from one project to another: First you graduating, then me graduating. In between we were blessed with our son Ilyes. Then you started your PhD, soon afterwards I started as well. Then we got blessed with our daughter Noor. You finishing your PhD and now me. Shall we stop running now? I am so lucky to have you in my life and am looking forward to all the peaceful years ahead.

I love you ♥

Esmah Lahlah  
Tilburg, July 2013



# Chapter 1

## General Introduction







## INTRODUCTION

There is a concern among scientists, policy makers, and educators about the plight of young Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys: Moroccan-Dutch boys have the highest crime rates compared to boys from other ethnic groups in the Netherlands and are about four times more often charged with violent offenses as would be expected from their estimated proportion of the population (Broekhuizen & Driessen, 2006). The public and the police perceive them as extremely confrontational and aggressive and gradually Moroccan-Dutch boys are becoming a symbol for hardcore criminals.

Why do Moroccan-Dutch boys commit more acts of juvenile offending than native Dutch boys or boys from other minority groups? To a certain extent, there is reason to believe that historical and social circumstances might contribute to the criminal involvement of Moroccan-Dutch boys. In the 1960s and 1970s, Moroccans arrived primarily from the Berber region as guest workers (Laghzaoui, 2009). Initially, Moroccans were not invited to stay and for a long time they themselves thought they would eventually return to Morocco. This is believed to have an important impact upon their relatively difficult integration into Dutch society: They did not emphasize on learning Dutch and did not invest in creating local networks (Laghzaoui, 2011). However, in time many of them wanted to reunite with their spouses and children and stay in the Netherlands. These children, most of whom were born in Morocco and brought to the Netherlands at a young age, experienced a pronounced generational gap from their parents in terms of knowledge, language, culture and their family relationships suffered due to the initial years of complete (geographical) separation from their fathers. In the 1980s, as a consequence of the economic hardships of the oil recession and the industrial restructuring (Cruel & Heering, 2008; Laghzaoui 2011), many of these first 'guest workers' lost their jobs and stayed outside the Dutch labor market, among others due to low levels of education. To date, Moroccan-Dutch families still live in low SES neighborhoods, with a high immigrant density (Boom et al., 2010; CBS, 2012). However, other minority groups, like Turkish-Dutch boys, who grow up in similar socio-economic circumstances, seem to get into fewer problems with law enforcement (De Jong, 2007). Their criminal behavior is not considered as noticeable as that of Moroccan-Dutch boys. The divergent levels of onset and participation in crime by these various ethnic groups suggest that there might be specific contextual factors that correlate with the special nature of the involvement of Moroccan-Dutch boys in crime (Blokland, Grimbergen, Bernasco, & Nieuwbeerta, 2010). A focus restricted to ethnic origin only however, might obscure substantive causal relationships between the life circumstances of migrant youth and developmental outcomes (Windzio & Baier, 2009).

The question remains what may be the most crucial factors determining the violent behavior of Moroccan-Dutch boys. Previous research has been helpful in explaining the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys. The dominant research tradition in the

study of the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile offending has depended mostly on structural approaches. Structural approaches explore relationships between (social) conditions and levels of juvenile crime in a given situation or place. These approaches suggest that harsh economic, political, and social conditions that a population faces account for the disparate rates of criminality (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould, Weinberg, & Mustard, 2002; Pratt, 2001). Cultural perspectives, on the other hand, assert that value systems for minority groups are qualitatively different from those of natives (Berry, 1997). Youth who are involved in two cultures can experience problems when these two cultures have partly different value systems and/or prescribe different behavior in particular situations (Berry, 2005; Junger & Polder, 1991). Meeting the normative demands of two different cultures may involve conflict and stress and subsequent dysfunctional behavior such as delinquency (see Agnew, 1992; Bovenkerk, 1994; Gabbidon & Greene, 2005; Stevens, Vollebergh, Pels, & Crijnen, 2005).

### **Violent Victimization**

To date, much theoretical attention has been devoted to the fact that compared with adults juveniles show high rates of both violent offending and violent victimization (Shaffer & Ruback, 2002). This pattern suggests that some youth are both perpetrators and victims of violence. Indeed, a number of victimization studies show that delinquency is strongly correlated with the risk of victimization (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1991; Finkelhor & Asdigian, 1996; Lauritsen, Sampson & Laub, 1991; Shaffer & Ruback, 2002). What is often implied by this line of research is that delinquency is victimogenic, that is, delinquency is a precursor to victimization. However, victimization can also be seen as a precursor to certain forms of offending, especially those of a violent and interpersonal nature. The dominant research tradition in the study of potentially criminogenic consequences of victimization are studies of the 'cycle of violence', a notion attributable to Widom (1989a & 1989b), who observed that child abuse and neglect increased the odds of future offending and adult criminality overall by 29 percent. Studies in this line of research focus on the intergenerational transmission of violent behavior in general, and on the impact of abuse and neglect in childhood on the risk of violence in adolescence and adulthood in particular (Apel & Burrow, 2010; Ferrari, 2002).

Although social and cultural approaches appear to be important in explaining ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending, neither approach has given much thought to familial abuse in explaining ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending. Widom's concept of the cycle of violence, central focus of this dissertation, is used to examine whether the overrepresentation in juvenile violent offending of Moroccan-Dutch boys is associated with past victimization in the home. Research has shown ethnic differences in the rates of child abuse exposure (Connelly & Straus, 1992; Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamsby, 2005; Vaughtner, Jelley, Ferrari, & Bernstein, 1997) and has identified several risk factors for child

abuse that are prominent among ethnic minority families or are commonly associated with an ethnic minority status (Ferrari, 2002). Surprisingly, only few studies have comprehensively examined the extent to which the relationship between ethnicity and violent offending is mediated by exposure to child abuse (Perez, 2001). This lack of insight in familial abuse and violent offending among ethnic minorities in general and Moroccan-Dutch in particular represents an important gap in our understanding of violent offending and might hinder prevention efforts (English, Widom, & Brandford, 2002).

## **THE PRESENT DISSERTATION**

Juvenile delinquency is often considered to be a predictor of the general crime level of a society. The adolescent years are formative, and might determine the criminal involvement of young people as they develop into adults (Bratt, 2004). It is therefore important to address juvenile delinquency through effective approaches.

The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to explain the prevalence and incidence of violent behavior of Moroccan-Dutch boys in the Netherlands and to shed a light on interethnic differences in the risk of juvenile violent offending by comparing Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, and (2) to provide additional insight into the underlying nature of the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys among juvenile offenders by examining empirical evidence for possible feedback from victimization to criminal offending.

While many efforts to reduce violence among migrant youth in general and Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular are under way, the current challenge is to identify intervention programs that are built on a clear understanding of the risk factors and etiology of juvenile violent delinquency. The field will need to continuously examine the meaning of the differential risk ratios across ethnic groups. Once these factors are identified, research and prevention specialists can then assess which are the most amenable to intervention.

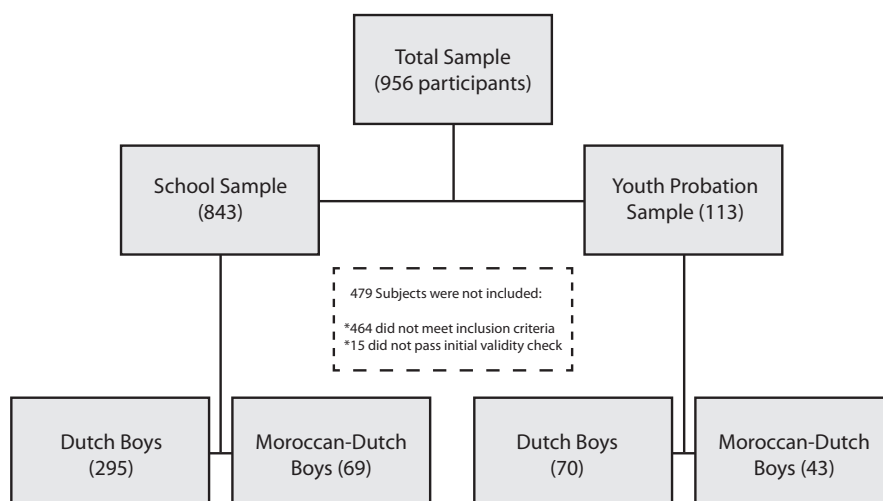
### **Setting of the present study**

To gain insight into the ethnic-specific risk factors that contribute to violent offending of Moroccan-Dutch boys in the Netherlands, Moroccan-Dutch and Dutch adolescent boys were studied. Participants of the study were recruited from five schools (school sample) and two youth probation services (youth probation sample) in three major cities and two rural districts in the Netherlands. The intention of the school sample was to survey all ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade pupils of five participating high schools (aged 15 to 18 years) via paper-and-pencil interviews during a one hour lesson, while a research staff member was present. Boys in the youth probation sample were recruited through the collaboration of two regionally operating youth probation organizations by having staff inform eligible clients about this study. Clients who indicated interest in participating were contacted by a

research staff member to schedule an appointment either at their school or at a time and place convenient to them. A research staff member was present while the boys completed the questionnaire on their own. We would like to emphasize that the latter boys were not in custody nor sentenced to prison. They were all school-going youth who lived with (one or both of) their parents.

An information letter describing the study was sent to the parents who could indicate if they did not wish their child to participate (passive consent). Participants were informed that the information provided in the questionnaire would remain confidential and that they were free not to participate in the research. Participants were included in our study 1) if they had sufficient reading ability to complete self-report measures, (2) if they were aged between 15 and 18 years old, (3) if they were male, and (4) if they designated themselves as Dutch or Moroccan-Dutch. Data that are reported in this dissertation were collected between January 2011 and September 2011.

Because no information on the background characteristics of the non-participants was available, possible non-response bias could not be estimated.



**Figure 1.1** Flowchart of study participants

### Overview of the present dissertation

The present chapter has provided a general introduction of the current study. The objective of Chapter 2 is twofold. Apart from a brief introduction of the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile (violent) offending, this chapter provides the reader with a literature review of prior research of explanations of the overrepresentation of ethnic minority youth among juvenile offenders and presents the conceptual framework and theoretical model

of the current study. In Chapter 3 our theory-driven hypothetical model that combines structural, cultural and individual risk factors to predict juvenile violent offending, is tested. By integrating structural, cultural, and individual considerations into one model, both the independent effects as well as the interplay between different sets of factors are assessed.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the results of three in-depth empirical studies. Chapter 4 examines ethnic differences in the effect of perceived parenting on juvenile violent offending and seeks to expand our knowledge of the relationship between ethnicity, perceived parenting and violent offending. In particular, it aims to explore whether Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys report different levels of perceived parenting measured as a multidimensional construct, while testing the unique contributions for each parent. Little research has been done on the effect of perceived parenting on juvenile delinquency for children with a non-western minority background. In addition, most studies focus on only one aspect of parenting resulting in limited information regarding the relative importance of various parenting aspects in the etiology of juvenile delinquency. Lastly, almost all work in this area has focused solely on maternal variables or combined maternal and paternal variables in a general categorization without considering the contribution of each parent separately. Chapter 5 considers the extent to which ethnic differences in exposure to child abuse between Moroccan-Dutch and native Dutch boys exist, and if they do, whether they are related to differences in levels of violent offending between these groups. Only few studies have comprehensively examined the extent to which the relationship between ethnicity and violent offending is mediated by child abuse exposure, and to our knowledge there are no Dutch studies that investigate the exposure to child abuse by ethnicity. This lack of insight in child abuse and violent delinquency among ethnic minorities represents an important (scientific) gap in our understanding of violent offending and hinders prevention efforts. In Chapter 6 the association of gender role orientations to juvenile violent offending is examined. Since a significant overrepresentation of violent offenders is found only for certain ethnic groups and only for boys, it might be assumed that there is an ethnic specific cultural factor that is associated to violent behavior in general and male violent offending in particular. Despite the notion that culturally accepted norms of violence, in many studies conceptualized as masculinity norms, may mediate ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending, prior research has not tested this assumption directly.

Chapter 7 finally, offers a summary of the findings of all studies. On the basis of these results, general conclusions are drawn and possible implications with respect to policy and practice are discussed. In addition the findings and the limitations of the current study will be considered in a broader perspective to conclude with suggestions and recommendations for future research on the development of juvenile violent offending of ethnic minority boys.

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# Chapter 2

## **The Trouble with Moroccan-Dutch Boys. Reflections on ethnicity and juvenile (violent) delinquency: A literature review**

Esmah Lahlah, Kim M. E. Lens, Leontien M. van der Knaap and Stefan Bogaerts



*(Under Review)*

## **ABSTRACT**

Although there is agreement about the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the juvenile justice system, researchers have not yet reached agreement about the validity of several competing explanations for this disparity. This article reviews the literature by exploring evidence and theories that have emerged to explain ethnic differences in juvenile offending. A comprehensive literature search was conducted within a 20-year framework (1992-2012). This yielded a vast literature that can be classified into three categories: structural, cultural, and individual perspectives. A new framework is introduced which allows to examine the interplay between different approaches and as such, explores some of the ways structural, cultural, and individual factors influence and combine to influence the involvement of ethnic minorities in juvenile delinquency.

## INTRODUCTION

In most European countries, ethnic minority boys with a non-Western background are disproportionately present among juvenile offenders, such as Turks in Germany, Algerians in France and Moroccans in Belgium (Esterle-Hedibel, 2001; Gostomski, 2003; Put & Walgrave, 2006). In the Netherlands, non-Western minority boys are overrepresented in the juvenile crime statistics as well (Borghans & Ter Weel, 2003; De Jong, 2007; Jennissen, 2009; Van der Laan & Blom, 2011). This is particularly true for Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys who are disproportionately represented among juvenile offenders (Veen, Stevens, Doreleijers, & Vollebergh, 2011). They are about four times more often charged with a criminal offense as would be expected from their estimated proportion of the population (Broekhuizen & Driessen, 2006) and there has been increasing concern among the police and the general public about the seriousness of the criminal involvement of Moroccan-Dutch boys (Van der Laan & Blom, 2011).

Why boys with an ethnic minority background in general and Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular commit more acts of juvenile delinquency than native boys is an important research and societal question. Some researchers argue that there are no substantial differences in the overall rates of native and ethnic minority juvenile crime when controlling for social economic factors (Gabbidon & Green, 2005) and ethnicity is believed to play only a small part, if any, in accounting for ethnic differences in juvenile crime (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). Others have accepted the apparent differences as real and have grappled with explanations for them.

Previous research has been helpful in explaining the overrepresentation of ethnic minority youth and many different, particularly social factors such as socioeconomic status, poor education, unemployment and social marginalization have been associated with the overrepresentation of minority youth in juvenile delinquency. However, notwithstanding the explanatory contribution of these social factors in minority crime, an important part of this overrepresentation remains unexplained. Important questions arise in connection with ethnicity and juvenile delinquency; Even more so because a comparison of crime rates among members of various ethnic groups of similar socio-economic status reveals that their rates of involvement in crime still differ (Blokland, Grimbergen, Bernasco, & Nieuwbeerta, 2010; Jennissen, 2009).

### The present study

In this study, a review of the literature is conducted to explore empirical evidence and theories that have emerged to document and explain ethnic differences in the rate of adolescent involvement in juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, this study tries to explore whether ethnic differences in risk factors for juvenile delinquency exist, and if so, whether

different theories to explain juvenile delinquency among different ethnic groups should be developed. Additionally, the present study proposes a relatively comprehensive theory-driven hypothetical model of ethnic differences in juvenile delinquency by integrating different perspectives into one unified model. Research has made few attempts to integrate different perspectives and to test competing theories simultaneously. As a result it is almost impossible to know which theoretical explanations are more powerful. The objective of this study is to achieve better understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency, and in particular Moroccan-Dutch boys and juvenile delinquency.

## **METHODS**

### **Literature Search**

The search for relevant studies to include in our literature review was performed using search term combinations including ethnicity related terms (ethnic\*, cultur\*, \*migrat\*, acculturat\*, identi\*, Moroccan\*), youth delinquency related terms (youth\*, juven\*, adolescen\*, antisocial\*, viol\*, delinquen\*, crim\*), and terms relating to the type of studies we were looking for (theor\*, caus\*, explan\*, empiric\*). Combinations of above search terms were entered in a variety of databases (Tilburg University Catalogue, JSTOR, Netherlands Central Catalogue, Online Contents book chapters and journal articles, PsychArticles, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsychInfo, PubMed, SAGE Journals Online, Science Directs, Springer Link, Web of Science, Wiley InterScience) and internet search engines (Google / Google Scholar ). Furthermore, manual searches were performed in which reference lists of reviews and other articles were checked in order to find relevant studies not found in the electronic databases. We performed our literature search from July 13, 2012 to August 24, 2012.

### **Selection of the Studies**

Four selection criteria were used to select studies: 1) ethnicity as a correlate, 2) juvenile delinquency as an outcome measure, which was defined as antisocial or illegal behavior by youths, 3) investigations on European samples only (given similarities in migration history), and 4) only literature published within a 20-year framework, unless of particular importance, was included in this review.

Our literature search resulted in a total number of 111 studies that seemed relevant for our literature review on the basis of their title. After reading the abstracts, the number of possibly relevant studies was further reduced to 39 studies. Of these studies we obtained and read the full article. Twenty studies were excluded after closer reading. Of these, three studies were excluded due to the fact that no information was given on the ethnic composition of the sample, four studies were excluded because juvenile delinquency was

not considered as an outcome measure and finally thirteen studies were excluded because they were not based on European samples. This resulted finally in a total number of 19 studies that met the above inclusion criteria (Table 1).

### **Summarizing and scoring theories and causes of crime**

The 19 studies that were included in the review were summarized according to a fixed format in which information about the sample of the study, research design, data, analysis plan and the results of the study in terms of key factors explaining the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency was documented. Two studies were summarized by both the first and second author, to reach agreement on what we considered relevant information, and how and at what point this information should be documented. All following studies were summarized by the first author. After completion, they were read by the second author in order to see if there was any ambiguity that had to be clarified.

## **RESULTS**

### **Description of the selected studies**

The current literature review is based on 19 studies that try to explain ethnic differences in juvenile offending. Although some studies show similarities on the key factors juvenile delinquency and ethnicity, differences can be identified as well, for instance in the nature of the sample or operationalization of key constructs such as juvenile delinquency and ethnicity. Because these differences might in part account for differences in the results across studies, we included them in the overview of reviewed studies (see Table 1) and describe them in more detail below.

#### *Nature of the sample and source of information*

By far, most of the studies (13) used a school survey in which juveniles were questioned (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008, 2007; Bratt, 2004; Deković, Wissink, & Meijer, 2004; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Gostomski, 2003; Junger-Tas, Ribeaud, & Crijff, 2004; Oberwittler, 2007; Pfeiffer, Wetzels, & Enzmann, 1999; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen, 2008; Titzmann, Raabe, & Silbereisen, 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009). Five studies used a random representative sample of juveniles in a particular neighborhood (Junger & Marshall, 1997; Junger & Polder, 1992; Stevens, Vollebergh, Pels, & Crijnen, 2007a, 2007b; Veen, Stevens, Doreleijers, Deković, Pels, & Vollebergh, 2011). One study was based on an official sample of identified offenders (Jennissen, Blom, & Oosterwaal, 2009).

To measure juvenile delinquency, three different sources were used in the studies included in our literature review. The vast majority of studies retrieved their information directly from the juveniles through self-report questionnaires (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008, 2007;

Bratt, 2004; Deković et al., 2004; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Gostomski, 2003; Junger & Marshall, 1997; Junger & Polder, 1992; Junger-Tas et al., 2004; Oberwittler, 2007; Pfeiffer et al., 1999; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen, 2008; Titzmann et al., 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009). One study used both self-reports as well as parent reports (Stevens et al., 2007b). Two studies used parent reports only, as their source of information (Stevens et al., 2007a; Veen et al., 2011) and one study used recorded crime statistics (Jennissen et al., 2009).

### *Definition and measurement of juvenile delinquency*

An important difference between the examined studies was the operationalization of juvenile delinquency. The way in which juvenile delinquency was defined differs strongly across the 19 studies. First, a difference can be identified in the variety of behaviors that have been categorized as juvenile delinquency. Most studies include any involvement in illegal behavior (Deković et al., 2004; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Junger & Marshall, 1997; Junger & Polder, 1992; Junger-Tas et al., 2004; Oberwittler, 2007; Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen, 2008; Titzmann et al., 2008; Veen et al., 2011; Windzio & Baier, 2009). Other studies include only violent behaviors such as causing serious bodily harm (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008, 2007; Gostomski, 2003; Pfeiffer et al., 1999; Rabold & Baier, 2008) or a tendency to be involved in fighting (Bratt, 2004). Two studies used validated clinical instruments to assess delinquent behavior (Child Behavior Check List) (Stevens et al., 2007a, 2007b). One study used recorded crime statistics to make a distinction in delinquent behaviors (Jennissen et al., 2009). Secondly, delinquent behavior is operationalized differently in terms of the number of items measuring delinquent acts, ranging from 1 item up to 30 items. These differences seem to be of particular importance when considering the prevalence of juvenile delinquency. A third dimension on which the operationalization of juvenile delinquency differed across studies is whether delinquency was conceptualized by a dichotomous (i.e. any committed crime) or continuous (i.e. number of incidences in last year) variable. However, most studies defined their outcome variable as both any committed crime as well as number of incidences.

### *Definition and measurement of ethnicity*

The construction of ethnicity or ethnic belonging varied in each of the studies as well. In most cases, ethnicity was measured through the respondent's or (one of) the parent's nationality (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Rabold & Baier, 2008), or through the respondent's or (one of) the parent's country of birth if at least one parent was born abroad (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2007; Jennissen et al., 2009; Junger & Marshall, 1997; Junger-Tas et al., 2004; Stevens et al., 2007a, 2007b; Veen et al., 2011). Some of these studies even used both definitions in the course of which some groups were defined by their nationality and other groups

defined by their country of birth in the same study (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Gostomski, 2003; Pfeiffer et al., 1999; Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen, 2008; Titzmann et al., 2008). Additionally, while many of the aforementioned studies defined ‘immigrants’ as having at least one parent born abroad, one study defined children as natives when at least one parent was born in the host country and only defined children as immigrants when both parents were born abroad (Oberwittler, 2007). Two studies made use of self-identification of ethnicity (Bratt, 2004; Deković et al., 2004). In one study, respondents were considered as native when at least one parent was born in that particular host country (Windzio & Baier, 2009). Furthermore, one study did not explicitly mention how ethnicity was operationalized (Junger & Polder, 1992).

### *Statistical Analyses*

All studies included in our review, were cross-sectional. Additionally, all studies included in our review conducted multivariate analyses. There is important additional information gained from multivariate analyses (Field, 2009). Multivariate analyses report on the effect of a particular variable on the outcome while controlling for the effects of other variables in the model (Field, 2009). Additionally, multivariate analyses have the power to detect whether groups differ along a combination of variables (Field, 2009). (Logistic) regression analyses were the most frequently used techniques among the 19 studies, followed by Structural Equation Modeling.

### **Explanations of the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency**

When synthesizing the evidence on the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile offending, a classification into three general categories emerges: structural, cultural and individual approaches.

#### *Structural approaches*

Structural approaches explore relationships between social conditions and levels of (violent) crime in a given situation or place. According to these perspectives, crime is not rooted in the characteristics of individuals, but rather in the social and structural characteristics of societies and neighborhoods (Windzio & Baier, 2009). The environments children inhabit and confront on a daily basis exert their own influences on (violent) delinquent behavior. Poverty (in Western societies) is positively correlated with delinquency and in most countries ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented among the nation’s poor (e.g., Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009). However, the relationship between poverty and delinquency is complex.

**Table 1.** Overview of included studies

Study	Nature of the sample	Source of information	Definition and measurement of delinquent behavior (dependent variable)	Definition and measurement of ethnicity	Factors explaining the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency (independent variables)	Statistical analyses	Outcome
Baier & Pfeiffer (2008)	School survey conducted in 2005 in both large cities and districts	Self-report	Covered by asking students whether and if yes how often they had committed bodily harm, a robbery, an extortion or held someone at gunpoint in the last twelve months	Defined by indication of their parent's nationality by birth. If both parents had different nationalities, the mother's nationality was chosen unless she was German, than the non-German nationality was chosen.	Migration status; Family (family structure, SES, acceptance of violence, everyday confrontation with violence, lack of supervision); School (type, commitment); Peers (networks)	Multivariate analyses and Structural Equation Modeling	Three central factors help explain ethnic differences in crime: Educational level, violence legitimizing norms of masculinity and parental violence
Baier & Pfeiffer (2007)	A national representative school survey of different cities in Germany of different ethnic origin	Self-report	Covered by four items representing violent behavior by asking: "Did you ever..." followed by "How often in this last year?"	Defined by the country of birth of the subject's parents	Gender; Age; School level; SES; Parental violence; Alcohol use, Delinquent friends; Gender attitudes; Self-control	Multivariate analyses	Results show that Turkish boys have more risk factors associated with violent behavior, such as a greater exposure to parental violence and more traditional masculinity norms in combination with low self-control
Bratt (2004)	A school survey conducted in 1999 in Norway	Self-report	Covered by the tendency to be involved in fighting (5 items) (how often in the past twelve months)	Defined by respondents who self reported their ethnicity	Out-of-home routine activities; Alcohol consumption; use of illegal drugs	Structural Equation Modelling	Results showed that routine activities have merits as far as to investigation of general tendencies in delinquency, but it should not replace investigations of subcultural differences
Deković, Wissink, & Meijer (2004)	School survey. Only those who identified themselves as Dutch, Moroccan, Turkish or Surinamese were included	Self-report	Covered through a 14-item scale which include a range of relatively minor acts, as well as more serious deviance	Defined by self-identification of the youngster to the ethnic group best describes you?"	Deviant peers; Parent-adolescent relationship (three aspects: positive quality; negative quality; and adolescent disclosure)	Multivariate ANOVAs and Structural Equation Modelling (LISREL)	Results show few ethnic differences in the mean level of all assessed constructs; adolescents from different ethnic groups show similar levels of delinquent behavior, are to a similar degree satisfied with their relationship with their parents, disclose as much information, and do not differ in their involvement with deviant peers



**Table 1.** Overview of included studies

Study	Nature of the sample	Source of information	Definition and measurement of delinquent behavior (dependent variable)	Definition and measurement of ethnicity	Factors explaining the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency (independent variables)	Statistical analyses	Outcome
Enzmann & Wetzels (2003)	A multiethnic study on victimization and delinquency in four major cities and one rural district in Germany	Self-report	Covered by 12 specific criminal acts. The measure had two response formats: lifetime prevalence and frequency of having committed the respective act during the past twelve months	Defined by the nationality of the subject or his parents, or defined by country of birth of the subject or his parents	SES; Victimization by parental corporal punishment; Violence legitimizing norms of masculinity; Attitudes against violence	Multivariate analyses, (Hierarchical) Regression analyses	Social circumstances of ethnic minority boys are particularly low and these variables are linked to violent offending independent of ethnic origin. Multivariate analyses show that lower educational level, families affected by parental unemployment and who experience child abuse are important risk factors but only partially explain ethnic differences. Ethnic differences disappear when is controlled for culture of honor
Gostomski (2003)	Random sample of a school survey (IKG-Jugendpanel 2001) of which analyses are performed on German, Turkish, and Russian immigrants	Self-report	Covered by one question asking if the boy has beaten up someone in the last twelve months	Defined by the nationality of the subject or his parents, or defined by country of birth of the subject or his parents	Educational level; Employment father; Employment mother; Experiences of discrimination; Faith in honest treatment; Harsh and inconsistent parenting; Vindictive strategy style; Peer network	Logistic regression analyses	Results show that the prevalence of violent behavior is significantly higher for Turkish boys. This overrepresentation is partly explained by the social-structural dimension of integration: they report more often discrimination experiences
Jennissen, Blom, & Oosterwaal (2009)	Data from the Safety monitor (SSB, CBS and HKS)	Recorded crime statistics	Covered by being suspects in recorded crime statistics	Defined by country of birth, or parent's country of birth if at least one parent was born abroad	Age; Gender; Family structure; SES (monthly income and being on welfare)	Multivariate analyses (logistic regression analyses)	Results show that even after correcting for a number of socioeconomic background variables, the probability of being suspected of an offense is still considerably greater for non-western ethnic minority groups

**Table 1.** Overview of included studies

Study	Nature of the sample	Source of information	Definition and measurement of delinquent behavior (dependent variable)	Definition and measurement of ethnicity	Factors explaining the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency (independent variables)	Statistical analyses	Outcome
Junger & Marshall (1997)	A ethnic heterogeneous sample of 788 Surinamese, Moroccan, Turkish and Dutch boys	Self-report	Defined as involvement in illegal behavior (16 items) as well as involvement in other forms of deviant behavior (4 items) by asking: "Did you ever... ", followed by "Did you do this last year?"	Defined as those groups representing the targets of the official Dutch minority policy (country of birth or parent's country of birth)	Beliefs; Bond to family; Bond to school; Leisure time; Control variables: SES; employment status of mother; age; number of years of residence in the Netherlands; Family structure; Urbanization level of place of residence in country of origin; Urbanization level of place of residence in the Netherlands; Delinquent friends	Multiple regression analysis (Ordinary Least Squares)	The high degree of comparability in the amount of explained variance when using the four sets of social bonding indexes separately as well as together to predict self-reported delinquency. All predictor variables were significant with the exception of the importance for school for Moroccans
Junger & Polder (1992)	Representative sample of Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese and native Dutch boys	Self-report as well as data on recorded contacts with the judicial system	Covered by those acts which can be brought to court by the public prosecutor (16 items). In addition information on recorded delinquency (ever and last year) came from police stations	No indication is given on how ethnicity is operationalized	Family relationships; Functioning at schools; Leisure time activities; Delinquency of peers; values towards delinquency; Traditionalism; Problems related to immigration	PCA was used to form relatively homogenous groups of variables that correspond with one element of the bond to society. Both self-reported delinquency and arrest data are used as dependent variables	Results indicate that the causes of criminality among ethnic minority boys may essentially be the same as those among natives
Junger-Tas, Ribeaud, & Crujeff (2004)	School survey of which 60% belonging to an ethnic minority group	Self-report	Covered through 30 delinquent acts as well as some 'problem behavior' by asking: "Did you ever... ", followed by "Did you do this last year?"	Defined by country of birth, or parent's country of birth if at least one parent was born abroad	Gender; Age of onset; Age of onset; Family structure; Parental supervision; School level; School achievement; Peers relationships; Number of friends; Adverse life-events	Series of logistic regression models	Results indicate that the causes of criminality among ethnic minority children may essentially be the same as those among natives with some small exceptions found

Table 1. Overview of included studies

Study	Nature of the sample	Source of information	Definition and measurement of delinquent behavior (dependent variable)	Definition and measurement of ethnicity	Factors explaining the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency (independent variables)	Statistical analyses	Outcome
Oberwittler (2007)	Sample of a school survey in two large cities in Germany	Self-report	Covered by 14 items describing punishable offenses and truancy by asking whether and if so how often...	Defined by asking for the parents' country of origin. If both parents were born abroad, the adolescent was defined as having an immigrant background; if one parent was born in Germany, the adolescent was defined as native	Relative deprivation; External locus of control	Multilevel analyses	Results stress the importance of peer groups and agency in shaping the influence of neighborhoods on individual attitudes and behavior but only for native German. Social segregation in general seems to be more salient than ethnic segregation
Pfeiffer, Wetzel, & Enzmann (1999)	National representative sample of a heterogeneous ethnic group of German, Russian, Turkish, Joegasiavian, and SouthEuropean boys	Self-report	C covered by one question asking if the boy has beaten up someone in the last twelve months	Defined by the nationality of the subject or his parents, or defined by country of birth of the subject or his parents	Family Violence (direct victims of physical violence and witnessing physical violence between parents); Subjective norms of parents against violence; Subjective norms of peers against violence	SEM analyses	Results show that exposure to child abuse (both as direct as well as indirect) has a significant influence on attitudes towards violence and the actual use of violence and explain a significant part of overrepresentation of ethnic minority boys
Rabold & Baier (2008)	A large school survey conducted in Hanover in 2006. Only adolescents who had a close-knit friendship network were included in the analyses. The sample	Self-report	Covered by one item measuring serious bodily harm offenses by asking have you ever...if yes how often in de late twelve months	Defined by their parent's nationality at the time of birth. If both parents had different nationalities, the mother's nationality was chosen unless she was German, than the non-German nationality was chosen.	Friendship network composition; Acceptance/denial of violent norms; Violence disapproval in friendship network; Parental violence; Social Status; Social immigrant concentration (poverty an immigrant concentration)	Multilevel binary logistic regression and multilevel linear regression analysis	Findings indicate that there are significant differences in the network composition across the ethnic groups. After controlling for these network characteristics, ethnic differences in violent offending disappear. In addition, the results show that friendship network's ethnic composition depend on community characteristics as well

**Table 1.** Overview of included studies

Study	Nature of the sample	Source of information	Definition and measurement of delinquent behavior (dependent variable)	Definition and measurement of ethnicity	Factors explaining the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency (independent variables)	Statistical analyses	Outcome
Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen (2008)	First measurement wave of a longitudinal panel (ISCAUF on DDB) Representative school survey of German, Former Soviet Union, first generation (foreign born) and second generation immigrants	Self-report	Covered by a list of 19 different criminal acts of various severity during the last twelve months	Defined by the nationality of the subject or his parents, or defined by country of birth of the subject or his parents	Family relationships (monitoring, family cohesion, parental violence); Peer relationships (clique membership, victimized by peers; delinquent friends); Adolescent value orientations; School problems; Depressive mood Control variables: age, father's occupational attainment, college bound track	ANCOVA with age as covariate, Intercorrelations, MANCOVA, SEM, and Stepwise multiple regression.	SEM analyses showed no differences in the prediction of delinquency between groups. Applying stepwise regression show that most of the culture-related variance in delinquency by the same set of predictors with delinquent beliefs and parental violence being the most powerful markers for the differences between groups
Stevens, Vollenbergh, Peis, & Crijnen (2007a)	Random study of a larger sample for which children, aged 4-18, with at least one parent born in Morocco were selected	Parents-report	Covered by the sum of scores of the subscale delinquent and aggressive syndroms of the CBCL (past 6 months)	Defined by at least one parent born in Morocco	Gender; Age; Parental affection; Parental discipline; Parental monitoring; Socioeconomic Status; Dutch psychological acculturation	Univariate ANOVAs, intercorrelations & hierarchical linear regression	High levels of affection and monitoring were associated with low levels of delinquency and high levels of discipline associated with high levels of delinquency, similar as with native Dutch children
Stevens, Vollenbergh, Peis, & Crijnen (2007b)	Random study of a larger sample for which children, aged 4-18, with at least one parent born in Morocco were selected. Data obtained from interviews with adolescents and interviews with their parents	Self-report and parents-report	Covered by the sum of scores of the subscale delinquent and aggressive syndroms of the CBCL (past 6 months)	Defined by at least one parent born in Morocco	Gender; Sense of belonging to Dutch and Moroccan culture; Parent-adolescent conflict	Oneway ANOVA, regression analyses and meditational analyses of Baron and Kenny	For Moroccan boys no effect of acculturation on problem behavior was found

**Table 1.** Overview of included studies

Study	Nature of the sample	Source of information	Definition and measurement of delinquent behavior (dependent variable)	Definition and measurement of ethnicity	Factors explaining the relationship between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency (independent variables)	Statistical analyses	Outcome
Titzman, Raabe, & Silberstein (2008)	The sample comprised male ethnic German adolescents from the former Soviet Union and male native German adolescents	Self-report	Covered by 11 items of minor delinquency by asking how often they were involved during the last twelve months	Defined by the nationality of the subject or his parents, or defined by country of birth of the subject or his parents	Peer-orientated leisure activities; Parental education and financial situation of the family; Parental knowledge whereabouts; Parental violence; School bonding; Delinquent peers	Structural Equation Modelling (AMOS)	Results suggest that certain risk factors, such as parental violence and involvement with delinquent peers, are more strongly related to delinquency among newcomer immigrants than among experienced immigrants and native adolescents
Veen, Stevens, Doreleijers, Deković, Pels, & Vollebregt (2011)	Dutch and Moroccan mothers of incarcerated boys and Dutch and Moroccan mothers of non-incarcerated boys	Mother-report	Identified through the incarceration of adolescent boys	For mothers with incarcerated boys ethnicity is defined by country of birth, or parent's country of birth; for mothers of non-incarcerated boys ethnic group is defined by at least one parent born abroad	Mother-son relationship (affection, discipline and monitoring); Parent-adolescent conflicts (issues outside home and in-home issues); Educational level	Latent Class Analyses	Compared to the native Dutch adolescents, Moroccans (both in the incarcerated and non-incarcerated population) more often showed a neglectful mother-son relationship type
Windzio & Baier (2009)	CRLS School survey in 2005, of which data was stratified according to the different types of schools. Afterwards a random sample of classes was drawn of students from a German, Russian, Eastern European, Turkish, Yugoslavian, Southern European, and Arabic decent	Self-report	Covered by one item measuring serious bodily harm offenses by asking have you ever....if yes how often in de late twelve months	Defined as German if either mother or father was born in Germany. If both parents were not native German, information on parental ethnic origin has been used, with a priority for background of the mother in case of different ethnic origins of parents	Parental child-rearing behavior; Norms of masculine behavior; Self-Control; Normative Pressure; Types of school	Multivariate analyses	The results indicate that violent peer networks and low self-control are more relevant for the explanation of juvenile violence that culture of honor. Moreover these risk factors are also a consequence of the spatial concentration of immigrants in large German cities

Although research shows higher rates of juvenile delinquency in urban areas where poverty is most prevalent (Oberwittler, 2007; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009), crime and violence have more to do with the dimensions of poverty than with poverty status per se (Oberwittler, 2007). That is to say, poverty is the result of a variety of different factors and influences and therefore can be experienced in many different dimensions. Children, like adults, experience poverty not solely through a lack of goods and resources, but also through the interplay of social, cultural, and political factors such as stigmatization and insecurity. In turn the latter experiences may lead to crime and violence (Gostomski, 2003, Oberwittler, 2007). Similarly, economically poor neighborhoods differ from affluent neighborhoods in a number of ways (Oberwittler, 2007). Apart from the fact that these areas are characterized by high concentrations of ethnic minorities and crowded housing conditions (Windzio & Baier, 2009), according to social disorganizations theories, economically poor neighborhoods also tend to be characterized by disorganization or a lack of neighborhood cohesion (Oberwittler, 2007; Windzio & Baier, 2009). These neighborhoods maintain such a high level of poverty that critical social institutions, such as the school and the family, breakdown, resulting in social disorganization which reduces the ability to control behavior, which in return leads to high crime rates (Oberwittler, 2007). Factors such as high levels of transiency make it difficult for individuals to establish common values and norms and to develop informal support networks (Junger & Mashall, 1997). As a result, ethnic minorities living in such neighborhoods often experience a sense of social isolation and exhibit lower levels of community commitment. Social control theories emphasize that delinquency occurs when the forces that bind people to society are weakened or broken (Junger & Marshall, 1997). Ethnic minority youth growing up in impoverished conditions have few positive role models to offset the negative influences in the environment (Junger & Marshall, 1997). Over the long term, children growing up in these communities are at higher risk of abandoning educational goals, and are more likely to adopt risky lifestyles and behaviors that increase the likelihood of violent victimization and perpetration (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008). Additionally, as ethnic minority groups often live in communities with a high immigrant density (for example Rabold & Baier, 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009) and stay within their ethnic communities, where risk factors in co-ethnic networks are more prevalent (Windzio & Baier, 2009), studies have examined the influence of peer groups in explaining ethnic differences in juvenile (violent) crime (Deković et al., 2004; Oberwittler, 2007; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Titzmann et al., 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009). However studies have shown mixed results. While Rabold and Baier (2008) have shown significant differences in the network composition of German, Turkish, Russian and Polish boys and have shown that after controlling for these network characteristics, ethnic differences in juvenile crime disappeared, Oberwittler (2007) emphasized the importance for peer groups on individual attitudes and behaviors, but only for native German children and not for immigrant children.

Social segregation seemed to be more salient than ethnic segregation (Oberwittler, 2007). Titzmann and colleagues (2008) found that involvement with delinquent peers was more strongly related to delinquency for newcomer immigrants rather than among experienced immigrants and natives, while Deković and colleagues (2004) did not find ethnic differences in involvement with deviant peers.

Strain theories suggest that relative deprivation or a socially imposed general strain can contribute to aggressive behavior among some adolescents (e.g., Gostomski, 2003; Oberwittler, 2007). Research shows that for ethnic minorities disadvantages at the level of labor market (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Gostomski, 2003) and individual and institutional discriminatory practices (Gostomski, 2003) restrict access to economic, political and social resources (Oberwittler, 2007; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009). These disadvantages trap a substantial part of ethnic minority groups in areas characterized by high levels of unemployment (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Gostomski, 2003), low educational attainment (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003), inadequate housing, family disruption and delinquency (Stevens, Vollebergh, Pels, & Crijnen, 2007a). Limited structural opportunities might create a discrepancy between a desired social status and resources to obtain this status (Veen, Stevens, Doreleijers, Deković, Pels, & Vollebergh, 2011). This discrepancy, in turn, is thought to be associated with higher crime rates. Indeed, for ethnic minority youth, economic adversity, prejudice and (social) exclusion may result in feelings of frustration concerning discrepancy between the dreams they pursue and the goals they are able to achieve (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Gostomski, 2003; Oberwittler, 2007; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009). This frustration in turn leads to unconventional ways to achieve their dreams and goals (i.e., criminal involvement).

However, although structural factors do help explain ethnic differences in juvenile offending and most studies do consider the effects of social and economic inequality, studies have also shown that when members of various ethnic groups of comparable socioeconomic status are compared, their rates of involvement in crime still differ (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Jennissen, Blom, & Oosterwaal, 2009). Ethnic minorities aren't a homogeneous group: They arrived with differences in levels of educational or occupational training. These differences at the time of migration might be transferred to their children and in turn, may be linked to different opportunity structures and levels of crime. To the extent that these variations across and within ethnic minority groups translate into different outcomes, it follows that structural factors cannot solely explain why some ethnic minority groups are overrepresented in crime while others are not.

### *Cultural approaches*

Cultural approaches focus on the existence and maintenance of specific standards and assert that value systems for minority groups might be qualitatively different from those

of natives (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Junger & Polder, 1992; Stevens, Vollenbergh, Pels, & Crijnen, 2007b). Youth balancing between two cultures can experience conflicts when these two cultures have (partly) different value systems and/or prescribe different behavior in particular situations (Junger & Polder, 1992). Meeting the normative demands of two different cultures may involve conflict and stress and subsequent dysfunctional behavior such as delinquency (see Jennissen et al., 2009; Stevens et al., 2007a). These statements are illustrative for the cultural dissonance approach (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Jennissen et al., 2009; Junger & Polder, 1992; Stevens et al., 2007b). Additionally, conflicts between parents and their children might emerge as a result of disagreement over adherence to the old culture's values and norms, which often contradict the values dominant in the new culture (Baier and Pfeiffer, 2008).

Another, yet related approach would be to see violence among ethnic minority boys with a non-Western background as associated with a culture of honor, which is characteristic of some ethnic groups. The culture of honor places a unique emphasis on upholding and defending the reputation of oneself and one's family and the use of violence for the purpose of protection becomes culturally permissible and, to a certain degree, a necessity (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). Since a significant overrepresentation of violent offenders is found only for certain ethnic groups and only for boys (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; 2007; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003), it might be assumed that an ethnic specific cultural factor is associated with male violent offending in particular (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; 2007; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Pfeiffer et al., 1999; Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen, 2008). Scholars have found these cultural orientations to be often related to sex-role characteristics and behaviors influenced by family, friends, media and community which lead to certain behaviors for boys and girls specifically (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Rabold & Baier, 2010). From this perspective, violence is not rooted in anger but might represent one's authority and masculine identity. It might appear to be requisite for maintaining one's reputation as well as one's personal sense of masculinity (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). Research has found that cultural orientations are correlated with high self-reported violent offending in males (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Pfeiffer et al., 1999; Rabold & Baier, 2010; Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen, 2008).

However, it is important to note that cultural orientations may not be uniformly distributed among different ethnic groups (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2007; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). To the extent that these cultural variations across ethnic minority groups exist, it follows that culture and migration as such may not have an uniform impact on juvenile delinquency and therefore cannot solely account for the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in juvenile crime.



### *Individual-oriented approaches*

One of the dominant research traditions in the study of juvenile delinquency has depended mostly on individual-oriented explanations. This theoretical approach tends to see ethnic differences in juvenile delinquency as largely indistinguishable from individual-level explanations. The period of adolescence is a time of heightened risk-taking behavior and a critical period where competence and intrinsic self-esteem building are crucial to youth (Bratt, 2004). Juveniles begin to distance themselves from parental authority, try on new identities in order to establish an individual identity and self-worth (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2007; Windzio & Baier, 2009). To enhance their own sense of self-esteem and level of confidence, many adolescent boys act out and impulsively use violence or fighting as a vehicle for enhancing their self-esteem (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2007; Windzio & Baier, 2009). This might be particularly true for ethnic minority youth, as studies have shown that ethnic minority youth might experience more identity difficulties and social disconfirmation than natives, which places them under additional personal psychological strain (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Jennissen et al., 2009; Junger & Polder, 1992).

Furthermore, this review shows that family risk factors, particularly those associated with parental behavior and the family environment, are important to our understanding of why some ethnic groups are at greater risk for violence. In this review, family factors were categorized into factors that pertain to 1) emotional bonding or attachment between parents and their children, 2) parenting practices such as discipline, monitoring and supervision, and 3) overall family functioning for example communication, cohesion and family conflict. Studies have shown that weak emotional parental bonds are associated with ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending (for example Veen et al., 2011). Compared to native Dutch boys, Moroccan-Dutch boys more often reported a neglectful mother-son relationship as a result of which it could be hypothesized that Moroccan-Dutch boys who more often lacked emotional support and experienced neglect, had an increased risk to display violent behavior (Veen et al., 2011). Additionally, parenting practices such as poor monitoring and poor supervision are positively associated with violent and criminal behavior as well (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2007; 2008; Bratt, 2004; Stevens et al., 2007b). However, while studies have shown ethnic differences in parenting practices (Veen et al., 2011) and these differences in parenting are related to juvenile delinquency (Titzmann et al., 2008), studies have also shown similarities in parenting practices between ethnic groups (Stevens et al., 2007a) and similarities in the degree different ethnic groups are satisfied with their relationship with and disclose as much information to their parents (Deković et al., 2004; Junger & Polder, 1992; Junger-Tas et al., 2004) indicating that parenting practices may be similarly related to juvenile delinquency for both native and non-native boys.

Several studies have focused on ethnic differences in family functioning, particularly factors related to family cohesion and family conflict, such as harsh discipline, child abuse, partner violence and a family sphere of conflict or hostility (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Pfeiffer et al., 1999; Schmitt-Rodermund, & Silbereisen, 2008; Titzmann et al., 2008). Each of these factors has been empirically studied with regard to its contribution to the development and display of aggression and violent delinquency, particularly in explaining ethnic differences in juvenile offending. Several studies have shown that some ethnic minority groups report higher levels of family violence, such as greater exposure to parental violence (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; 2007; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Pfeiffer et al., 1999; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen, 2008; Titzmann et al., 2008). In turn, this frequent confrontation with parental violence might even lead to violence legitimizing norms. Parenting styles are not independent of parents' values, which they pass on to their children. Parental violence in turn is closely linked to violence legitimizing norm of masculinity (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008, 2007; Pfeiffer et al., 1999).

As some studies have found only few ethnic differences in their assessed constructs, including delinquent behavior (Deković, Wissink, & Meijer, 2004; Junger & Polder, 1992; Junger-Tas, Ribeaud, & Cruijff, 2004; Schmitt-Rodermund, & Silbereisen, 2008; Stevens et al., 2007b), indicating that the causes of criminality among ethnic minority boys may essentially be the same as those among natives, individual-level explanations are unlikely to solely improve our understanding of ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending.

## DISCUSSION

Juvenile offending among adolescent boys with a minority background is reported to be a significant problem in several countries, including the Netherlands. Adding to the extant literature, the current study conducted a literature review to explore empirical evidence and theories that have emerged to document and explain ethnic differences in the rate of adolescent involvement in juvenile delinquency. The empirical support offered by the relevant research literature on ethnicity and juvenile crime raises questions as to which theory accurately describes the impact of ethnicity on juvenile delinquency and which perspective offers the best understanding of criminal behavior of ethnic minority boys in general and Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular.

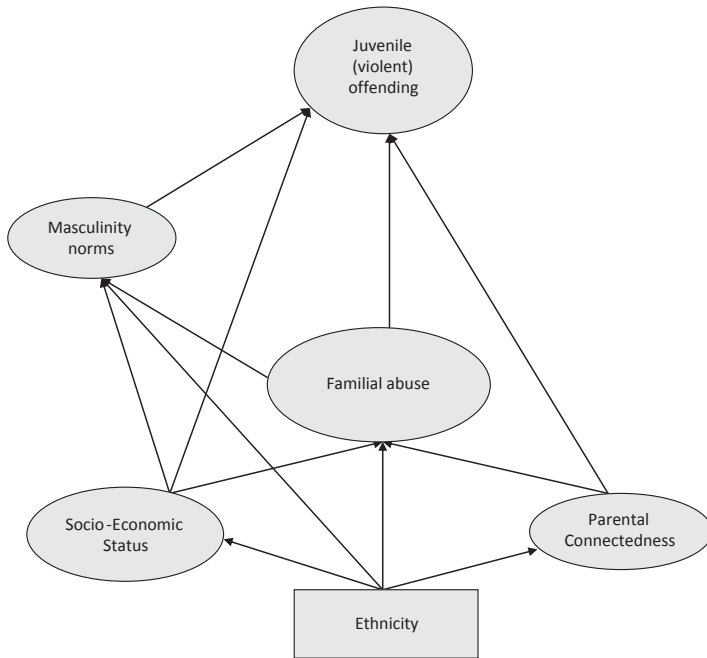
Concluding this literature review, it can be stated that each perspective possesses its own strengths and weaknesses. Each perspective aims at different objectives and specific interests. However, instead of trying to determine which perspective offers the most extensive understanding of delinquent involvement of ethnic minority boys in general and Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys in particular, we should address the question differently: Which main explanatory concepts can be retained from each theoretical perspective?

Juvenile delinquency is too complex a problem to single out any perspective. According to the studies and theories described above, it seems that ethnicity or rather an ethnic minority status is related to involvement in juvenile offending due to differences among ethnic groups in structural, cultural, and individual aspects. First, sociological theories suggest that relative deprivation or a socially imposed general strain can contribute to (violent) delinquent behavior among some adolescents (Agnew, 1992; Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould, Weinberg, & Mustard, 2002; Pratt, 2001). The social deprivation arising from greater exposure to poverty and lower school education of ethnic minorities in general (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Rabold & Baier, 2008; Windzio & Baier, 2009) and Moroccan-Dutch families in particular are well documented (Boom, Weltevrede, Wensveen, San, & Hermus, 2010; CBS, 2012). Moroccan-Dutch parents are more often unemployed or are social welfare recipients and they often leave school with the lowest educational degree. Second, cultural explanations focus on the existence and maintenance of specific cultural orientations (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Junger & Polder, 1992) and assert that value systems for minority groups might be qualitatively different from those of natives (Berry, 1997). For Moroccans, the worlds of men and women are relatively separate, and are mainly to be found in the public domain and the privacy of the home respectively. Although this strict gender division has changed over the past few decades due to education and as more women are entering the labor market (Pels & De Haan, 2007), the ideology of motherhood and the central role of women in the upbringing of children is still strongly adhered to, not in the least in order to maintain the male's traditional position of patriarch (Pels & De Haan, 2007). Traditional paths for this type of validation often involve enforcement of typical masculine roles. Additionally, by adolescence, Moroccan-Dutch boys have become aware of their poor material conditions through observation or first-hand experience (De Jong, 2007). Accordingly, the obstruction of indicators signifying their disadvantages can harmfully affect their psychological well-being. Within this approach, risk-taking might be an attempt to prove masculinity (McCord, 1995; Messerschmidt, 1993). Finally, most individual-oriented explanations focus on the importance of family functioning (Stouthamer-Loeber, Wei, Homisch, & Loeber, 2002), even more than the influence of peer groups. The latter providing mixed results in explaining ethnic differences in juvenile crime. Family risk factors, particularly those associated with parental behavior and the family environment, are key to understanding why some youth are at greater risk of violence. This might be particularly true for parental violence. Child abuse and domestic violence seem to be more prevalent among some ethnic minority groups (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Pfeiffer et al., 1999; Schmitt-Rodermund, & Silbereisen, 2008; Titzman et al., 2008). If minority adolescents experience more violence at home than native youth, they may be at higher risk of learning to see violence as an appropriate way of dealing with conflicts. Additionally, parenting styles are not independent of parents' values, which they pass on to their children, and parental violence is, in turn,

closely linked to norms violence legitimizing violence (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Pfeiffer et al., 1999). However, whether child abuse is more or less common among Moroccan-Dutch boys compared to native Dutch boys is unknown. To our knowledge there are no Dutch studies that investigate the exposure to child abuse by ethnicity.

Considering all the above, can the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in juvenile delinquency in general and of Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular be viewed as a typical pathway that is built on simple ethnic differences in structural, cultural and individual factors? Although, the results might suggest such a conclusion, most studies lack the possible interplay between different sets of factors and as such the possible combination of influences on juvenile delinquency. As opposed to examining them as separate approaches, it should be explored how these systems mutually construct and influence one another into one unified theoretical framework. Several risk factors for juvenile delinquency that have been identified in the extant literature are prominent among ethnic minority families and commonly associated with an ethnic minority status. Furthermore, research has shown that structural factors, such as low family income, are risk factors for both familial abuse (e.g. Fagan, 2005) and masculinity norms (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). In addition, researchers have argued that beliefs about masculinity are often enforced through gender role socialization processes what leads to supposed behavior for boys to possess. It can be argued that family violence might strengthen this socialization process, as research has shown that in most cases perpetrators of domestic violence are male. Lastly, research has shown that a strong emotional bond between parent and child is known as a protector, buffering adolescents from the many challenges and risks they face. Likewise, one might argue that weak emotional bonds between parent and child might increase the risk for familial abuse (see Figure 1).

The introduced integrative model should allow us to assess not only the independent effects of the main concepts of the relation between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency, but should also allow us to examine the interplay between different sets of concepts and as such, explore some of the ways individual, structural and cultural factors influence and combine to influence the relation between ethnicity and juvenile delinquency. Up till now, research has not taken into account the possible intersecting effects of different perspectives into theory and methods, provided that research can, for example, separate the effects of ethnicity and socio-economic status from one another. Given the large 'ethnic' disparity in juvenile delinquency, this lack of knowledge is surprising. Prevention and intervention programs that target risk factors will not be equally effective for native and ethnic minority boys if these influences are not similarly related to juvenile delinquency. Likewise, only if the ethnic specific risk factors of juvenile offending are known can ethnic-specific prevention strategies be developed.



**Figure 1.** Integrative theoretical model explaining ethnic differences in juvenile offending.

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# Chapter 3

**When Love Hurts.**

**Assessing the intersectionality of ethnicity, socio-economic status, parental connectedness, child abuse and gender attitudes in juvenile violent delinquency**

Esmah Lahlah, Kim M. E. Lens, Stefan Bogaerts and Leontien M. van der Knaap



*Child Abuse & Neglect*  
(in press)

## **ABSTRACT**

Researchers have not yet reached agreement about the validity of several competing explanations that seek to explain ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending. Ethnicity cannot solely explain why boys with an ethnic minority background commit more (violent) crimes. By assessing the intersectionality of structural, cultural and individual considerations, both the independent effects as well as the interplay between different factors can be examined. This study shows that aforementioned factors cumulatively play a role in severe violent offending, with parental connectedness and child abuse having the strongest associations. However, since most variables interact and ethnicity is associated with those specific factors, a conclusion to be drawn is that ethnicity may be relevant as an additional variable predicting severe violent offending although indirectly.

## INTRODUCTION

Ethnic differences in juvenile violent crime have been repeatedly observed in different countries across the world. For instance, in the United States, official crime statistics (e.g., Engen, Steen, & Bridges, 2002; McCarter, 2009; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Stahl, Finnegan, & Kang, 2007) as well as surveys on juvenile violent delinquency (e.g., Flores, 2002; Pope & Snyder, 2003) show that the rates of involvement in serious violence are much higher for blacks than for whites. In most European countries, ethnic minority boys with a non-Western background are overrepresented among juvenile offenders, such as Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, and Moroccans in Belgium (Esterle-Hedibel, 2001; Gostomski, 2003; Put & Walgrave, 2006). This overrepresentation of ethnic minority boys among juvenile offenders can also be found in the Netherlands. Research on reported and unreported crime shows that, compared to native Dutch adolescents, non-native Dutch youngsters are more likely to commit criminal acts, especially violent offenses (De Jong, 2007; Jennissen, Blom, & Oosterwaal, 2009; Komen, 2002; Van der Laan & Blom, 2011). This is particularly true for Moroccan-Dutch boys, who are disproportionately represented among juvenile offenders (Lahlah, Lens, Van der Knaap, & Bogaerts, 2013; Veen, Stevens, Doreleijers, & Vollebergh, 2011). In fact, the proportion of criminal offenses committed by Moroccan-Dutch boys is nearly four times the proportion of this group in the total population (Broekhuizen & Driessen, 2006). These ethnic differences in juvenile violent crime remain constant in temporal, regional, and gender-specific terms (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2007). Therefore, the academic and public debate has been concentrating on causes of ethnic differences in juvenile violent crime.

### Theoretical framework

Attempts to explain ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending can be classified into three general categories (for a review see Lahlah et al., 2013). First, sociological theories suggest that relative deprivation or a socially imposed general strain can contribute to violent behavior among some adolescents (Agnew, 1992; Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould, Weinberg, & Mustard, 2002; Pratt, 2001). Structural approaches explore relationships between social conditions and levels of juvenile crime in a given place or situation and suggest that harsh economic, political, and social conditions facing a population account for the disparate rates of criminality (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould et al., 2002; Pratt, 2001). The social disadvantages arising from greater exposure to poverty and lower school education of ethnic minorities in general and Moroccan-Dutch families in particular is well documented (Boom, Weltevrede, Wensveen, San, & Hermus, 2010; CBS, 2012). Second, cultural explanations focus on the existence and maintenance of specific orientations (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008) and assert that value systems for minority groups might be qualitatively different from those of natives (Berry, 1997). Youth who are involved in two cultures can experience

problems when these two cultures have partly different value systems and/or prescribe different behavior in particular situations (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2005). A different, yet related approach would be to see violence among ethnic minority youths as associated with a *culture of honor*, an important characteristic of some ethnic minority groups with a non-Western background. The culture of honor, which is said to be a strong motivation of violence (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996), may not be uniformly distributed among different ethnic groups. Lahlah, Van der Knaap, Bogaerts and Lens (2013a) provide evidence that Moroccan-Dutch boys hold more conventional gender attitudes in comparison with their Dutch peers and show that after controlling for these norms in multivariate models, Moroccan-Dutch boys do not turn out to be more violent than Dutch boys. Third, individual-oriented psychological explanations focus on the importance of family functioning (Stouthamer-Loeber, Wei, Homisch, & Loeber, 2002). It is likely that family functioning could help explain violence offending among ethnic minority youth. Family risk factors, particularly those associated with parental behavior and the family environment are key to understanding why some youth are at greater risk of violence. Studies have convincingly shown that youth who are safely attached to and subjected to sufficient monitoring by their parents are less likely to be involved in delinquency (Palmer & Hollin, 2001; Reid, Patterson, & Snyder, 2002), whereas parental rejection has been shown to be positively related to juvenile violent offending (Bogaerts, Vanheule, & Desmet, 2006; Hoeve et al., 2008; Low & Stocker, 2005; Vazsonyi & Pickering, 2003). Lahlah, Van der Knaap, Bogaerts and Lens (2013b) have shown ethnic differences in the degree to which Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys perceive their parents' upbringing, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting lower levels of parental emotional warmth in comparison with their Dutch peers. In addition, Lahlah et al. (2013b) have shown the significance of parental warmth in self-reported violent delinquency, supporting a vast body of research that identifies the importance of this variable (Davalos, Chavez, & Guardiola, 2005; Eichelsheim et al., 2010). However, some of the key family functioning factors believed to be associated with violent offending include child abuse, partner violence and a family sphere of conflict or hostility (e.g., Fagan, Van Horn, Hawkins, & Arthur, 2007; Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 2002; Swanson et al., 2003; Widom, 1989a, 1989b). Child abuse and domestic violence seem to be more prevalent among some ethnic groups (Alink et al., 2011; Finkelhor, Turner, Omrod, & Hamby, 2005), albeit research is mixed whether ethnicity alone can count for these disparities, or whether other factors may play more explanatory roles (Dettlaff et al., 2011; Ferrari, 2002). If minority adolescents experience violence at home, they may learn to see violence as an appropriate way of dealing with conflicts. Lahlah, Van der Knaap & Bogaerts (2013) show that Moroccan-Dutch boys are much more frequently victim of parental violence than Dutch boys are. This frequent confrontation with parental violence might result in more frequent imitation too (Widom, 1989).

In sum, although there is considerable agreement about the statistical fact of minority overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system, researchers have not yet reached agreement about the validity of several competing explanations for that disparity. Ethnicity cannot solely explain why boys commit violent crimes, and neither can structural, cultural, or individual factors. Studies have been undertaken as if the effects of ethnicity, structural, cultural, or individual explanations can be separated and examined independently. As a result, most studies lack the possible interplay between different sets of factors and as such the possible combination of influences on juvenile violent delinquency, or include ethnicity as a control variable only (Lahlah et al., 2013). As opposed to examining them as separate systems, *intersectionality* explores how these systems mutually construct one another. 'Intersectionality' originally refers to the interaction between gender, race/ethnicity, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power (McCall, 2005). While the theory began as an exploration of the oppression of women within society (Crenshaw, 1989), current research incorporating intersectionality strives to apply it to many different intersections of group membership as certain ideas and practices emerge repeatedly across multiple systems of oppression and serve as mediators for these intersecting systems (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992; Andrew, Russo, Sommer, & Yaeger, 1992).

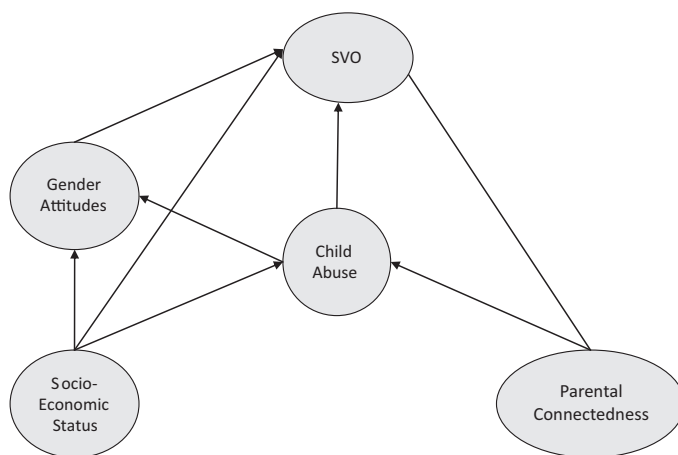
Similarly, recent research on ethnic disparities in violent offending call into question the use of aggregate (demographic) measures (Baskin-Sommers, Baskin, Sommers, & Newman, 2013) as to do so obscures important distinctions. Consequently, a more nuanced understanding of ethnic disparities in juvenile violent offending requires an examination of these variables in interaction with each other. Several risk factors for juvenile delinquency that have been identified in the extant literature are prominent among ethnic minority families and commonly associated with an ethnic minority status. Additionally, research has also shown that structural factors, such as low family income, are risk factors for both familial abuse (e.g. Fagan et al., 2005) and masculinity norms (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). Furthermore, researchers have argued that beliefs about masculinity are often enforced through gender role socialization processes what leads to supposed behavior for boys to possess. It can be argued that family violence might strengthen this socialization process, as research has shown that in most cases perpetrators of domestic violence are male. Lastly, research has shown that a strong emotional bond between parent and child is known as a protector, buffering adolescents from the many challenges and risks they face. Likewise, one might argue that weak emotional bonds between parent and child might increase the risk for familial abuse (see Figure 1).

However, up till now research has lagged behind in fully incorporating intersectionality into theory and methods, provided that research can, for example, separate the effects of ethnicity and socio-economic status from one another. Given the large 'ethnic' disparity in juvenile violent offending, this lack of knowledge is surprising. Prevention and intervention

programs that target risk factors will not be equally effective for native and ethnic minority boys if these influences are not similarly related to juvenile violent delinquency. Likewise, only if the ethnic specific risk factors of violent offending are known can ethnic-specific prevention strategies be developed.

### Aims of the Study

According to the studies and theories described above, it seems that ethnicity or rather an ethnic minority status increases the risk of involvement in juvenile violent offending. However, this does not automatically mean that violent offending can be viewed as a typical pathway that is built on ethnicity, nor on simple ethnic differences in structural, cultural and individual factors. The current study is designed to examine possible pathways between the abovementioned factors and juvenile violent offending. For this study, a large sample of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys was used to compare on several risk factors related to juvenile violent offending. We examined a) whether Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys report different levels of (exposure to) structural, cultural, and individual risk factors; b) whether juvenile violent offending can be explained as an effect of structural, cultural and individual risk factors; c) whether ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending can be explained as an effect of structural, cultural and individual risk factors and lastly; d) which factors contribute most to the development of violent offending.



**Figure 1.** Severe violent offending seen as dependent on socio-economic status, parental connectedness, child abuse and gender attitudes.

#### *The construction of the hypothetical model*

To test the usefulness of theories in general, it is necessary to construct a theory-driven hypothetical model. Our model (see Figure 1) is based on the literature discussed above

and composed of five intersecting latent concepts representing structural factors, cultural factors, individual factors, and juvenile violent offending. The dimension of structural factors, *socio-economic status*, was constructed with the manifest and measured variables of family wealth, father's unemployment and mother's unemployment. The dimension of cultural factors, *gender attitudes*, was constructed with the manifest and measured variables of genderbased family roles. Finally, the dimension of individual factors was constructed by latent variables *parental connectedness*, constructed with the manifest and measured variables of father's emotional warmth and mother's emotional warmth, and *child abuse*, constructed by manifest and measured variables sexual abuse, physical assault, psychological aggression, and exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV).

## METHOD

### Procedure and participants

The data used to test these hypotheses were taken from both a school survey and a youth probation office survey. In the school survey, all ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade pupils of five participating high schools (senior high) were questioned through paper-and-pencil interviews during a one hour lesson, while a research staff member was present. All types of schools were represented in the survey, except special needs schools. This resulted in 941 questionnaires returned from both boys and girls. Only adolescent boys who designated themselves as Dutch or Moroccan-Dutch were included in the present analyses. At the project site, surveys were inspected for validity (e.g., incomplete sections or identical responses to every item). Fifteen boys were subsequently disqualified because they failed the initial validity check. Five boys did not complete the questionnaire, the remainder either filled in identical responses to every item (2) or filled in 'abnormally' high scores on all juvenile delinquency items (8) (for example, stating that they committed each offense a thousand times). Twelve boys were Dutch; the mean age was 16.01 ( $SD = 0.91$ ); and socio-economic status ranged from medium to upper class. The analyses of the school survey were based on data from 364 Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys only: compared with the original sample, the number of cases was significantly lower because only adolescent boys who had designated themselves as Dutch (295) or Moroccan-Dutch (69) and who had passed the initial validity test were included.

Second, with the goal of oversampling delinquent boys (Loeber et al., 2005), participants were recruited among Dutch (70) and Moroccan-Dutch (43) boys who were subject to a supervision order either at the time of the study or in the period preceding the study (113), in two (regionally operating) youth probation offices. To avoid that boys were selected twice, via both school and youth probation office, probation officers were asked to exclude boys attending one of the five participating high schools. In addition, when a research staff member contacted a boy to schedule an appointment, the boy was asked which school he

attended. None of the boys attended one of the five participating high schools. A research staff member was present while the boys completed the questionnaire on their own, either at their school or at a time and place convenient to them but did not look at the participants' responses unless the subject asked for help. They were all school-going youth who lived with one or both of their parents.

An information letter describing the study was sent to parents who could indicate if they did not wish their son to participate. Participants were informed that they were free not to participate in the research and that the information provided in the questionnaire would remain confidential. Participants' anonymity was maintained by ascribing identification numbers rather than names to surveys. Inclusion criteria were (a) sufficient reading ability to complete self-report measures (b) age between 15 and 18 years. As no background information of the non-participants was available, possible non-response bias could not be estimated.

Measures were based on adolescent self-reports. Although concerns about the relative merits of self-reported delinquency and official statistics exist (Juby & Farrington, 2001), self-report measures provide a widely preferred method of measuring juvenile delinquency in research (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000; Wells & Rankin, 1991). Whereas reliance on official reports might introduce layers of potential bias between the actual behavior and the data (e.g., a substantial amount of crime is not reported, and even many crimes that are reported or brought to the attention of law enforcement officers are not officially recorded), self-reports of delinquency are considered to be the data source nearest to the actual behavior (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000).

## Measures

*Severe Violent Offending.* Severe violent offending was assessed using the Youth Delinquency Survey of the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice (2005), a self-report measure of delinquent behavior by the youngsters, comprising six categories of specific criminal acts: Internet offenses, drug offenses, discrimination, vandalism, property offenses and violent offenses. For each offense, the youngster was asked whether he/she had 'ever' committed that crime (lifetime prevalence) and, if so, how often in the previous twelve months (number of incidences in the previous year). For the present analyses, we only used the number of incidences in the previous year of the subscale *severe violent delinquency* containing four items. An example of an item measuring severe violent offending is "Did you ever hurt someone with a weapon?". The four items demonstrated good intercorrelations: Alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.79. This seems to suggest that even relatively different items, such as 'robbery with a weapon' and 'fight where a weapon was involved', were dependent on the same latent variable 'severe violent offending'. As a means to handle outliers, recoded scales of violent delinquency were utilized in the analysis, from 0 to 6; with values 3–5 recoded into 3; 6–10 recoded into 4; 11–20 recoded into 5;



21–100 recoded into 6. After recoding, alpha remained high ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ).

*Socio-Economic Status.* A measure of socio-economic status was captured through the participant's rating of his *family's wealth*. Responses were given from very rich, quite rich, medium rich, not so rich, not rich. In addition, the participants were asked to indicate whether their father and mother were *unemployed* (yes vs. no).

*Parental Connectedness* was measured by 36 items of the Egena Minnen Betreffande Uppfostran for Adolescents (EMBU-A), a self-report instrument for measuring adolescents' current perception of parental rearing (Gerlisma, Arrindell, Van der Veen, & Emmelkamp, 1991). This questionnaire consists of two parallel questionnaires concerning relationships with father and mother, using a 4-point Likert-type scale (i.g., 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often and 4 = most of the time). For the present analyses, we used the total scores on the subscales *father's emotional warmth* and *mother's emotional warmth* as indicators of parental connectedness. Examples of items measuring Emotional Warmth are: "Does your father/mother show you that he/she loves you?" and "Do you and your father/mother ever hug each other?". The eighteen items measuring father's emotional warmth demonstrated high intercorrelations: Alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.96. Similarly, the eighteen items measuring mother's emotional warmth showed an alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.95.

*Child Abuse Exposure* was assessed by 20 items of the Unpleasant and Nasty Incidents Questionnaire (see also Lamers-Winkelmann, Slot, Bijl, & Vijlbrief, 2007). This questionnaire is based on the Dating Violence Questionnaire (Douglas & Straus, 2006) and the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales (CTSPC; Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore, & Runyan, 1998). The questionnaire assesses (recalled) victimization in the home as reported by the adolescent. Examples of items measuring child abuse are: "How often in the previous year did your mom/dad grab you by the neck or choked you?", "How often in the previous year did an adult family member ever force you to perform certain sexual acts?" and "How often in the previous year did your mom/dad ever throw or knock your dad/mom down?". The twenty items demonstrated high intercorrelations: Alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.89. The high intercorrelations between the items suggest that relatively different types of child abuse, such as 'sexual abuse by a family member', 'physical assault', 'psychological aggression', and 'witnessing IPV' were dependent on the same latent variable 'Child abuse'. As a means to handle outliers, recoded scales of child abuse were utilized in the analysis, from 0 to 6; with values 3–5 recoded into 3; 6–10 recoded into 4; 11–20 recoded into 5; more than 20 recoded into 6. After recoding, alpha remained high ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ).

*Gender Attitudes* were assessed by the Gender-based Family Roles scale of the Gender Attitude Inventory (for a more detailed description of this questionnaire, see Ashmore, Del Boca, & Bilder, 1995). The Gender-based Family Roles scale consists of ten items using

a 7-point Likert-type scale. Examples of items constituting the Family Roles scale are: “I would not respect a man if he decided to stay at home and take care of his children while his wife worked” and “The husband should have primary responsibility for taking care of the children”. Alpha coefficient for Family Roles scale was 0.81, indicating a good reliability (Kline, 1999).

*Ethnicity* was assessed by a single item in the questionnaire: “What ethnic group best describes you?” (see also Deković, Wissink, & Meijer, 2004). Only those adolescents who designated themselves as Dutch or Moroccan-Dutch were included in the present analyses. Dutch boys served as the reference category in all analyses in this study.

### **Statistical Analyses**

The present study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with latent variables based on multi-item measurements, which should improve the analysis by reducing the effect of measurement errors associated with individual items (Bratt, 2004). Measurement models of latent variables consider possible autocorrelations between items, i.e., questionnaire-imposed context effects from one item on the next (Byrne, 2010).

First, a correlation analysis with all measured variables was conducted. This correlation analysis was done in two versions – one with the school sample and one with the probation office sample. These correlations are presented together with standard deviations, following the general recommendation to include information on covariances between measured variables when structural equation modeling is used (e.g., Hoyle & Panter, 1995).

A confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the assumption that the selected items could be applied as indicators of latent variables. The latent variable ‘Severe violent offending’ was tested with four indicators. ‘Socio-economic status’ was tested with three indicators. Further, the latent variable ‘Parental connectedness’ was tested with the sum scores of eighteen items measuring father’s emotional warmth and eighteen items measuring mother’s emotional warmth respectively. The latent variable ‘Child abuse’ was tested with the sum scores of twenty items measuring sexual abuse by a family member (four items), physical assault (eight items), psychological aggression (one item), and exposure to intimate partner violence (seven items). The latent variable ‘gender attitudes’ was measured by ten indicators, all on item level. When both theory and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) supported the use of latent variables, they were included in more extended structural models. An advantage of some SEM applications (such as Amos 19, used in this study) is the opportunity to include cases with missing data in the analysis by using the full information maximum likelihood estimation method (see Arbuckle, 1996; Bratt, 2004; Wothke, 2000). This option was used in this study. Maximum likelihood estimations assume multivariate normality, but are known to be relatively robust in the presence of non-normal

data (Chou & Bentler, 1995). Several fit indices were used to test how well SEM models reproduced the covariances in the sample data (tests of general fit of the model). When comparing nested models, hierarchical  $\chi^2$  (hierarchical chi-square) was applied (with  $p < 0.05$  falsifying the more parsimonious model, i.e., the model that used fewer parameters to explain the complex data matrix). For other tests of general fit,  $\chi^2$  was not emphasized, because of the tendency of  $\chi^2$  to be inflated by large samples, even with trivial deviations from the sample matrix – particularly when data are not multivariate normally distributed (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). In addition to  $\chi^2$ , the following fit measures are presented: the *normed chi-square* (NC), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), together with the 90 percent confidence interval for the RMSEA. Although fit measures are based on subjective judgements and therefore cannot be regarded as infallible or correct (Byrne, 2010; Iacobucci, 2010), recommended cut-off values for these tests are:  $NC \leq 5.0$ ;  $CFI \geq 0.90$ ;  $RMSEA < 0.10$ . (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999; Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1995; Kline, 1999)

## RESULTS

### Group differences and correlation between items

Characteristics of the study participants are reported in Table 1. In both the school sample and the probation office sample, Moroccan-Dutch boys reported committing more *severe violent acts* in the past year than their Dutch peers. These differences were statistically significant for the probation office sample only ( $t = -3.71, p < 0.001$ ). As for structural factors, the social circumstances of Moroccan-Dutch boys are particularly poor in comparison with their Dutch peers: They rated their *family wealth* significantly lower ( $\chi^2(4) = 24.34, p < 0.001$  for the school sample and  $\chi^2(4) = 29.67, p < 0.001$  for the probation office sample) and the proportion of *father's unemployment* ( $\chi^2(1) = 36.76, p < 0.001$  for the school sample and  $\chi^2(1) = 38.50, p < 0.001$  for the probation office sample) and *mother's unemployment* ( $\chi^2(1) = 103.59, p < 0.001$  for the school sample and  $\chi^2(1) = 24.92, p < 0.001$  for the probation office sample) was significantly higher.

Further, the Moroccan-Dutch boys rated significantly lower levels of *paternal emotional warmth* ( $t = 4.26, p < 0.001$  for the school sample;  $t = 5.93, p < 0.001$  for the probation office sample) and significantly lower levels of *maternal emotional warmth* ( $t = 3.19, p < 0.001$  for the school sample;  $t = 6.70, p < 0.001$  for the probation office sample) in comparison with their Dutch peers.

**Table 1.** Sample Characteristics

	School Sample		Probation Office Sample	
	Dutch boys (295)	Moroccan-Dutch boys (69)	Dutch boys (70)	Moroccan-Dutch boys (43)
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Severe Violent Offending	0.07 (0.60)	0.17 (1.16)	1.17 (2.06)	3.14 (3.08)
Connectedness				
Father's emotional warmth	60.99 (13.03)	51.94 (13.03)	54.54 (15.73)	35.79 (17.28)
Mother's emotional warmth	61.77 (11.17)	55.93 (14.22)	57.80 (14.01)	39.12 (14.99)
Child Abuse				
Sexual Abuse	0.19 (1.43)	0.07 (0.60)	0.65 (3.06)	0.23 (0.81)
Physical Assault	0.29 (1.40)	0.62 (2.12)	2.06 (4.35)	3.02 (4.18)
Psychological Aggression	0.14 (0.59)	0.97 (1.71)	0.64 (1.39)	2.86 (2.05)
Exposure to IPV	0.32 (1.98)	1.58 (3.45)	1.80 (4.29)	2.86 (3.57)
Gender based Family Roles	40.07 (11.03)	53.46 (11.87)	44.76 (10.15)	62.77 (14.15)
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Socio-Economic Status				
Family's Wealth				
<i>very rich</i>	3.7% (11)	1.4% (1)	7.1% (5)	2.3% (1)
<i>quite rich</i>	34.2% (101)	10.1% (7)	37.1% (26)	2.3% (1)
<i>medium rich</i>	56.6% (167)	71.0% (49)	45.7% (32)	48.8% (21)
<i>not so rich</i>	4.7% (14)	14.5% (10)	7.1% (5)	30.2% (13)
<i>not rich</i>	0.7% (2)	2.9% (2)	2.9% (2)	16.3% (7)
Paternal Unemployment	5.1% (15)	29% (20)	14.3% (10)	72.1% (31)
Maternal Unemployment	10.2% (30)	65.2% (45)	24.3% (17)	72.1% (31)

Missing data were not included in calculations of Means

With the exception of sexual abuse by a family member, Moroccan-Dutch boys reported significantly more exposure to different types of *child abuse* in comparison with their Dutch peers. In both samples, significant differences between the two groups were found only for psychological aggression ( $t = -4.00, p < 0.001$  for the school sample;  $t = -6.25, p < 0.001$  for the probation office sample) and exposure to IPV ( $t = -2.93, p = 0.004$  for the school sample;  $t = -1.36, p = 0.02$  for the probation office sample).

Finally, in both samples, significant differences in gender attitudes were found ( $t = -8.95, p < 0.001$  for the school sample;  $t = -7.28, p < 0.001$  for the probation office sample), with Moroccan-Dutch boys having more conventionally defined roles compared to Dutch boys.

Table 2 presents correlations between measured variables. The upper part of the matrix (above the diagonal) shows correlations in the school sample. The variables 'Child abuse' and 'Severe violent offending' are slightly skewed, with L-shaped distributions. Skewness of

these variables is slightly lower in the probation office sample (below the diagonal). Patterns of correlations were fairly similar across both samples, although effect sizes were stronger in the probation office sample.

Among all indicators, only *Family wealth* was significantly associated with severe violent offending in the school sample, while in the probation office sample all indicators, with the exception of *Sexual Abuse* and *Physical assault* were significantly associated.

**Table 2.** Correlations between measured variables, means and standard deviations. School sample above the diagonal, probation office sample below the diagonal.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	M	SD
Socio-Economic Status													
1. Family wealth		.30	.19	-.14	-.11	.01	.03	.11	.05	.13	.13		
2. Father's unemployment	.58		.41	-.15	-.15	.01	.08	.16	.02	.20	.05		
3. Mother's unemployment	.34	.62		-.21	-.18	-.06	.03	.27	.06	.33	.04		
Parental Connectedness													
4. Father's emotional warmth	-.15	-.31	-.51		.69	-.01	-.08	-.27	-.08	-.21	-.06	59.28	14.18
5. Mother's emotional warmth	-.32	-.36	-.55	.76		-.09	-.16	-.23	-.14	-.19	-.12	60.66	12.01
Child Abuse													
6. Sexual Abuse by a family member	.17	.04	.19	-.10	-.07		.21	-.02	.42	-.02	.02	0.16	1.29
7. Physical Assault	.09	.03	.02	-.08	-.06	.03		.28	.61	.07	.01	0.35	1.56
8. Psychological Aggression	.31	.49	.45	-.45	-.51	-.01	.34		.27	.25	.04	0.30	0.97
9. Exposure to IPV	.18	.28	.36	-.29	-.36	.04	.36	.47		.14	.04	0.55	2.38
10. Gender Attitudes	.38	.63	.60	-.60	-.63	-.04	.08	.53	.21		.09	42.61	12.35
11. Violent delinquency	.31	.34	.40	-.48	-.51	.03	.12	.45	.43	.39		0.15	1.01
Mean					47.41	50.69	0.50	2.42	1.49	2.20	51.61	1.92	
SD					18.66	16.98	2.46	4.30	1.99	4.04	14.68	2.66	

## Structural Equation Modeling

### *Tests of measurement models (latent variables)*

*Severe Violent Delinquency.* Four indicators of the tendency to commit severe violent offending were used: robbery with assault, assault with a weapon, weapon possession, and rape. A model with a latent variable loading on all four indicators provided a close approximate fit ( $\chi^2$  based on  $p = 0.984$ ; RMSEA = 0.000). The measurement model was also supported when tested on the probation office sample ( $\chi^2$  based on  $p = 0.503$ ; RMSEA = 0.000).

*Socio-Economic Status.* A measurement model that applied three indicators of socio-economic status was supported (CFI = 0.988; RMSEA = 0.080). This measurement model was also supported when tested on the probation office sample (CFI = 1.000; RMSEA = 0.000).

*Parental Connectedness.* A measurement model that applied eighteen indicators of father's emotional warmth provided a reasonable fit, though it had a relatively high RMSEA in both samples (CFI = 0.920; RMSEA = 0.082 on the school sample; CFI = 0.946; RMSEA = 0.082 on the probation office sample). Further, a measurement model that applied eighteen indicators of mother's emotional warmth provided a reasonable fit, though it had a relatively high RMSEA (CFI = 0.893; RMSEA = 0.084). On the probation office sample, the measurement model resulted in a relatively high RMSEA as well (CFI = 0.920; RMSEA = 0.082 on the probation office sample).

*Child Abuse.* A measurement model with a latent variable loading on all four indicators provided a close fit ( $\chi^2$  based on  $p = 0.286$ ; RMSEA = 0.020) when two theoretically reasonable correlations between residual variables were included: 1) a correlation between the residual variables for sexual abuse by a family member and psychological assault; 2) a correlation between the residual variables for physical assault and psychological assault. The measurement model was also supported when tested on the probation office sample ( $p = 0.648$ ; RMSEA = 0.000).

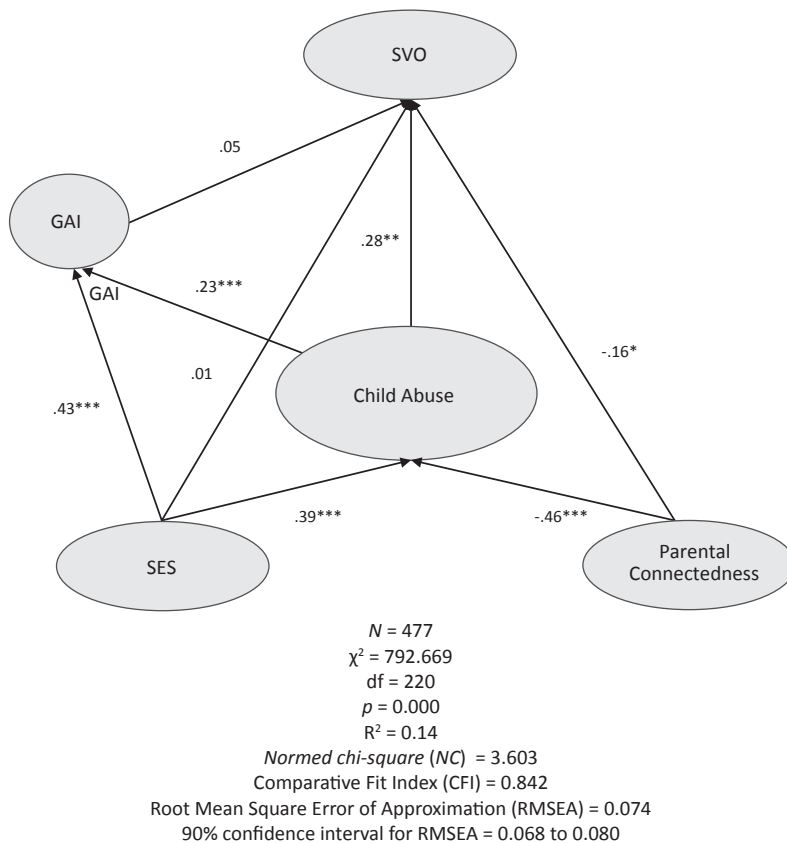
*Gender Attitudes.* A measurement model that applied ten indicators of gender-based family roles was supported (CFI = 0.966; RMSEA = 0.055). This measurement model was also supported when tested on the probation office sample (CFI = 0.967; RMSEA = 0.062).

#### *Predicting severe violent offending*

Figure 2 presents the results for a model seeing severe violent delinquency as dependent on socio-economic status, parental connectedness, child abuse and gender attitudes, analysed with full information maximum likelihood estimation using the full sample (The figure uses standardized coefficients). The model resulted in satisfying fit measures (CFI = 0.842; RMSEA = 0.074) and could explain a moderate percentage of the variance of the latent variable severe violent offending ( $R^2 = 0.14$ ). Child abuse ( $beta = 0.28$ ) and parental connectedness ( $beta = -0.16$ ) were estimated to be more closely related to violent offending than socio-economic status ( $beta = 0.01$ ) and gender attitudes ( $beta = 0.05$ ). On the other hand, if socio-economic status was estimated as the sole predictor of severe violent offending, it demonstrated a  $beta = 0.17$ . Similarly, using parental connectedness as the sole indicator gave a  $beta = -0.30$ . Child abuse as the sole indicator gave a  $beta = 0.31$ . Lastly, if gender attitudes was estimated as the sole predictor of severe violent offending, it demonstrated a  $beta = 0.13$ .

The results obtained with the school sample were compared with an analysis of the probation office sample (Table 3). It was necessary to use measurement variance between the school sample and the probation office sample, since identical unstandardized

factor loadings for the school and probation office were not supported by the data. Full information maximum likelihood estimation then provided a close fit for the school sample (CFI = 0.966; RMSEA = 0.055) and a moderate fit for the probation office sample (CFI = 0.800; RMSEA = 0.094). The regression coefficient for 'socio-economic status' loading on 'severe violent offending' was rather similar for the school sample ( $b = 0.08$ ) and the probation office sample ( $b = 0.04$ ). The regression weight for 'connectedness' loading on severe violent offending' was similar as well ( $b = -0.00$  for the school sample;  $b = -0.00$  for the probation office sample), while the regression weight for 'child abuse' on 'severe violent offending' became statistically significant in the probation sample ( $b = 0.07$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ). For 'gender attitudes', the regression coefficient was rather similar for both samples ( $b = 0.02$  for the school sample;  $b = 0.07$  for the probation office sample).



**Figure 2.** Severe violent offending seen as dependent on socio-economic status, parental connect- edness, child abuse and gender attitudes, full information maximum likelihood estimation using the whole sample including missing data. Standardized estimated.

**Table 3.** The model in Figure 1 used with the school sample and the probation office sample. Full information likelihood estimations with unstandardized estimates.

	School sample (N = 364)	Probation-office sample (N = 113)
Socio-economic Status		
Family's wealth	1.00 <sup>a</sup>	1.00 <sup>a</sup>
Father's unemployment	0.72***	0.83***
Mother's unemployment	1.05***	0.56***
Parental Connectedness		
Father's emotional warmth	1.00 <sup>a</sup>	1.00 <sup>a</sup>
Mother's emotional warmth	1.45**	1.00***
Child Abuse		
Exposure to IPV	1.00 <sup>a</sup>	1.00 <sup>a</sup>
Sexual Abuse by a family member	0.24***	0.08
Physical Assault	0.44***	0.55**
Psychological Aggression	0.12***	0.72***
Gender Attitudes		
GAI 1	1.00 <sup>a</sup>	1.00 <sup>a</sup>
GAI 2	1.13***	0.91***
GAI 3	2.66**	1.57***
GAI 4	4.18**	1.50***
GAI 5	3.53**	1.48***
GAI 6	3.12**	1.63***
GAI 7	3.88**	1.74***
GAI 8	0.26	0.83**
GAI 9	3.52**	1.48***
GAI 10	1.98**	0.94**
Severe Violent Offending		
Robbery with assault	1.00 <sup>a</sup>	1.00 <sup>a</sup>
Assault with a weapon	1.75***	1.00*
Weapon possession	0.03	1.67***
Rape	1.74***	0.61**
SES → Severe Violent Offending	0.08	0.04
Connectedness → Severe Violent Offending	0.00	0.00
Child Abuse → Severe Violent Offending	0.00	0.07*
Gender Attitudes → Severe Violent Offending	0.02	0.07
SES → Child Abuse	0.15	1.50**
SES → Gender Attitudes	0.64*	0.70**
Child Abuse → Gender Attitudes	0.01	0.166*
Connectedness → Child Abuse	0.04**	0.08***
$\chi^2$	456.073	437.988
df	220	220
p	0.000	0.000
Normed chi-square (NC)	2.073	1.991
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.925	0.800
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.054	0.094
RMSEA conf. interval, lower bound	0.047	0.081
RMSEA conf. interval, upper bound	0.061	0.107

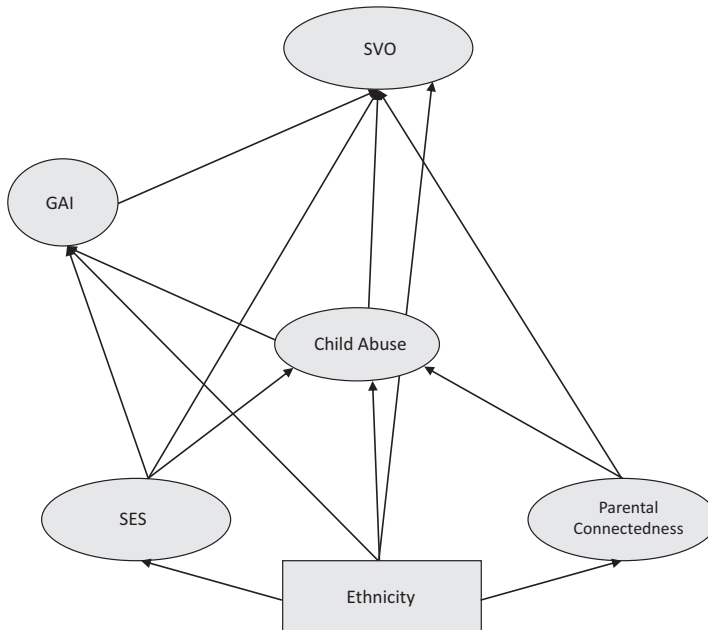
\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

<sup>a</sup> = fixed to unstandardized value of 1 to identify the model (which implies that no significance test of this individual parameter is provided).



### *Ethnicity predicting severe violent offending*

A separate part of the analyses, explored whether ethnicity could account for differences in severe violent offending, using an alternative model which considered indirect paths, with ethnicity as the only exogenous variable (see Figure 3), thus testing ethnicity as a predictor of socio-economic status, connectedness, child abuse, and gender attitudes, while all these five variables were used to predict severe violent offending.



**Figure 3.** Severe violent offending seen as dependent on ethnicity, socio-economic status, parental connectedness, child abuse and gender attitudes.

In the school sample, the SEM-based analysis with only ethnicity (Dutch = 1) predicting the latent variable ‘severe violent offending’ found a small association:  $\beta = 0.05$  (see Table 4). The estimated weight of ethnicity was reduced when socio-economic status and connectedness was accounted for,  $\beta = 0.04$ ; extending the model further by also including child abuse did not improve the explanation of ethnic differences,  $\beta = 0.02$ . However, ethnicity did have a significant effect on all remaining predictor variables: socio-economic status ( $\beta = 0.69, p < 0.001$ ); parental connectedness ( $\beta = -0.27, p < 0.001$ ); child abuse ( $\beta = 0.31, p < 0.001$ ), and gender attitudes ( $\beta = 0.29, p = 0.03$ ). Since the complete model (Figure 3) accounted for only 1% of the variance of severe violent offending, no further analyses were performed on the school sample.

**Table 4.** SEM-models testing the impact of ethnicity on a latent variable of violent offending, with full information maximum likelihood estimations (standardized estimates): school sample

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Ethnicity (Dutch = 1)	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.03
Socio-Economic Status		0.08	0.10	0.10	0.10
Parental Connectedness			-0.08	-0.09	-0.09
Child Abuse				0.01	0.02
Gender Attitudes					0.02
R <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Ethnicity → SES					0.69***
Ethnicity → Connectedness					-0.27***
Ethnicity → Child Abuse					0.31***
Ethnicity → Gender Attitudes					0.29*
χ <sup>2</sup>	4.263	42.104	58.633	173.104	482.73
df	5	18	31	69	239
p	0.512	0.001	0.002	0.000	0.000
Normed chi-square (NC)	0.853	2.339	1.891	2.509	2.020
CFI	1.000	0.984	0.984	0.951	0.927
RMSEA	0.000	0.061	0.050	0.064	0.053
RMSEA conf. interval, lower bound	0.000	0.037	0.030	0.053	0.046
RMSEA conf. interval, upper bound	0.067	0.085	0.069	0.077	0.060

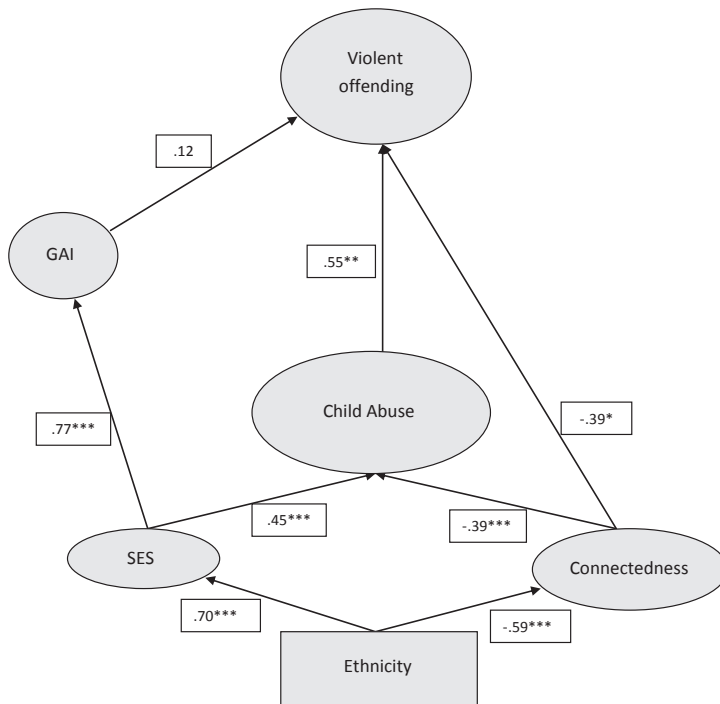
\*p < 0.05. \*\*p < 0.01. \*\*\*p < 0.001.

**Table 5.** SEM-models testing the impact of ethnicity on a latent variable of violent offending, with full information maximum likelihood estimations (standardized estimates): probation office sample

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Ethnicity (Dutch = 1)	0.38*	0.13	0.13	0.17	0.18
Socio-Economic Status		0.38*	0.28	0.16	0.34
Parental Connectedness			-0.58**	-0.46**	-0.53**
Child Abuse				0.40*	0.38**
Gender Attitudes					0.26
R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.23	0.42	0.56	0.61
Ethnicity → SES					0.67***
Ethnicity → Connectedness					-0.59***
Ethnicity → Child Abuse					0.13
Ethnicity → Gender Attitudes					0.12
χ <sup>2</sup>	6.564	28.482	67.210	161.02	455.015
df	5	18	31	69	239
p	0.255	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.000
Normed chi-square (NC)	1.313	1.582	2.178	2.334	1.904
CFI	0.967	0.950	0.907	0.831	0.810
RMSEA	0.053	0.072	0.083	0.109	0.089
RMSEA conf. interval, lower bound	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.087	0.077
RMSEA conf. interval, upper bound	0.149	0.120	0.130	0.131	0.102

\*p < 0.05. \*\*p < 0.01. \*\*\*p < 0.001.

In the probation office sample, the SEM-based analysis with only ethnicity predicting severe violent offending found a strong association:  $\beta = 0.38$  (see Table 5). The estimated weight of ethnicity in the probation office sample was reduced when socio-economic status ( $\beta = 0.13$ ), connectedness ( $\beta = 0.13$ ), child abuse ( $\beta = 0.17$ ), and gender attitudes ( $\beta = 0.18$ ) was accounted for. In addition, ethnicity had a significant effect on the predictor variables: socio-economic status ( $\beta = 0.67, p < 0.001$ ) and connectedness ( $\beta = -0.59, p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, socio-economic status had a significant effect on both child abuse ( $\beta = 0.35, p = 0.02$ ) and gender attitudes ( $\beta = 0.68, p < 0.001$ ). Parental connectedness had a significant effect on child abuse as well ( $\beta = -0.34, p = 0.01$ ). Explained variance of severe violent offending was high ( $R^2 = 0.61$ ).



$N = 113$

Normed chi-square (NC) = 1.889

Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.810

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.089

90% confidence interval for RMSEA = 0.077 to 0.100

**Figure 4.** Severe violent offending seen as dependent on socio-economic status, parental connect- edness, child abuse and gender attitudes, full information maximum likelihood estimation using the probation office sample including missing data.

Alternative models were tested by hierarchical  $\chi^2$ . Both the direct path from ethnicity on severe violent offending ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 1.59, p > 0.05$ ) and the direct path from socio-economic status on severe violent offending could be released ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 2.25, p > 0.05$ ). However, neither the direct path from connectedness on severe violent offending, nor the path from child abuse on severe violent offending could be released ( $p < 0.001$  in both cases). As for the indirect paths, both the indirect path from ethnicity on severe violent offending through child abuse ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 0.932, p > 0.05$ ) as well as the indirect path from ethnicity through gender attitudes ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 0.828, p > 0.05$ ) could be released. Likewise, the indirect path from child abuse through gender attitudes could be released ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 2.39, p > 0.05$ ). All other indirect paths could not be released ( $p < 0.001$  in both cases). SEM found that the alternative model (see figure 4) provided a reasonable fit ( $NC = 1.889$ ;  $CFI = 0.810$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.089$ ) and explained 63% of the variance of severe violent offending.

## DISCUSSION

Juvenile violent offending among adolescent boys with a minority background is reported to be a significant problem in several countries, including the Netherlands. This study focused on assessing the intersectionality of ethnicity, socio-economic status, parental connectedness, child abuse, and gender attitudes in juvenile violent delinquency. Rather than relying on an item-level analysis, this study applied structural equation modeling, analyzing the relation between latent variables. Four indicators of the tendency to commit severe violent offending were used: 1) robbery with assault; 2) assault with a weapon; 3) weapon possession; 4) rape. Confirmatory factor analysis found that these four items could be used as indicators of one latent construct, which itself is noteworthy. Considering the high intercorrelations among these four indicators, it could be suggested that probation officers should take any severe violent act as a warning that these boys may be involved in even more serious violent offending. Probation officers are well placed to counteract violent offending among boys.

Our results build upon the extant literature in several ways. First, this study demonstrates that in both the school sample as well as the probation office sample Moroccan-Dutch boys reported committing more severe violent acts than their Dutch peers. However, these differences were statistically significant for the probation office sample only.

Second, this study demonstrated ethnic differences in levels of (exposure to) structural, cultural, and individual risk factors. As for structural factors, the social circumstances of Moroccan-Dutch boys were particularly poor in comparison with their Dutch peers: They rated their family wealth lower, and the proportion of parental unemployment was significantly higher. Additionally, significant differences in gender attitudes were found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys having more conventionally defined roles compared to Dutch boys.

Furthermore, Moroccan-Dutch boys rated significantly lower levels of paternal emotional warmth and significantly lower levels of maternal emotional warmth. Finally, in both samples, Moroccan-Dutch boys reported significantly more exposure to child abuse than their Dutch peers. . In sum, in comparison with their Dutch peers, Moroccan-Dutch boys experience more risk factors for involvement in severe violent offending.

Third, the latent variable of severe violent offending was estimated as dependent on socio-economic status, parental connectedness, child abuse, and gender attitudes. The SEM-based analysis with the whole sample provided a reasonable fit, explaining 14% of severe violent offending. A closer look at the two subsamples revealed that the school sample did not support a significant effect on severe violent offending induced by socio-economic status, connectedness, child abuse, and gender attitudes. In other words, the analysis of this particular subsample indicated no additional effect on severe violent offending from the predictor variables. This is probably due to the fact that only 4.1% of the boys in this sample ( $N = 15$ ) reported committing at least one act of severe violent offending. However, the SEM-based analysis with the probation office sample did support the proposed model, explaining 63% of the variance of severe violent offending. In addition, it suggested that parental connectedness and child abuse had a significantly stronger effect on severe violent offending than gender attitudes and socio-economic status. In other words, the analysis of the probation office sample indicated no additional effect on the dependent variable from socio-economic status. Thus, family interactions demonstrated strong associations with severe violent offending. As expected, the survey supported both theoretical and empirical research recognizing the family as an important influence on violent offending (for a review, see Hoeve et al., 2008; Bowlby, 1969). However, while family functioning was significantly better at predicting severe violent offending, the analysis still found an estimated effect of socio-economic status on family functioning, i.e., child abuse. Therefore, another conclusion to be drawn from this study is that socio-economic status may be relevant as an additional variable predicting severe violent offending. Poor social conditions contribute directly to child abuse (Dettlaff et al., 2011; Fagan et al., 2007; Messner, Raffalovich, & McMillan, 2001) and indirectly to youth violence (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould et al., 2002; Pratt, 2001), i.e., the connection between poor social conditions and severe violent offending in this particular subsample appear to apply through child abuse. Gender attitudes contributed further to explaining severe violent offending in the probation office sample.

Following previous research (see Lahlah et al., 2013), a fourth addition that our study offers to the existing body of literature, is the finding that socio-economic status, connectedness, child abuse and gender attitudes could explain a substantial proportion of the differences between Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys committing severe violent acts. As suggested by Enzmann & Wetzels (2003), the ability of ethnicity to predict severe violent offending was reduced when other predictors were accounted for. Still, ethnicity added

significantly to the explanation of severe violent offending through socio-economic status and connectedness. The first Moroccan immigrants mostly came to the Netherlands for economic reasons. However, as a consequence of the economic hardships of the oil crises and the industrial restructuring in the 1980s (Crul & Doornik, 2003; Laghzaoui 2009), many of the first immigrants lost their jobs and stayed outside the Dutch labor market, among others due to low levels of education. To date, Moroccan-Dutch families still live in low SES neighborhoods with a high immigrant density than Dutch families (Boom et al., 2010; CBS, 2012). This suggests that the unfavorable conditions of Moroccan-Dutch boys are probably due to the presence of several socio-economic stressors in the family, such as low levels of parental employment of both parents and low level of educational attainment of parents and child (Dagevos & Gijsberts, 2007), rather than ethnicity per se. In addition, the presence of these stressors may lead to a higher risk of child abuse exposure, resulting in severe violent offending. Indeed, this study shows that the higher rates of child abuse among Moroccan-Dutch boys is related to the exposure of several risk factors associated with child abuse, primary among these being a low socio-economic status. This is in line with previous research demonstrating considerable evidence that child abuse occurs disproportionately among low SES families (for example see Dettlaff et al., 2011; Fagan et al., 2005; Messner, Raffalovich, & McMillan, 2001). This is particularly relevant to understanding differences in child abuse exposure as Moroccan-Dutch families are significantly more likely as Dutch families to live in poverty.

A rather similar mechanism may apply to the relationship between ethnicity and parental connectedness. Although the findings of this study demonstrate ethnic differences in the degree to which Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys perceive their relationship with their parents, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting lower levels of parental emotional warmth, and although the results of this study indicate the significance of connectedness in severe violent offending, supporting a vast body of research that identifies the importance of this variable (Davalos et al., 2005; Eichelsheim et al., 2010), research often considers the individual family in isolation from its social setting and overlooks the way the family interacts with its social setting. It seems reasonable to expect that parenting will be harder where parents have expectations that differ from those of their social setting in general and their children in particular, and similarly easier where there is concordance between 'normal' behavior within and outside the family (Lahlah et al., 2013b). This might be particularly true for Moroccan-Dutch children with parents who fail to provide sufficient help and support if lack of resources and their social setting make it difficult to make a more effective effort. The discrepancy between the parents' and adolescents' expectations and/or preferences might cause conflict for the adolescent, which may result in a negative influence on the parent-child relationship or even result in child abuse, which, in turn, results in higher risk of involvement in severe violent offending.

## Conclusions

Ultimately, the findings of these analyses indicate that disproportionality in juvenile violent delinquency is a complex phenomenon that cannot be explained by a single factor. Ethnicity cannot solely explain why boys commit violent crimes, and neither can structural, cultural, or individual factors. All these factors cumulatively play a role in the development of severe violent offending. The analyses in the probation office sample show that 63% of the variance in the dependent variable 'severe violent offending' can be explained by the set of factors that was incorporated in the model. From those factors, both parental connectedness and child abuse had a significant direct path to severe offending, with parental connectedness having the strongest direct association. However, since most variables in this study interact or **intersect**, and ethnicity (or rather an ethnic minority status) is associated with those specific characteristics, a conclusion to be drawn from this study is that ethnicity may be relevant as an additional variable predicting severe violent offending, albeit indirectly. As stated above, research has lagged behind in fully incorporating intersectionality into theory and methods. However, unless intersectionality is taken into account in the field of criminology, psychology and social work, prevention and intervention programs will be of less use, and may in fact even be harmful for certain groups. Thus, social services and criminal justice offices need to be aware of the seemingly unrelated factors that can impact a boy's life experience and response to the service and to adapt their methods accordingly. The use of the traditional family ideal may function as one such example of intersectionality (Collins, 1998). Families are expected to socialize their family members into an appropriate set of family values that reinforce the hierarchy within the assumed unity of interests symbolized by the family and simultaneously lay the foundation for individual development. Boys and girls typically learn their assigned place in hierarchies of ethnicity, gender, and social class in their families of origin. In particular, hierarchies of gender, age, and wealth within actual family units correlate with comparable hierarchies in society. Given the power of the family as an important factor to the development of violent offending, it might be considered to recast family systems in ways that do not reproduce inequality. Sociological research clearly shows that ethnicity does not fully explain significant differences in juvenile violent offending. However, people who are at the bottom of the social hierarchy in terms of ethnicity or gender are more likely to have a lower social status, to be subjected to stereotypes, and to be discriminated against (Collins, 2000). For instance, the image of Moroccan-Dutch boys in Dutch media and public discourse is far from bright: they are often associated with marginalization and delinquency (De Jong, 2007). Although there is clear evidence of the unfavorable position of Moroccan-Dutch boys in Dutch society (Crul & Heering, 2008), the victimization of Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular is often underreported and overlooked (Lahlah et al., 2013d). Through the study of intersectionality of ethnicity and the family, we should achieve a better understanding of (economic) inequalities and the implications of the multidimensional impact of family stressors on violent offending.

## Implications

Counselors should develop a different approach appropriate to ethnic minority youths in general and Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular. In line with both cross-cultural and multicultural research, this study makes it clear that there is no one-size-fits-all explanation for the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in juvenile violent offending. Prevention and intervention programs based on the experiences of adolescents who do not share the same ethnic background and social class will be of limited utility for those whose lives are shaped by a different set of obstacles. Consequently, juvenile offenders from different backgrounds require different interventions as well. These interventions should focus on the underlying and intersecting structural conditions of poverty, marginalization, discrimination with the means to significantly change the boys' situation and that of their families. Additionally, interventions designed to combat juvenile violence should be linked to strategies that combat violence within communities (child abuse / domestic violence). One without the other is inadequate, since this study shows that the two are closely connected. Furthermore, practitioners should further their understanding of diverse ethnic groups so that they can be alert to the ways in which ethnic differences may affect the assessment of juvenile violent offending. For example, Moroccan-Dutch boys are generally socialized to be macho or domineering in accordance with the cultural concept of machismo (Lahlah et al., 2013b). Such confining gender roles, in combination with cultural prohibitions against disclosing (child) abuse to outsiders, may result in reluctance of many Moroccans to report abuse to counselors. Practitioners need to be aware of such ethnically specific barriers to help-seeking among different ethnic groups. However, the authors would like to stress that on the other hand, practitioners should be wary of facile categorizations of juvenile offenders based on ethnicity. Although belonging to an ethnic minority group holds some inherent risks, those risks and the resulting stressors may be mitigated by strengths and other unique circumstances within each family.

## Limitations of this study

Several limitations of the research design should be noted. Most importantly, conclusions are based on self-reports. Although concerns about the relative merits of self-reported delinquency and official statistics exist (Juby & Farrington, 2001), self-report measures provide a widely preferred method of measuring juvenile delinquency in research (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000; Wells & Rankin, 1991). Whereas reliance on official reports might introduce layers of potential bias between the actual behavior and the data (e.g., a substantial amount of crime is not reported, and even crimes that are reported or brought to the attention of law enforcement officers are often not officially recorded), self-reports of delinquency are considered as the data source nearest to the actual behavior (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). However, in similar studies, data may also have been affected



by a quite different validity problem than socially desirable responding: Some boys may have enjoyed reporting frequent acts of violent offending when this in fact did not take place or was less frequent. This potential methodological problem was addressed by several means: Fifteen questionnaires that appeared to be unreliable were excluded; scores above 100 for a specific act of severe violent offending were defined as missing; and finally each offending was recoded into a 7-point scale. Second, the study's reliance on cross-sectional data limits causal inferences. Without longitudinal data, temporal ordering of the variables cannot be determined, nor can ethnic differences be assessed in individual pathways to violent offending. This weakens causal analyses. It may very well be that a boy's delinquent behavior has led parents to become more controlling and strict or to withdraw emotionally.

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# Chapter 4

## **Ethnic differences in the effect of perceived parenting on juvenile violent delinquency of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study considers ethnic differences in the effect of perceived parenting on juvenile delinquency in a sample of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, by focusing on several perceived maternal and paternal parenting variables. Extant literature appears divided over whether or not the etiology of juvenile delinquency for ethnic minority youth is somehow distinct from standard criminological theories, or whether parenting is a culturally distinct source. Cross-cultural studies on the effect of parenting on juvenile delinquency show inconsistent findings. Overall, the results seem to suggest both specificity and generalizability in the effect of parenting on violent delinquency by ethnicity. Despite the mean level differences on perceived parenting variables and violent delinquency, and despite the moderate differences in the predictive relationships of the variables by ethnicity, the results suggest similarity in the patterns of associations as well. Given that both paternal and maternal parenting variables were significantly related to violent delinquency in Moroccan-Dutch boys in a manner similar to Dutch peers, it is important that social services and criminal justice offices provide prevention and intervention strategies for both fathers and mothers.



## INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency remains a serious problem in today's society (Hoeve, Dubas, Smeenk, Gerris, & Van der Laan, 2011; Van der Laan, Veenstra, Bogaerts, Verhulst, & Ormel, 2010; Wampler & Downs, 2010). Adolescent boys with a minority background account for a large share in juvenile crime both in the United States as well as in Europe. In the United States, boys with a African-American or Hispanic-American background are overrepresented in juvenile crime figures (Stahl, Finnegan, & Kang, 2007); in Europe, ethnic minority boys with a non-Western background are disproportionately represented among juvenile offenders, such as Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, and Moroccans in Belgium (Esterle-Hedibel, 2001; Gostomski, 2003; Put & Walgrave, 2006). In the Netherlands, official crime records have long reported Moroccan-Dutch boys as disproportionate juvenile offenders (e.g., De Jong, 2007; Jennissen, Blom, & Oosterwaal, 2009; Stevens, Vollebergh, Pels, & Crijnen, 2005 & 2007; Van der Laan & Blom, 2011) and there has been increasing concern among the police and the general public about the seriousness of the criminal involvement of Moroccan-Dutch boys (Stevens et al., 2007; Van der Laan & Blom, 2011).

### Theoretical framework

Research has since long acknowledged the association between parenting practices and juvenile delinquency (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Palmer & Hollin, 2001; Rankin & Kerr, 1994; Simons, Simons, Chen, Brody, & Lin, 2007; Stouthamer-Loeber, Loeber, Wei, Farrington, & Wikström, 2002). However, extant literature appears divided over whether or not the etiology of juvenile delinquency for ethnic minority youth is somehow distinct from standard criminological theories, or whether parenting is a culturally distinct source (Davalos et al., 2005; Lindahl & Malik, 1999; Smith & Krohn, 1995). Cross-cultural studies on the effect of parenting on juvenile delinquency show inconsistent findings (Davalos et al., 2005; Davidson & Cardemil, 2009; Smith & Krohn, 1995). With the growing number of ethnic minorities in Western societies and the high rates of registered delinquency among ethnic minorities, the necessity of an examination of ethnic differences in the relation between parenting and juvenile delinquency is underlined.

Family functioning, in particular parenting, is an important predictor for later behavioral outcomes in adolescence (for a review, see Hoeve et al., 2008; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; O'Brien & Scott, 2007; Stormshak, Bierman, McMahon, & Lengua, 2000). Three aspects of parenting are relevant with respect to the development of juvenile delinquency: emotional warmth, control, and consistency (Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrum, 2001; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Simons, Simons, & Wallace, 2004; Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 2002; Wissink, Deković, & Meijer, 2006). Youth who are safely attached to and subjected to sufficient monitoring by their parents are less likely to be involved in delinquency (Palmer & Hollin, 2001; Reid, Patterson, & Snyder, 2002), whereas parental rejection has been shown to be positively

related to juvenile delinquency (Bogaerts, Vanheule, & Desmet, 2006; Hoeve et al., 2011; Low & Stocker, 2005; Vazsonyi & Pickering, 2003).

However, a number of limitations hinder a more extensive understanding of the relationship between parenting practices and juvenile delinquency. First, most studies focus on only one aspect of parenting. Therefore, information regarding the relative importance of various aspects of parenting in the etiology of juvenile delinquency is limited (Hoeve et al., 2008; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter, & Keehn, 2007; Simons et al., 2007). Second, almost all work in this area has focused solely on maternal parenting variables or combined maternal and paternal characteristics in a general categorization without considering the contribution of each parent separately (Hoeve et al., 2011; Milevsky et al., 2007; Williams & Kelly, 2005). Fathers and mothers play a distinct role in the lives of their children and the nature of parental involvement differs between fathers and mothers as well as the quantity of the time fathers and mothers spend with their children (Bowlby, 1969; Hoeve et al., 2011; Lamb & Oppenheim, 1989; Videon, 2005). Research has further shown that a father's behavior is predictive of a child's competence above and beyond the mother-child relationship (Cox, 2004). Finally, the findings of parenting on juvenile delinquency are mainly applicable to Western societies (Eichelsheim et al., 2010). Considering the fact that current international migrations are of an unprecedented volume and ethnic minorities constitute a considerable part of the population in Western societies, it is an important question to be studied.

Perspectives on which parenting style is most successful in preventing juvenile delinquency may depend quite heavily on what parents and children in a particular society are taught regarding appropriate parenting practices (Chao, 2001; Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006; Rudy & Grusec, 2006) and how it is perceived by the child (Baumrind, 1996). For example, the relationship between parents and their children in collective societies (e.g., Moroccan, Chinese, Latin-American, and Puerto Rican) is closer and more mutual dependent than in individualistic societies (Dwairy et al., 2006). In addition, parents in collectivistic cultures emphasize interdependence and commonly use high levels of control over their children to teach them to inhibit the expression of their own needs to attend to the needs of the group they belong to (Bhandari & Barnett, 2007; Dwairy & Achoui, 2010b; Grusec, Rudy, & Martin, 1997; Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Here, parental control and strictness may be appropriate and even be perceived as an expression of love and care. Several studies have shown that in collectivistic cultures, children experience parental control as normal and not necessarily as reflecting rejection and have found no or a positive association between parental control and a child's developmental outcome (Chao, 2001; Dwairy et al., 2006; Kagitcibasi, 2005; McWayne, Owsianik, Green, & Fantuzzo, 2008). In more individualistic cultures, however, the emphasis is on autonomy, self-reliance and self-confidence (Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Parenting that tends to exercise moderate parental control to allow children to become progressively more autonomous, may be appropriate.

With the growing number of ethnic minorities in Western societies, numerous scholars called for research on ethnic diverse samples to test the generalizability of past findings (Wissink et al., 2006). Studies with ethnically diverse samples show inconsistent findings. Some studies showed similar relationships across ethnic groups among parenting behaviors and delinquent behavior (Forehand, Miller, Dutra, Chance, 1997; Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Zelli, & Huesmann, 1996; Vazsonyi, Trejos-Castillo, & Huang, 2006), while other studies found ethnic differences in both the strength of the associations between parenting variables and juvenile offending as well as the relationship between parenting variables and juvenile offending. For example, Smith and Krohn (1995) found that parental warmth and support and a greater sense of parental control were related to delinquency for African American and European American adolescents, but not for Hispanic Americans. Further, research has indicated that among African Americans, a higher level of parental warmth and support was associated with fewer behavior problems. However, among Hispanic Americans there was a tendency for higher levels of parental warmth and support to be associated with more behavior problems (Bradly, Corwyn, Burchinal, McAdoo, & Col, 2001; Deater-Decker, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, 1996). Similar results were found by Lindahl and Malik (1999), who reported that parental control was positively related to externalizing behavior problems for European American but unrelated for Hispanic American youth, suggesting the possibility of ethnic variation in the effect of parenting on juvenile delinquency. Other studies did not report ethnic differences in the associations between parental warmth and support and criminal involvement. Davalos and colleagues (2005) found that adolescents' perceptions of parental emotional support were negatively related to criminal involvement for both Hispanic American and White adolescents. Likewise, Vazsonyi and colleagues (2006) found that the associations between parental warmth and externalizing behavior were not influenced by ethnicity. In summary, studies concerning ethnic differences or similarities in the patterns of associations among parenting variables and juvenile offending provide a mixed picture (Wissink et al., 2006). It seems that the relationship of parental control and delinquent behavior is more culturally influenced, whereas the relationship between parental warmth is more universal (Eichelsheim et al., 2010; Smith & Krohn, 1995) albeit results remain inconsistent. Given the inconsistent findings regarding the importance of parenting characteristics in understanding and predicting juvenile delinquency cross-culturally, this study seeks to explore the relationship between parenting and juvenile delinquency in a sample of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. The latter group has the highest crime rates compared to other ethnic groups in the Netherlands, even when corrected for their estimated proportion of the population (Broekhuizen & Driessen, 2006).

### *The present study*

This study seeks to expand our knowledge of the relationship between ethnicity, perceived parenting and violent offending. In particular, we aim to explore whether different ethnic groups report different levels of perceived parenting measured as a multidimensional construct, while testing the unique contributions for each parent. Furthermore, we aim to examine whether or not the etiology of violent offending for ethnic minority youth is somehow distinct from standard criminological theories, or whether parenting is a culturally distinct source. Juvenile delinquency is often considered to be a predictor of the general crime level of a society. Because the adolescent years are formative, and determine the criminal involvement of young people as they develop into adults, it is important to address juvenile delinquency through effective approaches. From a policy standpoint, it makes sense to concentrate on the most serious offenses. Since youth violence is a visibly significant problem with extremely negative consequences for both society and the particular individuals involved, the focus of our study will be on juvenile violent offending.

### *Hypotheses*

Based on previous theory and research, it is hypothesized that ethnic differences in violent offending will be found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting higher incidences of violent offending (**Hypothesis 1**). In addition, it is hypothesized that Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys differ significantly in their perceptions of parental rearing (**Hypothesis 2**). Furthermore, it is expected that ethnic differences in the association between perceived parenting and violent offending will be found (**Hypothesis 3**). In addition, although we anticipate that parenting, measured as a multidimensional construct, exerts a significant and direct effect on juvenile delinquency for both groups (**Hypothesis 4a**), we expect ethnic differences in the effect of parenting on violent offending (**Hypothesis 4b**). Finally, we anticipate that both paternal and maternal factors each have their unique contribution to juvenile violent offending (**Hypothesis 5**). It is important to determine whether ethnic differences in levels of perceived parenting exist and add to the differences in levels of violent offending among Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. A focus on both ethnicity and perceived paternal and maternal parenting may serve as a fertile ground for improving theory and research on juvenile delinquency.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants and Procedure**

The data used to test these hypotheses are taken from both a school survey and a youth probation office survey. The questionnaire focused on the life-style of adolescents, with a particular interest in both risk and protective factors of juvenile violent offending, in three major cities and two rural districts in the Netherlands in the year 2011.

The intention of the school survey was to survey all fourth, fifth and sixth-grade pupils of five participating high schools via paper-and-pencil interviews during a one hour lesson, while a research staff member was present and surveyed 941 adolescents, both boys and girls. Except for special need schools, all types of schools are represented in the survey. The following analyses were based only on data from 364 Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Compared with the original sample, the number of cases was significantly lower because only adolescent boys who designated themselves as Dutch (295) or Moroccan-Dutch (69) were included in the present analyses.

Second, with the goal of oversampling delinquent boys (Loeber et al., 2005), participants were recruited among Dutch (70) and Moroccan-Dutch (43) boys subjected to a supervision order either at the time of the study or in the period preceding the study (113), in two (regionally operating) youth probation offices. To avoid that boys were selected twice, via both school and the youth probation office, probation officers were asked to exclude boys attending one of the five participating high schools. In addition, when a research staff member contacted the boy for scheduling an appointment, a boy was asked which school he attended. None of the boys attended one of the five participating high schools. A research staff member was present while the boys completed the questionnaire on their own either at their school or at a time and place convenient to them but did not look at the participants' responses unless the subject asked for help.

A national evaluation study of youth probation services in the Netherlands, revealed that three types of youth probation clients can be distinguished (Kruissink & Verwers, 2002): 1) *occasional offenders*, who committed only one offense or just a few minor offenses; 2) *high risk juveniles*, who have already been in contact with the judicial authorities before. These juveniles do not have day-to-day activities in terms of school or work, and too often use drugs; and 3) *very high risk juveniles*. The living conditions resemble those of the juveniles in the previous category. However, the *very high risk juveniles* have had more contacts with the police and judicial authorities and the reason for the contact with the youth probation service is a more serious offence. This type has already made a small start with a criminal career and tends to continue that path. The occasional offenders represent about one quarter of the sample, about one third of the sample can be characterized as high-risk juveniles and almost one third as *very high-risk juveniles* (Kruissink & Verwers, 2002). The boys of our sample all belonged to the occasional offenders and were not in custody nor sentenced to prison. They were all school-going youth who lived with (one or both of) their parents. In addition, we would like to emphasize that these boys were suspected of or convicted for **any** criminal offense and not necessarily suspected of, or convicted for a violent offence. It may very well be the case that some boys were convicted for example skipping school, fare dodging in public transport or shoplifting.

An information letter describing the study was sent to parents who could indicate if they did not wish their son to participate. Participants were informed that the information

provided in the questionnaire would remain confidential and that they were free not to participate in the research. Inclusion criteria were (a) sufficient reading ability to complete self-report measures (b) age between 15 and 18 years old. As no background information of the non-participants was available, possible non-response bias could not be estimated.

Participants' anonymity was maintained by ascribing identification numbers to surveys rather than names. At the project site, surveys were inspected for validity (e.g., incomplete sections or identical responses to every item). Fifteen boys subsequently were disqualified because they failed the initial validity check. Five boys did not complete the questionnaire, the remainder either filled in identical responses to every item (2) or filled in 'abnormally' high scores on all juvenile delinquency items (8) (for example, stating that he committed each offence thousand times). All the boys came from the school-sample: twelve of them were Dutch; the mean age was 16.01 ( $SD = 0.91$ ); and socio economic status ranged from medium to upper class.

## Measures

*Demographics.* Participants were asked to indicate their *age* on a single item: "What is your age?" A measure of *socio-economic status* was captured through the participants rating of his family's wealth. Responses were given from very rich, quite rich, medium rich, not so rich, not rich. Traditionally, SES is measured using a scoring regime based on occupation, monthly household income and education. However, previous research in the Netherlands has shown that relatively many adolescents do not know whether their parents are employed or not and about 40% does not know the educational level of the parents (Lamers-Winkelmann, Slot, Bijl, & Vijlbrief, 2007). Since our sample consists of self-reports of adolescent boys, we preferred to capture SES through the boy's rating of his family's wealth (cf. Lamers-Winkelmann et al., 2007; Ter Bogt, Van Dorsselaar, & Vollebergh, 2005). Finally, participants were asked to indicate their *family structure* by answering the following question: "Which of the following 'home situations' applies best to you?" 'I live with ....' Responses to this item were given as (1) both parents, (b) my father, (c) my mother, (d) both parents on different addresses, (e) other.

*Ethnicity.* Adolescents' ethnicity was classified based on their responses to a single item in the questionnaire: "What ethnic group best describes you?" (see also Deković, Wissink, & Meijer, 2004). Only those adolescents who designated themselves as Dutch, or Moroccan-Dutch were included in the present analyses. Dutch boys serve as the reference category in all regression models in this research.

*Perceived Parenting Styles.* Based on the original EMBU (Egna Minnen Beträffande Uppfostran: My memories of child upbringing; Perris, Jacobsson, Lindstrijm, Von Knorring,

& Perris, 1980) Gerlsma, Arrindell, Van der Veen, and Emmelkamp (1991) developed the EMBU-A, a self-report instrument for measuring adolescents' current perception of parental rearing. The EMBU-A consists of two parallel questionnaires concerning relationships with father and mother, each with 56 items, and using a 4-point Likert-type scale (i.g., 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often and 4 = most of the time).

For the present analyses, we only used the subscales *Emotional Warmth*, *Rejection*, and the two items measuring *Strictness* and *Consistency*, because research has shown that these aspects of parenting are seen as relevant with respect to the development of juvenile delinquency (Cottle et al., 2001; Hoeve, et al., 2011; Palmer & Hollin, 2001; Reid et al., 2002; Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 2002). The questionnaire was introduced with instructions that read: in the next section, we would like to find out more about your relationship with your mother/stepmother/female caretaker and your father/stepfather/male caretaker. Thus, for example, responses would include ratings of a maternal relationship, even though a participant may have indicated living in a single father home. Examples of items measuring *Emotional Warmth* and *Rejection* are "Does your father/mother show you that he/she loves you?" and "Does your father/mother blame you for everything?" respectively.

For paternal emotional warmth, alpha coefficients were 0.95 for Dutch boys and 0.97 for Moroccan-Dutch boys respectively. For maternal emotional warmth, alpha coefficients were 0.93 and 0.97 respectively. As for paternal rejection, alpha coefficients were 0.96 for Dutch boys and 0.93 for Moroccan-Dutch boys. For maternal rejection, alpha coefficients were 0.93 and 0.91. All coefficients indicate a high reliability (Kline, 1999; Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998).

*Violent Delinquency.* *Violent delinquency* was assessed using the Youth Delinquency Survey of the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice (2005), a self-report measure of delinquent behaviour by the youngsters. For each offense, the youngster was asked whether he had 'ever' committed it (lifetime prevalence) and, if so, 'how often in the previous twelve months' (number of incidences in the previous year). For the present analyses only the number of *violent incidences* (nine-item index) committed in the previous year was considered.

The internal consistency reliability (Alpha coefficient) was 0.71 for Dutch boys and 0.85 for Moroccan-Dutch boys, indicating an acceptable to good reliability (Kline, 1999; Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998).

*Social Desirability.* Given the possibility of cultural variance in willingness to self-disclose socially undesirable behavior (e.g., Junger-Tas, 1996), the social desirability scale from the "*Dating Violence Questionnaire*" (Douglas & Straus, 2006) was used as a control. The scale consists of 13 items, using a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree,

3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree) on behaviors and emotions that are slightly undesirable but true for almost everyone, such as 'There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone' and 'I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget'. The more of these items the respondent denies, the more likely a respondent is to avoid admitting the undesirable criminal behaviors that are the focus of this study. Scale reliability of the social desirability measure in this study was fair as coefficient alpha was 0.63.

### **Statistical analyses**

As a first step, initial descriptive statistics were computed for several demographic variables. Means and standard deviations were computed for continuous variables, while percentages are presented for categorical variables. Additionally, to identify potential confounders we performed independent sample-t-tests and chi-square tests to compare means and percentages for Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Next, several analyses of covariances (ANCOVAs) were conducted, controlling for background variables such as age, SES and family structure, to examine differences in self-reported juvenile delinquency and parenting variables of fathers and mothers respectively by ethnic group. Further, in anticipation of predictive analyses, a correlation matrix for paternal parenting variables, maternal parenting variables, and self-reported violent delinquency was computed. Finally, hierarchical regression analyses were utilized using both paternal and maternal parenting variables as predictors of violent delinquency by ethnicity and key demographic variables as controls. An inversely repeated 2-step procedure was performed to examine the unique variance explained by each set of father and mother parenting variables. Variance that was shared between the two sets could then be identified (see Vazsonyi & Pickering, 2003). In the first analysis, key demographics were entered as a control in step 1, all paternal parenting variables were entered in the second step followed by all maternal parenting variables. In the second part of this analysis, all maternal parenting variables were entered in the second step and then all paternal parenting variables.

## **RESULTS**

### **Initial Analyses**

Characteristics of the study participants are reported in Table 1. More than three quarters of the sample identified themselves as Dutch (76.5%), the remainder as Moroccan-Dutch (23.5%). Participants of the study ranged in age from 15 to 18, with a mean age of 15.8 years ( $SD = .9$ ). Almost 12% of the sample indicated his family's socio-economic status as low, rating his family's wealth as not (so) rich. By far, most boys reported that they lived with both parents (84.7%). Given the possibility of cultural variance in willingness to self-disclose socially undesirable behavior (e.g., Junger-Tas, 1996), a social desirability scale was



used as a control. The overall mean score on social desirability was 32.6 ( $SD = 4.7$ ). No significant differences in mean scores were found between the two groups ( $t = -.83, p = .41$ ) and therefore this variable was not included in further analyses. Significant differences between the groups were found on the variables age ( $t = -4.07, p < .001$ ), socio-economic status ( $\chi^2(4) = 63.67, p < .001$ ) and family structure ( $\chi^2(4) = 9.88, p = .04$ ).

**Table 1.** Sample Characteristics

	Dutch boys (N = 365)		Moroccan boys (N = 112)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD			
<b>Age</b>	15.7	.8	16.1	1.0	-4.07	< .001	-.47
<b>Social Desirability</b>	32.5	4.7	32.8	4.7	-.83	.41	-.09
	N	%	N	%	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
<b>Socio Economic Status</b>							
Very rich	16	4.4%	2	1.8%			
Quite rich	127	34.8%	8	7.1%			
Medium rich	199	54.5%	70	62.5%			
Not so rich	19	5.2%	23	20.5%			
Not rich	4	1.1%	9	8.0%			
<b>Family structure</b>					9.88	.04	.14
Both parents	299	81.9%	105	93.8%			
My father	5	1.4%	1	.9%			
My mother	20	5.5%	3	2.7%			
Parents different addresses	37	10.1%	3	2.7%			
Other	4	1.1%	0	0.0%			

Note. Discrepancies between totals when summed reflects rounding errors.

### Analyses of Covariance

A number of ANCOVAs were carried out to examine the effect of ethnicity on the criterion measures using the three background variables age, SES and family structure, as covariates. A summary of these analyses is presented in Table 2.

#### Violent offending

A one-way analysis of covariance showed that ethnicity had significant effect ( $F = 23.47, df = 1, p < .001$ ). On average, Moroccan-Dutch boys (1.8,  $SD = 2.6$ ) reported committing significantly more violent acts in the previous year than their Dutch peers (.8,  $SD = 1.3$ )

*Paternal parenting variables*

Dutch boys reported significantly higher levels of paternal emotional warmth (59.7,  $SD = 13.8$ ) as well as paternal consistency (3.0,  $SD = 1.0$ ) in comparison to Moroccan-Dutch boys (45.7,  $SD = 18.5$  and 2.5,  $SD = 1.1$ ) ( $F = 44.60$ ,  $p < .001$ , for emotional warmth;  $F = 18.94$ ,  $p < .001$ , for consistency). Further, Dutch boys reported significantly lower levels of paternal rejection (33.3,  $SD = 16.6$ ) and paternal strictness (2.2,  $SD = 1.2$ ) in comparison to Moroccan-Dutch boys (39.6,  $SD = 15.3$  and 2.6,  $SD = 1.2$ ) ( $F = -9.16$ ,  $p < .001$ , for rejection;  $F = 12.68$ ,  $p < .001$ , for strictness).

**Table 2.** ANCOVA results for Violent Delinquency and Parenting Variables in Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys

	Dutch boys (N = 365)		Moroccan boys (N = 112)		F	p	$\eta^2$
	M	SD	M	SD			
<b><i>Violent delinquency</i></b>	.8	1.3	1.8	2.6	23.47	< .001	.05
<b><i>Parenting variables</i></b>							
<b><i>Father items</i></b>							
Emotional warmth	59.7	13.8	45.7	18.5	44.60	< .001	.09
Rejection	33.3	16.6	39.6	15.3	9.16	< .001	.02
Strictness	2.2	1.2	2.6	1.2	12.68	< .001	.03
Consistency	3.0	1.0	2.5	1.1	18.94	< .001	.04
<b><i>Mother items</i></b>							
Emotional warmth	61.0	11.9	49.5	16.6	36.35	< .001	.07
Rejection	30.9	12.5	34.6	12.2	5.90	.02	.01
Strictness	2.0	1.0	2.1	.9	.84	.36	< .001
Consistency	3.0	1.0	2.6	1.0	12.45	< .001	.03

Note. Missing data (N = 3) were not included in calculations of Means  
df = 1;  $\eta^2$  = the effect size.

*Maternal parenting variables*

Dutch boys reported significantly higher levels of maternal emotional warmth (61.0,  $SD = 11.9$ ) and maternal consistency (3.0,  $SD = 1.0$ ) in comparison to Moroccan-Dutch boys (49.5,  $SD = 16.6$ ; 2.6,  $SD = 1.0$ ;  $F = 36.35$ ,  $p < .001$ , for emotional warmth;  $F = 12.45$ ,  $p < .001$ , for consistency). Lastly, Dutch boys reported significantly lower levels of maternal rejection (30.9,  $SD = 12.5$ ) in comparison to Moroccan-Dutch boys (34.6,  $SD = 12.2$ ;  $F = 5.90$ ,  $p = .02$ ). However, no significant differences were found in maternal strictness.

## Correlational Analyses

Table 3 displays the associations among the measures separately for Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Results show that all (significant) correlations between both paternal as well as maternal parenting variables and violent offending were in the expected direction, although the strength of the associations varied with the specific aspect of paternal and maternal parenting respectively considered and across ethnic group. In general, the indicators of the quality of the parent-child relationship, respectively emotional warmth and rejection, were more strongly related to juvenile violent offending than were the concrete parenting behaviors strictness and consistency. Furthermore, for Dutch boys, two of the predictor variables were unrelated to violent delinquency, namely both paternal and maternal consistency. The effect sizes of the remaining parental variables and violent delinquency were significant but small, ranging from  $r = .09$  to  $r = .16$  (Cohen, 1988). For Moroccan-Dutch boys all predictor variables were significantly related to violent delinquency. The effect sizes of both paternal and maternal strictness and consistency and violent delinquency were small, ranging from  $r = .19$  and  $r = .40$ . For the remaining parental variables all effects were moderate, ranging from  $r = .45$  to  $r = .49$  (Cohen, 1988). A z-test for comparing independent correlations (DeCoster, 2007) showed that with the exception of the variables paternal and maternal strictness (respectively,  $Z = |1.22|$ ,  $p = .22$  and  $Z = |0.66|$ ,  $p = .51$ ), the strength of the associations for all paternal and maternal variables and violent delinquency (all,  $p < .01$ ) were significantly stronger for Moroccan-Dutch boys than for Dutch boys.

**Table 3.** Correlations of Individual Predictors and Violent Delinquency by Ethnicity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>1. Violent delinquency</b>		-.16**	.13**	.09*	.04ns	-.14**	.16**	.12**	-.02ns
<b>2. Father warmth</b>	-.45**		-.16ns	.09*	.66*	.59**	-.28**	-.15**	.30**
<b>3. Rejection</b>	.48**	-.51**		.69**	.20**	-.24**	.53**	.26**	-.15**
<b>4. Strictness</b>	.22**	-.42**	.59**		.20**	-.14**	.30**	.40**	-.07ns
<b>5. Consistency</b>	-.33**	.67**	-.39**	-.06ns		.37**	-.12*	-.10*	.54**
<b>6. Mother warmth</b>	-.49**	.59**	-.52**	-.39**	.57**		-.20**	-.14**	.55**
<b>7. Rejection</b>	.49**	-.37**	.76**	.34**	-.35**	-.46**		.49**	-.01ns
<b>8. Strictness</b>	.19*	-.19*	.30**	.61**	.00ns	-.25**	.44**		-.01ns
<b>9. Consistency</b>	-.40**	.55**	-.42**	-.07ns	.77**	.65**	-.49**	.01ns	

Note. Correlation for Dutch boys are found in the top half of the matrix, while those for Moroccan-Dutch boys are in the bottom half.

ns = nonsignificant; \* $p \leq .05$ ; \*\* $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

The intercorrelations among both paternal and maternal parenting variables were moderate to strong, with especially strong negative associations found between parental

emotional warmth and rejection. Here again, differences among both ethnic groups were found, with paternal warmth was positively associated with paternal strictness for Dutch boys, while it was negatively associated for Moroccan-Dutch boys.

### **Hierarchical Regression Analyses**

To determine whether it was necessary to analyze separately by ethnicity, regression analyses including ethnicity as a main effect as well as sets of interaction terms (Ethnicity × Paternal variables and Ethnicity × Maternal variables) were conducted to test whether ethnicity added any explanatory power beyond the independent paternal and maternal variables already included in the model. Hierarchical regressions were run for self-reported violent delinquency. The control variables and the independent variables were entered on the first step, ethnicity was entered as a main effect on the second step, and the set of interaction terms which applied to that particular analysis was entered on the third step. The test of both main effect and interaction terms was necessary to thoroughly exhaust the possibility that ethnicity may add explanatory power which should be explored through separate analyses. In the analysis involving paternal variables as the independent variable, the main effect of ethnicity accounted for only 1% of variance of violent delinquency ( $R^2 = .01, p < .01$ ). In addition, ethnicity added another 5% of variance ( $R^2 = .05, p < .01$ ) through the subsequent entry of the four Ethnicity × Paternal interaction terms (entered simultaneously as a set on the third step of the regression after the control and independent variables as well as ethnicity had been partialled out). For the analysis involving maternal variables as the independent variable, the main effect of ethnicity accounted for 2% of variance of violent delinquency ( $R^2 = .02, p < .01$ ). In addition, ethnicity added another 7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .07, p < .01$ ) through the subsequent entry of the four Ethnicity × Maternal interaction terms. These findings indicate that ethnicity plays a significant role in the relationship between self-reported delinquency and paternal and maternal parenting domains. The fact that these tests revealed a significant amount of variance explained by both ethnicity and the interaction term sets or both is an indication that it is necessary to complete subsequent regression analyses separately by ethnicity. The results of the separate hierarchical regression analyses are presented in Tables 4 and 5. In these analyses, we controlled for age, socio-economic class and family structure. When all paternal and maternal parenting variables respectively are entered as one block, this study shows the significance of perceived paternal and maternal emotional warmth in self-reported violent delinquency. In addition, the results show that paternal and maternal variables together explain 6% of the variance in self-reported violent delinquency for Dutch boys and 23% for Moroccan-Dutch boys. When the amount of variance explained by control variables was included in the model, the predictor variables explained 11% of the total variance of violent delinquency for Dutch and 38% for Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys.

**Table 4.** Hierarchical Regression analyses on violent offending: Dutch boys

<i>Model 1</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Step 1. Demographics <sup>a</sup>				
	Age	.17	.09	.10
	SES	-.39***	.10	-.20
	Family Structure	.18**	.07	.14
Step 2. Father Items <sup>b</sup>				
	Warmth	-.02***	.01	-.23
	Rejection	.01	.01	.13
	Strictness	-.02	.08	-.01
	Consistency	.10	.09	.08
Step 3. Mother Items <sup>c</sup>				
	Warmth	.00	.01	.00
	Rejection	.00	.01	.02
	Strictness	.14	.09	.09
	Consistency	.01	.11	.01
<i>Model 2</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Step 1. Demographics <sup>a</sup>				
	Age	.17	.09	.10
	SES	-.39***	.10	-.20
	Family Structure	.18**	.07	.14
Step 2. Mother Items <sup>b</sup>				
	Warmth	-.02*	.01	-.14
	Rejection	.01	.01	.07
	Strictness	.10	.08	.07
	Consistency	.06	.09	.04
Step 3. Father Items <sup>c</sup>				
	Warmth	-.02	.01	-.23
	Rejection	.01	.01	.14
	Strictness	-.07	.09	-.06
	Consistency	.11	.11	.08

Model 1:

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = .06$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ;  $\Delta F = 7.79***$ <sup>b</sup> Step 2:  $R^2 = .11$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ;  $\Delta F = 4.44**$ <sup>c</sup> Step 3:  $R^2 = .11$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ;  $\Delta F = .62ns$ 

Model 2:

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = .06$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ;  $\Delta F = 7.79***$ <sup>b</sup> Step 2:  $R^2 = .10$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .04$ ;  $\Delta F = 3.56**$ <sup>c</sup> Step 3:  $R^2 = .11$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ;  $\Delta F = 1.46ns$ 

The inversely repeated 2-step procedure indicates that for Dutch boys the paternal parenting variables uniquely explain 2% of the variance and the maternal parenting variables uniquely explain 1% of the variance. Another 4% of the variance in self-reported delinquency was shared by both father and mother variables. For Moroccan-Dutch boys, paternal parenting variables uniquely explain 1% of the variance and the maternal parenting variables uniquely explain 4% of the variance. Further, about 18% of the variance in self-reported delinquency was shared by both father and mother variables.

**Table 5.** Hierarchical Regression analyses on violent offending: Moroccan-Dutch boys

<i>Model 1</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Step 1. Demographics <sup>a</sup>				
	Age	-.03	.22	-.01
	SES	1.25***	.30	.38
	Family Structure	-.84*	.40	-.19
Step 2. Father Items <sup>b</sup>				
	Warmth	-.04*	.02	-.26
	Rejection	.07***	.02	.39
	Strictness	-.31	.24	-.15
	Consistency	.06	.27	.03
Step 3. Mother Items <sup>c</sup>				
	Warmth	-.02	.04	-.11
	Rejection	.04	.04	.19
	Strictness	.12	.40	.04
	Consistency	-.23	.46	-.09
<i>Model 2</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Step 1. Demographics <sup>a</sup>				
	Age	-.03	.22	-.01
	SES	1.25***	.30	.38
	Family Structure	-.84*	.40	-.19
Step 2. Mother Items <sup>b</sup>				
	Warmth	-.04*	.02	-.25
	Rejection	.07**	.02	.34
	Strictness	-.15	.27	-.05
	Consistency	-.06	.30	-.02
Step 3. Father Items <sup>c</sup>				
	Warmth	-.02	.04	.16
	Rejection	.04	.03	.21
	Strictness	-.27	.34	-.13
	Consistency	.19	.41	.08

Model 1:

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = .16$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .16$ ;  $\Delta F = 6.64***$

<sup>b</sup> Step 2:  $R^2 = .34$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .19$ ;  $\Delta F = 7.48**$

<sup>c</sup> Step 3:  $R^2 = .38$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .04$ ;  $\Delta F = 1.42ns$

Model 2:

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = .16$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .16$ ;  $\Delta F = 6.64***$

<sup>b</sup> Step 2:  $R^2 = .37$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .21$ ;  $\Delta F = 8.83***$

<sup>c</sup> Step 3:  $R^2 = .38$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ;  $\Delta F = .39ns$

## DISCUSSION

Although both theory and empirical research recognize the family as an important influence on juvenile delinquency (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Palmer & Hollin, 2001; Simons et al., 2007; Stouthamer-Loeber, et al., 2002), extant literature appears divided over whether or not the etiology of violent delinquency for ethnic minority youth is somehow distinct from standard criminological theories, and whether parenting is a culturally distinct source (Davalos et al., 2005; Lindahl & Malik, 1999; Smith & Krohn, 1995). Studies with ethnically diverse samples show inconsistent findings (Davalos et al., 2005; Davidson & Cardemil,

2009; Wissink et al., 2006). Our analyses attend to the much needed empirical research on the etiology of the involvement of juvenile violent delinquency for ethnic minority youth. For these reasons alone, we consider this study on parenting an important step in understanding the involvement of Moroccan-Dutch boys in juvenile delinquency. Results build upon the extant literature in several ways.

First, the current study demonstrates that the number of incidences of violent offending is higher for Moroccan-Dutch boys than for native Dutch boys (*hypothesis 1*). This is in line with the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in official crime statistics (e.g., De Jong, 2007; Jennissen et al., 2009; Veen et al., 2011).

Second, the findings of this study demonstrate ethnic differences in the degree to which Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys perceive their parents' upbringing (*hypothesis 2*), with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting lower levels of parental emotional warmth and parental consistency, and higher levels of parental rejection and strictness in comparison with their Dutch peers. Here, ethnicity seems to be an important factor associated with parenting styles and patterns. This is in line with previous studies demonstrating that parent-child relationships differ between cultures, since parents behave according to the values and norms in their own culture (Dwairy, 2006). However, several studies have shown that the relationship between parents and their children in collectivistic cultures, such as the Moroccan culture, is closer and more mutually dependent than in individualistic societies, such as the Netherlands (Dwairy et al, 2006). Based on those studies, one would expect that Moroccan-Dutch boys in our study would have reported higher levels of parental emotional warmth and lower levels of parental rejection. However, these expectations were not confirmed. One possible explanation is that perceived connectedness is positively associated with a higher family economic status (Dwairy & Achoui, 2010). Significant differences in socio-economic status were found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys rating their family's wealth significantly lower than their Dutch peers. However, alternative explanations are possible and this issue should be studied in greater depth.

Third, this study finds ethnic differences in the association between perceived parenting and violent offending (*hypothesis 3*). Like previous studies, this study shows that, within both groups, emotional warmth and rejection are significantly associated to violent offending. A boy who feels unloved or rejected seems unlikely to be very involved with his parents at both an emotional as well as a practical level. This provides further evidence that adolescent boys who are reared in a way they perceive to be cold and unsupportive may be more likely to be involved in juvenile violent delinquency and vice versa. Similarly, and in line with previous studies, the results show that for both Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys perceived strictness is associated with violent delinquency (Hoeve et al., 2011; Low & Stocker, 2005; Vazsonyi & Pickering, 2003). However, unlike prior research, perceived paternal and maternal consistency are unrelated to violent delinquency for Dutch boys (Cottle et al.,

2001; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Simons et al., 2004; Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 2002). This might be due to the fact that the current study is limited in the sense that consistency in parenting was a single-item measure. One of the disadvantages of single-item measures may lie in their psychometric properties, although research has shown the advantages of single-item measures as straightforward, simple and economic (Burisch, 1984; Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001).

In addition, and in line with a vast body of research identifying ethnic differences in the strength of associations between parenting variables and violent offending (e.g. Kuperminc, Blatt, Shahar, Henrich, Leadbeater, 2004; Smith & Krohn, 1995; Wissink et al., 2006), the associations of almost all parenting variables and violent delinquency are significantly stronger for Moroccan-Dutch boys than for Dutch boys. Although the following speculation awaits empirical validation, a possible explanation could be found by the fact that one of the primary values across Moroccan families is the value of familism, as opposed to the Western value of autonomy (Pels & De Haan, 2003). Familism carries the expectations and sense of obligation that the family will be the primary source of support, both instrumental and emotional. Thus, when parents fail to provide sufficient help and support due to a lack of resources and skills to do better, which may be particularly true for ethnic minority families in general and Moroccan-Dutch families in particular, it seems reasonable to expect that the effects of perceived parenting on violent offending are much stronger for Moroccan-Dutch boys in comparison with their Dutch peers. Further work should be done to identify possible differences and answers regarding these differences in familial influence on violent offending across various ethnicities.

Furthermore, ethnic differences are also found between the intercorrelations among all paternal and maternal parenting variables. All intercorrelations are moderate to strong, with especially strong negative associations between parental emotional warmth and rejection. Somewhat counterintuitively, paternal warmth is positively associated with paternal strictness for Dutch boys, while it is negatively associated for Moroccan-Dutch boys. Although it is theorized that relatively strict parenting influences the parent-child relationship positively for children with a non-western background, but not western children (Bhandari & Barnett, 2007), research has also shown that paternal behaviour is more significant in western societies, while maternal behaviour is more significant in traditional societies (Dwairy et al., 2009). It is likely that Dutch boys perceive paternal strictness as an expression of parental involvement and care, while maternal strictness might be perceived as parental interference. This may be particularly true for late adolescence. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that for Dutch boys the bivariate associations between paternal strictness and paternal emotional warmth is small. For Moroccan-Dutch families, where gender role socialization is still strongly adhered to (Stevens et al., 2007), the mother role traditionally is defined as that of caregiver, while the father role has been traditionally defined as that of a



provider and disciplinarian (Stevens et al., 2007). In this perspective, Moroccan-Dutch boys might perceived paternal strictness as a necessity rather than normal paternal behavior.

Fourth, this study shows that perceived parenting exerts a significant and direct effect on violent offending. This is in line with a vast body of research identifying parenting variables as an important influence on adolescent violent offending (e.g., Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengart, & Cauffman, 2006) (*hypothesis 4a*). This study extends prior research by suggesting that perceived paternal and maternal parenting, measured as a multidimensional construct, contributes to self-reported violent offending in both ethnic groups in a rather similar way. This is in line with studies demonstrating similar relationships across ethnic groups between parenting variables and delinquency (for example Forehand et al., 1997; Gorman-Smith et al., 1996; Vazsonyi et al., 2006). However, this study does show ethnic differences in the strength of this effect (*hypothesis 4b*). In predictive analyses, when all paternal and maternal parenting variables respectively are entered as one block, this study shows that the shared variance of paternal and maternal parenting variables on violent delinquency does significantly differ by ethnicity, with Moroccan-Dutch boys having a larger variance explained. This seems to reflect the notion that the relationship between parents and their children in collectivistic cultures is closer and more mutually dependent than in individualistic cultures (Dwairy et al., 2006). Further study using larger and more carefully stratified samples and controlling for any possible mediating factors is required to investigate the effect of parenting on juvenile delinquency cross-culturally.

Finally, although we anticipated that both paternal and maternal factors each would have their unique contribution to juvenile violent offending (*hypothesis 5*) the results of our study do not show significant differences between the unique contribution of fathers and mothers respectively. Apparently, although fathers and mothers differ in both quality and quantity of parental involvement (Dwairy & Achoui, 2010b; Hovee et al., 2011; Videon, 2005), this does not necessarily reflect differences in the effect of parenting variables on violent delinquency for each parent separately. These findings appear counterintuitive because despite the fact that fathers and mothers play a distinct role in the lives of their children and the nature of parental involvement differs between fathers and mothers, their unique contribution to violent offending is small. This might be particularly true for Moroccan-Dutch families, where gender role socialization is still strongly adhered to (Stevens et al., 2007), with the mother role traditionally defined as that of caregiver; thus, women become socialized to provide warmth and care for their children, while the father role has been traditionally defined as that of a provider and disciplinarian (Stevens et al., 2007). These different responsibilities may in turn prompt mothers and fathers to use different styles of parenting in their interactions with their children. At the same time, in the current social structure the father and mother role are changing, with men helping their spouses in parenting, thus leading to fathers' spending more time with and taking more care of their children. In return

women are allowed to be more flexible in their roles balancing a career with motherhood (Bianchi, 2000). It may be the case that due to these role changes mothers and fathers adopt a similar stance to parenting or that a boy perceives his parents as one stance. In addition, because of the multiple associations between maternal and paternal parenting factors, one can assume that the shared variance between the perceived parenting of the mother and violent offending overlaps with the shared variance between the perceived parenting of the father and violent offending. Therefore, when the shared variance of all maternal and all paternal factors is assessed, the unique contribution of each parent might be relatively small.

As our society continues to become increasingly multi-ethnic, a clear mandate exists for research with ethnically diverse samples. This study constitutes an initial effort towards understanding the effect of parenting on violent offending for diverse groups of families and children. The findings of this study seem to suggest both specificity and generalizability in the effect of parenting on juvenile violent delinquency by ethnicity. Despite the mean level differences on predictor and outcome variables, and despite the moderate differences in the predictive relationships of the variables by ethnicity, the results suggest great similarity in the patterns of associations as well. Given that both paternal and maternal parenting variables were significantly related to juvenile violent delinquency in Moroccan-Dutch boys in a manner similar to Dutch peers, it is important that social services and criminal justice offices provide prevention and intervention strategies for both fathers and mothers.

### *Limitations*

Several limitations of the research design are worth mentioning. First, conclusions are based on a sample of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, in which juvenile delinquents are oversampled implicating that our sample is not necessarily representative of all Moroccan-Dutch and native Dutch adolescent boys. Second, measures are based on adolescent self-reports. Although concerns about the relative merits of self-reported delinquency and official statistics exist (Juby & Farrington, 2001), self-report measures provide a widely preferred method of measuring juvenile delinquency in research (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000; Wells & Rankin, 1991). Whereas reliance on official reports might introduce layers of potential bias between the actual behavior and the data (e.g., a substantial amount of crime is not reported, and even many crimes that are reported or brought to the attention of law enforcement agents are not officially recorded), self-reports of delinquency are considered as the data source nearest to the actual behavior (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). Third, the study's reliance on cross-sectional data limits causal inferences. Without longitudinal data, temporal ordering of the variables cannot be determined nor can ethnic differences be assessed in individual pathways to violent offending. It may very well be that a boy's delinquent behaviour led parents to become more controlling and strict, or to withdraw

emotionally. Without longitudinal data, temporal ordering of the variables cannot be determined. Fourth, children construe the meaning of a parenting style on the basis what is normative (Kagitcibasi, 2005), but to which context do immigrant children with a non-western background refer to as being normative: the 'new' individualistic host culture or the cultural group they belong to? Further complicating these issues are studies suggesting that individualistic and collectivistic tendencies can coexist (Killen & Wainryb, 2000). It may very well be that for some parenting variables a more individualistic approach is seen as normative, and for others a more collectivistic approach. However, our survey data does not inform us on these potential individual differences. Obviously, more studies are needed to broaden our knowledge of ethnic diversity in the relationship between parenting and violent offending. Finally, we classify adolescent boys into ethnic categories according to their responses on a single item in the questionnaire: "What is your ethnicity?" Self-perceived ethnicity might possibly constitute a selective group within the total group of migrants, namely those that choose still to identify with their original ethnic background, whereas those who identify as belonging to their host country are no longer detectable. Thus, migrants who identify with the host culture are left out of the comparison, possibly leading to a biased picture of the ethnic specificity of the relationship between parenting and youth delinquency. However, the definitions for autochthonous and allochthonous derived from the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS, Statistics Netherlands], in which initial immigrants are labeled first-generation allochthonous, individuals born in the Netherlands but at least one parent was born abroad are labeled as second-generation allochthonous and their children are often referred to as third-generation allochthonous, are not neutral either. The stretching of this definition to second and third generation makes that it becomes a discursive impossibility for descendants of Moroccans or other immigrants to ever become Dutch.

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# Chapter 5

## **Dangerous Boys or Boys in Danger? Ethnic differences in the prevalence of child abuse and its effect on juvenile violent delinquency**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study considers the extent to which ethnic differences in exposure to child abuse exist between native Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, and if they do, whether they are related to differences in levels of violent offending between both groups. The results demonstrate that Moroccan-Dutch boys are significantly more likely to report exposure to child abuse than Dutch boys. In addition, differences in exposure to child abuse are of sufficient magnitude to partially explain the observed differences in levels of violent offending between Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. The results of this study highlight the need for social services and criminal justice professionals to provide prevention and intervention strategies for abused adolescent boys. This may be particularly important for Moroccan-Dutch boys. Ethnic-specific prevention programs need to build on a clear understanding of the risk factors and etiology of juvenile violent offending and need to continue to examine the meaning of the differential risk ratios across ethnic groups. We suggest that further research into the effects of child abuse on juvenile violent delinquency among ethnic minority youth takes this complexity into account.

## INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency remains a serious problem in today's society (Hoeve, Dubas, Smeenk, Gerris, & Van der Laan, 2011; Wampler & Downs, 2010). In the United States, boys with an African-American or Hispanic-American background are overrepresented in juvenile crime figures (e.g., Engen, Steen, & Bridges, 2002; Hawkins, Laub & Lauritsen, 1998; McCarter, 2009; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Stahl, Finnegan, & Kang, 2007). In most European countries, ethnic minority boys with a non-Western background are disproportionately represented among juvenile offenders. This is true for Turkish boys in Germany, Algerian boys in France, and Moroccan boys in Belgium (Esterle-Hedibel, 2001; Gostomski, 2003; Put & Walgrave, 2006). Similarly, ethnic minority boys in the Netherlands show higher crime rates than native Dutch boys (De Jong, 2007; Jennissen, Blom, & Oosterwaal, 2009; Komen, 2002; Van der Laan & Blom, 2011). Particularly, Moroccan-Dutch boys are disproportionately represented among juvenile offenders (Veen, Stevens, Doreleijers, & Vollebergh, 2011) and are about four times more often charged with violent offences than would be expected from their estimated proportion in the population (Broekhuizen & Driessen, 2006). Why do ethnic minority boys in general and Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular commit more acts of juvenile delinquency than native boys? This has been a puzzling question and responses to it have varied.

### Theoretical Framework

Various explanations are reviewed of ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending and can be classified into three general categories (for a review see Lahlah, Lens, Van der Knaap & Bogaerts, 2013). First, the dominant research tradition in the study of juvenile offending has depended mostly on individual-level analyses. This theoretical approach has tended to see ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending as largely indistinguishable from individual-level explanations (Loeber & Farrington, 1998). However, individual-level explanations are unlikely to improve our understanding of ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending, since this approach does not take into consideration the larger socio-structural characteristics that distinguish groups (Hawkins, Laub, Lauritsen & Cothorn, 2000). Ethnicity per se is believed to play only a small part, if any, in accounting for ethnic difference in juvenile crime (Lahlah et al., 2013). Second, in contrast to individual-level explanations, structural approaches explore relationships between social conditions and levels of juvenile crime in a given situation or place. These approaches suggest that harsh economic, political, and social conditions that a population faces account for the disparate rates of criminality (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould, Weinberg, & Mustard, 2002; Pratt, 2001). Indeed, research has shown that structural factors such as low socioeconomic status, unemployment, and social marginalization are associated with the overrepresentation of ethnic minority youth among juvenile offenders (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould et al., 2002; Pratt, 2001). Third,

cultural perspectives assert that value systems for minority groups are qualitatively different from those of natives (Berry, 1997). Youths who are involved in two cultures can experience problems when these two cultures have partly different value systems and/or prescribe different behavior in particular situations (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2005; Berry, 2005; Junger & Polder, 1991). Meeting the normative demands of two different cultures may involve conflict and stress and subsequent dysfunctional behavior such as delinquency (see Agnew, 1992; Bovenkerk, 1994; Gabbidon & Greene, 2005; Stevens, Vollebergh, Pels, & Crijnen, 2005).

To a large extent, social and cultural approaches appear to be important influences on ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending, independently of individual-level factors (Loeber & Farrington, 1998). However, neither approach has given much thought to familial abuse in explaining ethnic differences in juvenile delinquency, which is the focus of our study.

In recent decades, research has established a clear relationship between the impact of victimization in the home and violent offending (e.g., Bolger & Patterson, 2001; Fagan, Van Horn, Hawkins, & Arthur, 2007; Stouthamer-Loeber, Wei, Homish, & Loeber, 2002; Swanson et al., 2003; Widom, 1989a, 1989b). Child abuse can refer to situations where children are direct victims of abuse as well as to situations in which children are witnessing inter-parental violence. Studies have convincingly shown that experiencing child abuse is consistently linked to an increased risk of violent delinquency in adolescence and adulthood (Gold, Sullivan, & Lewis, 2011; Lewis et al., 2007; Smith, Ireland, & Thornberry, 2005). Compared to non-abused children, youth exposed to psychologically aggressive and physically abusive parenting report higher rates of delinquency (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004), involvement in violent delinquent behavior (Herrera & McCloskey, 2001), and arrests for criminal acts (Widom, 1992). Further, sexually abused children are at higher risk of becoming involved in violent delinquency (see Bergen, Martin, Richardson, Allison, & Roeger, 2003; Yun et al., 2011).

Risk factors for child abuse that have been identified in the extant literature include characteristics such as low family income (Fagan, 2005; Messner, Raffalovich, & McMillan, 2001), broken homes (Heck & Walsh, 2000; Juby, & Farrington, 2001; Perez, 2001), large family size (Jaya & Narasimhan, 2003), and living in urban, disorganized neighbourhoods (Coulton, Korbin, Su, & Chow, 1995; Lansford et al., 2004). Similar characteristics are prominent among ethnic minority families and are commonly associated with an ethnic minority status (Ferrari, 2002). In addition, research has shown ethnic differences in the rates of child abuse exposure (Finkelhor, Turner, Omrod, & Hamby, 2005). However, few studies have comprehensively examined the extent to which the relationship between ethnicity and violent offending is mediated by exposure to child abuse (Perez, 2001). This lack of insight in child abuse and violent delinquency among ethnic minorities represents

an important gap in our understanding of violent offending and hinders prevention efforts (English, Widom, & Brandford 2002).

### *The present study*

This study seeks to expand our knowledge of the relationship between ethnicity, child abuse and violent delinquency. In particular, we aim to explore whether different ethnic groups report different levels of exposure to different types of child abuse (i.e., physical assault by a parent, sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member and witnessing inter-parental physical violence). To our knowledge there are no Dutch studies that investigate the exposure to child abuse by ethnicity. The most recent prevalence study on child abuse in the Netherlands (*NPM-2010*) is based on a replication of two studies that are very different in their design. The first study is a replication of the *National Prevalence Study of Child Abuse* (Van IJendoorn et al., 2007) and is based on facts and figures of the Dutch Child Protection Services (AMK) and professionals working with children. The authors report that about 3.4% of all 0-17-year old children experienced child abuse in the previous year according to legal definitions as included in Dutch law (Alink et al., 2011). The second study is a replication of the *Pupils on Abuse study* (Lamers-Winkelmann, Slot, Bijl, & Vijlbrief, 2007) and is based on self-report retrospective questionnaires of high-school students. This study revealed that 18.7% of the students reported at least one experience with child abuse in the preceding year (Alink et al., 2011). However, neither study has examined whether child abuse is more or less common among Moroccan-Dutch youth compared to Dutch youth. In both studies, Moroccans were allocated to the traditional minority group together with youth with a Turkish, Surinamese and Antillean background, (Alink et al., 2011), making a clear distinction by ethnicity impossible. Furthermore, we aim to explore the extent to which previous findings regarding the risk of juvenile offending associated with childhood victimization affects boys of different ethnic background.

### *Hypotheses*

Based on previous theory and research, four hypotheses are derived. From these perspectives, it is hypothesized that ethnic differences in serious violent offending will be found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting higher incidences of violent offending (Hypothesis 1). In addition, we argue that the prevalence of child abuse will vary systematically across ethnic groups, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting more exposure to child abuse (Hypothesis 2). We further hypothesize that a history of child abuse increases the likelihood of juvenile violent offending (Hypothesis 3). Lastly, we expect that differences in prevalence of child abuse explain ethnic differences in levels of violent offending (Hypothesis 4). It is important to determine whether ethnic differences in levels of exposure to child abuse exist and add to the differences in levels of violent offending between Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. A

focus on both ethnicity and child abuse may serve as a fertile ground for improving theory and research on juvenile delinquency.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants and Procedure**

The data used to test these hypotheses are taken from both a school survey and a youth probation office survey. The questionnaire focused on the life-style of adolescents, with a particular interest in both risk and protective factors of juvenile offending, in three major cities and two rural districts in the Netherlands in the year 2011.

The intention of the school survey was to survey all fourth, fifth and sixth-grade pupils of five participating high schools via paper-and-pencil interviews during an one hour lesson, while a research staff member was present and surveyed 941 adolescents, both boys and girls. Except for special need schools, all types of schools are represented in the survey. The following analyses were based only on data from 364 Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Compared with the original sample, the number of cases was significantly lower because only adolescent boys who designated themselves as Dutch (295) or Moroccan-Dutch (69) were included in the present analyses.

Second, with the goal of oversampling delinquent boys (Loeber et al., 2005), participants were recruited among Dutch (70) and Moroccan-Dutch (43) boys subjected to a supervision order either at the time of the study or in the period preceding the study (113), in two (regionally operating) youth probation offices. However, at the time of the study they were neither in custody nor sentenced to prison: They were school-going youth who all lived with (one or both of) their parents. To avoid that boys were selected twice, via both school and the youth probation office, probation officers were asked to exclude boys attending one of the five participating high schools. In addition, when a research staff member contacted the boy for scheduling an appointment, a boy was asked which school he attended too. None of the boys attended one of the five participating high schools. A research staff member was present while the boys completed the questionnaire on their own either at their school or at a time and place convenient to them but did not look at the participants' responses unless the subject asked for help.

An information letter describing the study was sent to parents who could indicate whether they objected to their son's participation (passive consent). Participants were informed that the information provided in the study would remain confidential and that they were free not to participate in the research. Inclusion criteria were (a) sufficient reading ability to complete self-report measures, and (b) age between 15 and 18 years old. Because no information on the background characteristics of the non-participants was available, possible non-response bias could not be estimated.

Self-report measures were used to assess child characteristics and to measure perceived parent characteristics. With regard to measuring juvenile delinquency, an on-going debate exists concerning the relative merits of using self-report data as opposed to relying on police or court records. Although some authors prefer using official data only, authors studying the importance of family dynamics with regard to juvenile delinquency tend to prefer self-report data (Juby & Farrington, 2001). They argue that self-reported delinquency can be considered as the data source that most accurately reflects actual behavior (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000), while reliance on official reports may introduce layers of potential bias between actual behavior and the data because a substantial amount of crime is never reported and many crimes that are reported are never solved as a result of which it is unknown whether they were committed by juveniles or adults.

A research staff member was present while the participants completed the questionnaires but did not look at the participants' responses unless the subject asked for help. Participants' anonymity was maintained by ascribing identification numbers to surveys rather than names. At the project site, surveys were inspected for validity (e.g., incomplete sections or identical responses to every item). The responses of fifteen boys were subsequently excluded from the data set because they failed the initial check: Five boys did not complete the questionnaire and the remainder either filled in identical responses to every item (two boys) or filled in 'abnormally' high scores on all juvenile delinquency items (for example, stating that he committed each offence thousand times) (eight boys). All these boys were from the school-sample: twelve of them were Dutch; their mean age was 16.01 years ( $SD = 0.91$ ); their social class ranged from medium to high; and nine boys reported living with both parents.

## Measures

*Demographics.* Participants were asked to indicate their age on a single item: "What is your age?" An indication of social class was assessed through participants' rating of their family's wealth. Responses were given from *very rich*, *quite rich*, *medium rich*, *not so rich*, *not rich*. Although this is a subjective measure, we chose to assess social class in this way because previous research has shown that adolescents are not able to give an estimation of their family's net monthly income (cf. Lamers-Winkelman, Slot, Bijl, & Vijlbrief, 2007; Ter Bogt, Van Dorsselaar, & Vollebergh, 2005). In addition, the participants were asked to indicate whether their father and mother, respectively, were unemployed. Lastly, participants were asked to indicate their family structure by answering the following question: "Which of the following 'home situations' applies best to you?" 'I live with ...' Responses to this item were given as (a) both parents, (b) my father, (c) my mother, (d) both parents on different addresses, (e) other.

*Ethnicity.* Adolescents' ethnicity was classified based on their responses to a single item in the questionnaire: "What ethnic group best describes you?" (see also Deković, Wissink, & Meijer, 2004). Only those adolescents who designated themselves as Dutch, or Moroccan-Dutch were included in the present analyses. Dutch boys serve as the reference category in all regression models in this research.

*History of Child Abuse.* Child abuse experiences were assessed with the "Unpleasant and Nasty Incidents Questionnaire" (see also Lamers-Winkelmann, Slot, Bijl, & Vijlbrief, 2007). This questionnaire is based on the Dating Violence Questionnaire (Douglas & Straus, 2006) and the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales (CTSPC; Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore, & Runyan, 1998). The questionnaire assesses (recalled) victimization as reported by the adolescent.

In the current study three prevalence indices were included: Physical assault by a parent (8-item index); Sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member (2-item index); and Witnessing inter-parental physical violence (7-item index). Examples of items measuring Physical assault by a parent, Sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member and Witnessing inter-parental physical violence are respectively; "Has your mom/dad ever grabbed you around the neck or choked you?", "Has an adult family member ever forced you into performing certain sexual acts" and "Has your mom/dad ever thrown or knocked the other one down?". The responses to the items that measure physical assault by a parent were used to classify respondents into a group that experienced no abuse (coded as 0) and a group that experienced physical abuse on at least one occasion (coded as 1). Similarly, based on the items pertaining to sexual abuse by a family member respondents were classified into a group that experienced no abuse and a group that had been raped or sexually assaulted by a family member on one or more occasions. Lastly, using the items that ask about witnessing physical violence between parents, respondents were classified as witnessing physical violence between their parents (coded as 1) if they responded positively on having seen at least one of the parents physically abusing the other on at least one occasion. Respondents who did not report any of such experiences were classified as 'non-witnesses' (coded as 0).

Alpha coefficients for the three prevalence indices are respectively .76 for physical assault by a parent, .71 for sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member, and .84 for witnessing inter-parental physical violence, indicating a good to high internal consistency for each of these indices (Kline, 1999; Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998).

*Violent Delinquency.* Violent delinquency was assessed using the Youth Delinquency Survey (YDS) of the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice (2005). The YDS is a self-report measure of juvenile delinquent behavior and comprises six categories of specific criminal acts: Internet offences (six-item index), drug offences (three-item index), discrimination (four-item index), vandalism (seven-item index),



property offences (ten-item index of moderate to serious property offences) and violent offences (nine-item index of moderate to serious violent acts). Questions refer to both minor and frequently occurring offences (e.g., fare dodging in public transport, vandalism or shoplifting) as well as serious and less frequent ones (e.g. burglary, robbery or hurting someone with a weapon). For each offence, respondents were asked whether he had ever committed it (lifetime prevalence) and, if so, how often he had committed the offence in the previous twelve months (number of incidences in the previous year). For the present analyses only the number of violent offences committed in the year preceding the study was considered. The alpha coefficient for violent delinquency was found to be .81, indicating a good reliability (Kline, 1999; Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998).

*Social Desirability.* Given the possibility of cultural variance in willingness to disclose socially undesirable behavior (e.g. Junger-Tas, 1996), the social Desirability Scale from the Dating Violence Questionnaire (Douglas & Straus, 2006) was used to assess social desirability. The scale consists of 13 items regarding behaviors and emotions that are slightly undesirable but true for almost everyone, such as 'There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone' and 'I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget'. Respondents are asked to what extent they agree with the statements using a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree). As a respondent disagrees with more of these items, chances are greater that he will avoid to report the undesirable criminal behaviors that are the focus of this study. Scale reliability of the social desirability measure in this study was fair with an alpha coefficient of .63. In general, an alpha coefficient of .60 or higher is considered acceptable for research purposes (Nunnally, 1978).

### Statistical analyses

Descriptive statistics were calculated. Means and standard deviations were computed for continuous variables, while percentages are presented for categorical variables. Additionally, we performed independent sample t-tests and chi-square tests to compare means and percentages by ethnicity. To identify potential confounders, we examined if there were any (socio-demographic) variables that were significantly associated with our dependent variable, violent delinquency. Next, we performed chi-square tests to examine differences between the two ethnic groups in levels of exposure to child abuse, i.e., parental physical violence, sexual abuse by a family member, and witnessing parental physical violence. To test the association between child abuse exposure and violent delinquency, correlational analyses were performed for each ethnic group separately. Further, we examined the mediating effect of the different types of child abuse on the relation between ethnicity and violent delinquency. To establish multiple mediation as proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008) three criteria should be met. First, the predictor variable (*ethnicity*)

must be significantly related to the potential mediators (*different types of child abuse*). The regression coefficients representing these effects will be denoted as  $a1$  to  $a3$ . Second, the potential mediators are required to hold a significant relation with the outcome variable (*violent offending*) after controlling for the effects of the predictor variable (denoted as  $b1$  to  $b3$ ). Lastly, the third criterion holds that to establish full mediation, the effect of the predictor on the outcome variable after controlling for the potential mediators (denoted as  $c'$ ) should be zero. If the effect of the predictor after controlling for the mediator ( $c'$ ) on the outcome variable is not equal to zero, but is significantly reduced compared to the total effect of ethnicity on violent offending (denoted as  $c$ ) then partial mediation is indicated (see Figure 1). Because the assumption of normality of the sampling distribution of the total and indirect effects, through the potential mediators, is questionable, particularly in small samples as the case in this study, the indirect effects of ethnicity on violent delinquency were bootstrapped.

All analyses were performed on the total sample as well as the school sample and probation sample separately. Similar results were found in the separate samples as compared to the total sample which indicates that the results in the total sample did not suffer from sample selection bias.

## RESULTS

### Preliminary Analyses

Characteristics of the study participants are reported in Table 1. More than three quarters of the sample identified themselves as Dutch (76.5%), the remainder as Moroccan-Dutch (23.5%). Participants of the study ranged in age from 15 to 18, with a mean age of 15.77 years ( $SD = 0.86$ ). Almost 12% of the sample rated their families' wealth as not (so) rich, indicating they were from a lower class background. By far, most boys reported that they lived with both parents (84.7%). The social circumstances of Moroccan-Dutch boys are particularly poor. They rated their families' wealth significantly lower than their Dutch peers. In addition, the proportion of unemployed parents is also significantly higher for Moroccan-Dutch boys. Significant differences between the groups were found on the variables age ( $t = -4.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ), social class ( $\chi^2(4) = 63.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ), parental unemployment ( $\chi^2(1) = 109.67$ ,  $p < .01$  and  $\chi^2(1) = 143.85$ ,  $p < .01$  for father and mother, respectively) and family structure ( $\chi^2(4) = 9.88$ ,  $p < .04$ ). To identify any potential confounders we should control for in our analyses, we checked whether the variables described above were significantly related to our dependent variable, violent delinquency. Social class ( $r = 0.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ), unemployment of the father ( $r = 0.27$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and unemployment of the mother ( $r = 0.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were found to significantly correlate with violent offending and were therefore included in further analyses.

### Do ethnic differences in violent offending exist?

As a first step in our analysis and in line with Hypothesis 1, we examined the frequency of having committed a violent act in the preceding year by ethnic group. On average, Moroccan-Dutch boys (1.82,  $SD = 2.58$ ) reported committing significantly more violent acts in the preceding year than their Dutch peers (0.79,  $SD = 1.34$ ) ( $t = -4.08$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Given the possibility of cultural variance in willingness to disclose socially undesirable behavior (e.g., Junger-Tas, 1996), a social desirability scale was used as a control. The overall mean score on social desirability was 32.56 ( $SD = 4.74$ ). No significant difference in mean scores was found between the two groups.

**Table 1.** Sample Characteristics

	Dutch ( $N = 365$ )		Moroccan-Dutch ( $N = 112$ )		$t$	$p$	$d$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$			
Age	15.67	0.77	16.10	1.04	-4.07	< .001	-0.47
Social Desirability	32.46	4.75	32.88	4.71	-0.83	0.41	-0.09
Violent Delinquency	0.79	1.37	1.82	2.58	-4.08	< .001	-0.50
		% ( $N$ )		% ( $N$ )	$\chi^2$	$p$	$V$
Social Class					63.67	< .001	0.37
Very rich		4.4% (16)		1.8% (2)			
Quite rich		34.8% (127)		7.1% (8)			
Medium rich		54.5% (199)		62.5% (70)			
Not so rich		5.2% (19)		20.5% (23)			
Not rich		1.1% (4)		8.0% (9)			
Unemployment father		4.8% (17)		44.5% (49)	109.67	< .001	0.49
Unemployment mother		11.7% (42)		67.9% (76)	143.85	< .001	0.55
Family Structure					9.88	0.04	0.14
Both parents		81.9% (299)		93.8% (105)			
My father		1.4% (5)		0.9% (1)			
My mother		5.5% (20)		2.7% (3)			
Parents different addresses		10.1% (37)		2.7% (3)			
Other		1.1% (4)		0.0% (0)			

*Note.* Discrepancies between totals when summed reflects rounding errors.

### Does the prevalence of different types of child abuse vary by ethnicity?

In line with Hypothesis 2, we compared the prevalence of different types of child abuse (i.e., physical assault by a parent, sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member, and witnessing inter-parental physical violence) between the Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch group.

These results are reported in Table 2. About one third of the total sample reported having experienced physical violence by a parent. Moroccan-Dutch boys (60.7%) were significantly more likely to indicate having experienced parental physical violence than Dutch boys (21.6%) ( $\chi^2(1) = 59.54, p < .01$ ). Further, the Moroccan-Dutch group was significantly more likely to report sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member (17.0%) than Dutch boys (4.9%) ( $\chi^2(1) = 15.70, p < .01$ ). About one quarter of the total sample witnessed inter-parental physical violence. Once again, Moroccan-Dutch boys (45.5%) were significantly more likely to report exposure to witnessing physical violence between parents than Dutch boys (17.8%) ( $\chi^2(1) = 34.31, p < .01$ ).

**Table 2.** Chi-square tests for prevalence of child abuse by ethnicity

	Dutch % (N)	Moroccans % (N)	$\chi^2$	p	V
<i>Child abuse</i>					
Physical assault by a parent	21.6% (79)	60.7% (68)	59.54	<.001	0.36
Sexual abuse by a family member	4.9% (18)	17% (19)	15.70	<.001	0.19
Witnessing parental physical violence	17.8% (65)	45.5% (51)	34.31	<.001	0.27

### Is exposure to child abuse associated with self-reported violent delinquency?

In line with Hypothesis 3, we investigated whether exposure to child abuse is associated with self-reported violent offending. Table 3 displays the associations among child abuse and violent delinquency separately for Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys while controlling for participants' social class and parental unemployment. For Dutch boys, all forms of child abuse were significantly associated with violent offending, whereas for Moroccan-Dutch boys only parental physical assault and witnessing inter-parental physical violence were significantly associated with violent offending. No significant relationship existed between sexual abuse by a family member and violent delinquency in Moroccan-Dutch boys.

**Table 3.** Correlations among measures by Ethnicity

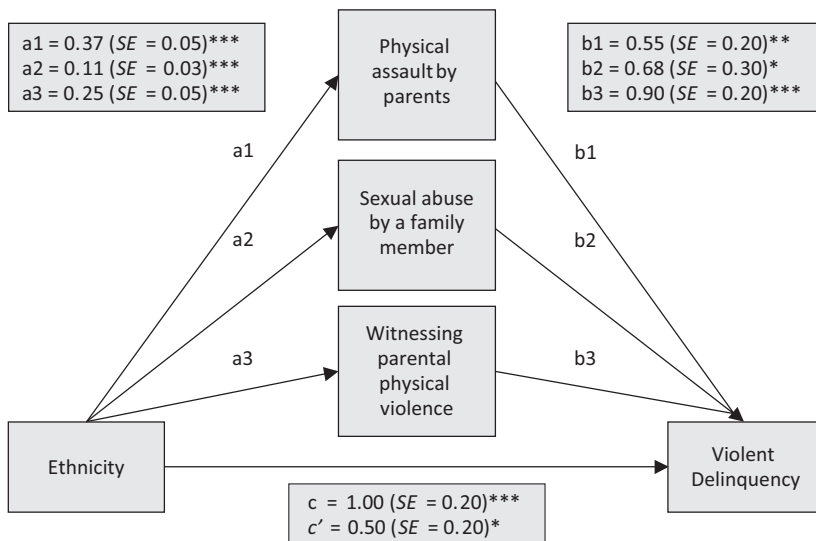
Measures	1	2	3	4
1. Violent Delinquency	—	0.16**	0.14**	0.22***
2. Physical Assault by parents	0.31**	—	0.24***	0.40***
3. Sexual Abuse by a Family Member	0.09	0.20*	—	0.25***
4. Witnessing parental physical violence	0.35***	0.43***	0.17*	—

*Note.* Entries are partial correlations separately for Dutch ( $N = 365$ ) and Moroccan-Dutch ( $N = 112$ ) boys with social class and parental unemployment controlled. Dutch boys' correlations are above the diagonal; Moroccan-Dutch boys' correlations are below the diagonal.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### Does exposure to child abuse mediate the effect of ethnicity on self-reported violent delinquency?

In line with Hypothesis 4, mediation analyses were performed to examine whether the relationship between ethnicity and violent offending is mediated by exposure to child abuse. While controlling for social class and parental unemployment, a regression-based causal model was estimated for the effect of ethnicity on violent offending through the mediating effect of exposure to child abuse. As figure 1 shows, the total ( $c$ ) and direct ( $c'$ ) effect of ethnicity on violent delinquency are 1.00,  $p < .01$ , and .50,  $p < .01$ , respectively. The difference between the total and direct effect is the total indirect effect through child abuse exposure, with a point estimate of .50 and a 95% BCa bootstrap CI of .31 to .74. When taken together, physical assault by a parent, sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member, and witnessing inter-parental physical violence significantly mediate the effect of ethnicity on violent offending.



**Figure 1.** The multiple mediation effect of child abuse experiences, while controlling for social class and parental unemployment. This figure shows the unstandardized regression coefficients. The italic coefficient  $c'$  (0.50) is the direct effect after controlling for the multiple mediator variables.

The specific indirect effects of ethnicity on violent offending are .20 through physical assault by a parent, .07 through sexual abuse by a family member, and .23 through witnessing inter-parental physical violence. The SEs and critical ratios for these effects are reported in Table 4. With regard to the potential mediators we examined, we can conclude that physical assault by a parent and witnessing inter-parental physical violence are important and significant

mediators of the ethnicity to violent offending relationship ( $Z = 2.91, p < .01$  and  $Z = 2.84, p < .01$ , respectively). The estimates and 95% CI's (BCa) are reported in Table 4. Sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member does not contribute to the indirect effect above and beyond physical assault by a parent and witnessing inter-parental physical violence.

**Table 4.** Mediation of the effect of ethnicity on violent delinquency through physical assault by a parent, sexual abuse by a family member, and witnessing parental violence while controlling for social class.

	Point Estimate	Product of Coefficients		Bootstrapping	
		SE	Z	BCa 95% CI Lower	Upper
Indirect Effects					
Assault	0.2036	0.07	2.91	0.0799	0.3709
Sexual	0.0724	0.07	1.03	-0.0216	0.2489
Witnessing	0.2272	0.08	2.84	0.0980	0.3970
TOTAL	0.5032	0.11	4.57	0.3076	0.7406
Contrasts					
Assault vs. Sexual	0.1311	0.10	1.31	-0.0694	0.3338
Assault vs. Witnessing	0.0236	0.11	0.21	-0.1844	0.2364
Sexual vs. Witnessing	0.1547	0.11	1.41	-0.0586	0.3853

Note. BCa, bias corrected and accelerated; 1000 bootstrap samples

## DISCUSSION

Juvenile violent offending among adolescent boys with a minority background is reported to be a significant problem in several countries, including the Netherlands. Adding to the extant literature, the current study investigated to what extent possible differences in the prevalence of child abuse mediate the relationship between ethnicity and violent offending. Our results build upon the extant literature in several ways.

First, in line with our first hypothesis, this study demonstrates that the number of incidences of violent offending is higher for Moroccan-Dutch boys than for Dutch boys. This is in line with the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in official crime statistics (e.g., De Jong, 2007; Jennissen et al., 2009; Veen et al., 2011).

Second, in line with our second hypothesis, this study demonstrates that Moroccan-Dutch boys are exposed to a greater amount of victimization in the home than Dutch boys. Up till now, empirical studies on child abuse in the Netherlands have not clarified whether child abuse is more or less prevalent among Moroccan-Dutch youth in comparison to Dutch youth. Of course, the current study may be limited by the sample we were able to reach. However, data from the most recent national self-report study on child abuse among high-

school students in the Netherlands (NPM-2010; Alink et al., 2011), shows that the percentage of Dutch boys reporting child abuse in the current study is comparable to the prevalence among Dutch boys in the general population. If anything, the Dutch boys in our sample are characterized by slightly more physical violence by a parent and witnessed more inter-parental physical violence. However, when conducting chi-square tests using weighting to correct for disproportional sample sizes (Field, 2009), both effect sizes (respectively -0.09 and -0.07) are small (Cohen, 1988). For sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member no significant differences are found, suggesting consistency between both studies. Unfortunately, because the national study did not report prevalence for Moroccan-Dutch boys separately, we could not compare the prevalence of child abuse experiences among Moroccan-Dutch boys from our study to the results from the national study. However, we found no significant differences between Moroccan-Dutch and Dutch boys in their social desirability so we have no reason to assume that our results that show a higher prevalence of child abuse victimization among Moroccan-Dutch boys are artifacts of our study.

Third, consistent with previous research (e.g., Fagan et al., 2007; Perez, 2001; Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 2002; Swanson et al., 2003; Tolan, Gorman-Smith, & Henry, 2006; Widom, 1989a, 1989b) and our third hypothesis, we find that exposure to child abuse is significantly associated with violent offending. This is true for both Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys which suggests that the way in which child abuse affects violent offending is similar for both Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. This too is consistent with findings from previous research (Perez, 2001). Among Moroccan-Dutch boys, however, sexual abuse by a family member is not associated with violent delinquency. Although we can only speculate about the reasons for this absence of an association, one possible explanation for this ethnic-specific finding may be found in the socialization of Moroccan-Dutch boys. Moroccan-Dutch boys grow up in a culture that places a strong emphasis on upholding and defending the reputation of oneself and one's family, much more so than the Dutch culture. Men in particular feel the need to embrace masculine features to guarantee the protection of their property, families and themselves (Pels & De Haan, 2007). Within this context, sexual abuse might be seen as an extreme violation of one's manly ability to protect and defend oneself and could be considered as critical to well-being. As a result, sexual abuse may lead to internalizing instead of externalizing problems, although this is a tentative hypothesis that we can neither verify nor reject on the basis of our survey data. Further exploration of this unexpected result is therefore necessary.

A fourth addition that our study offers to the existing body of literature, and in accordance with our fourth hypothesis, is our finding that differences in exposure to different types of child abuse partially mediate the relationship between ethnicity and violent delinquency. Greater exposure to child abuse was associated with greater involvement in violent delinquency regardless of ethnicity. Because of the higher prevalence of child abuse

victimization among Moroccan-Dutch boys, these results suggest that the higher prevalence of violent offending among Moroccan-Dutch boys is partially explained by the higher level of exposure to different types of child abuse rather than by ethnicity per se.

We acknowledge that the study's reliance on cross-sectional data limits causal inferences, because cross-sectional studies are confined to one specific point in time. However, many cross-sectional studies attempt to go further than just providing information on the frequency (or level) of the attribute of interest in the study population by collecting information on both the attribute of interest and potential risk factors. For instance, in our study we collected data on potential risk factors for juvenile violent offending. We explicitly sought to establish a causal relationship by considering the lifetime prevalence exposure of different types of child abuse as potential risk factors of violent offending in the preceding year, in the course of which it seems quite probable that the abuse preceded the offending. In addition, research generally shows that younger children are more often the victims of familial abuse than older children (Fisher & McDonald, 1998) and that child abuse victimization decreases with age (Alink et al., 2011; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). One reason is that under most circumstances the younger the child, the more time spent in the home. However, our survey data did not inform us on these potential age differences. Longitudinal studies are required to investigate the effect of familial abuse on juvenile violent offending. Further, violent delinquency involves a broad spectrum of minor and major violent acts as well as differences in frequency in these minor and major acts. With a sample including boys who were not suspected or convicted for a criminal offence, there might be an inherent and very limited range of violent acts identifying "violent" boys. Therefore, this study's research design allows only for a partial examination of the central relationship between ethnicity and violence as mediated by abuse.

In addition, as in many studies, rather than using multi-methods of assessment (e.g., juvenile criminal records, parents reports), we based our study exclusively on self-report instruments to operationalize all constructs. A multi-methods design would have addressed potential effects of shared method variance by breaking up variance accounted by methods of assessment. Finally, data were collected among boys of Dutch or Moroccan-Dutch descent only. To increase generalizability, future studies should investigate the relationship among ethnicity, exposure to child abuse and violent offending in samples that contain respondents with a wider range of ethnic backgrounds; a wider age range; including girls; and in samples from a wider range of socio-economic groups (specifically including respondents from lower risk groups).

### **Implications and future directions**

The findings of this study can have several implications for the prevention of violent juvenile delinquency. Given that both Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys report committing violent



delinquent acts and that exposure to child abuse is significantly related to violent offending for both groups, it is important that both groups receive prevention services that reduce risk, enhance protection, and lessen the likelihood of violent offending. Furthermore, the results of this study highlight the need for social services and criminal justice professionals to provide prevention and intervention strategies for abused adolescent boys. This may be particularly important for Moroccan-Dutch boys. Given that Moroccan-Dutch boys are significantly more likely to report exposure to child abuse and that these differences in victimization are of sufficient magnitude to partially explain the observed differences in levels of violent offending between Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch, this study emphasizes the need for increased recognition of and procedures to raise awareness to the vulnerable position of Moroccan-Dutch boys. The victimization of Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular is often underreported and overlooked by authorities, perhaps because Moroccan-Dutch boys are less likely than their Dutch peers to be seen as victims. There is clear evidence for the unfavorable position of Moroccan-Dutch boys in Dutch society (Crul & Heering, 2008) and their reputations in Dutch media and public discourse is far from bright. To date Moroccan-Dutch families still live in low SES neighborhoods with a high immigrant density than Dutch families (Boom, Weltevrede, Wensveen, San, & Hermus, 2010; CBS, 2012; Laghzaoui, 2009). This suggests that rather ethnicity per se, the unfavorable conditions of Moroccan-Dutch boys are probably due to the, on average, presence of several stressors in the family. This might be generally true for boys with an ethnic minority status with parents failing to provide sufficient help and support due to a lack of resources to do better and to their social setting making it difficult to succeed. The discrepancy between the parents' and adolescents' expectations and/or preferences might cause conflict for the adolescent which may result in a negative influence on the parent-child relationship or might even result in child abuse exposure, which in turn results in higher risk of involvement in violent offending.

Ethnic-specific prevention programs need to build on a clear understanding of the risk factors and etiology of juvenile violent delinquency and need to continuously examine the meaning of the differential risk ratios across the two ethnic groups. We suggest that further research of the effects of child abuse on juvenile violent delinquency for ethnic minorities take this complexity into account.

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# Chapter 6

## **Making Men out of Boys? Ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending and the role of gender role orientations**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the association of gender role orientations to juvenile violent offending in a sample of nearly 500 Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys. While results from this study support the hypothesis that an ethnic minority background is associated with higher prevalence rates in serious violent offending, direct examination of the effects of ethnicity on serious violent offending demonstrated the influential role of gender role orientations in the prevalence rates of serious violent offending. Specifically, lower class boys and Moroccan-Dutch boys reported more conventional gender roles attitudes than their counterparts. The results highlight the importance of considering the need to provide positive male role models who provide concrete information about how to behave, as source of support and guidance, but also to provide concrete information to boys regarding what is possible for them as members of specific social groups. The psychosocial need for affirmation, convention and support may be an important consideration in addressing violent offending.



## INTRODUCTION

Ethnic differences in juvenile violent crime have been repeatedly observed in several countries across the globe (Rabold & Baier, 2011). In the United States, boys with an African-American or Hispanic-American background are overrepresented in the official crime figures (e.g., Engen, Steen, & Bridges, 2002; McCarter, 2009; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Stahl, Finnegan, & Kang, 2007). In most European countries, ethnic minority boys with a non-Western background are overrepresented among juvenile offenders, such as Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, and Moroccans in Belgium (Esterle-Hedibel, 2001; Gostomski, 2003; Put & Walgrave, 2006). This overrepresentation can also be found in the Netherlands, where ethnic minority boys, and especially Moroccan-Dutch boys have the highest crime rates and are disproportionately represented among juvenile offenders (De Jong, 2007; Jennissen, Blom, & Oosterwaal, 2009; Komen, 2002; Van der Laan & Blom, 2011; Veen, Stevens, Doreleijers, & Vollebergh, 2011).

Attempts to explain this ethnic gap focus on mainly three explanations (for a review see Lahlah, Lens, Van der Knaap, & Bogaerts, 2013): First, sociological theories suggest that the relative deprivation or a socially imposed general strain can contribute to violent behavior among some adolescents (Agnew, 1999; Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould, Weinberg, & Mustard, 2002; Pratt, 2001). The social disadvantages arising from greater exposure to poverty and lower school education of ethnic minorities in general and Moroccan-Dutch families in particular are well documented (Boom, Weltevrede, Wensveen, San, & Hermus, 2010; CBS, 2012). Furthermore, several studies have shown that these community characteristics influence the ethnic composition of the friendship network (Rabold & Baier, 2011), which subsequently can play an important role for involvement in violence and delinquency (Haynie & Payne, 2006). Indeed, several studies have shown that disadvantaged ethnic minorities significantly more often belong to peer networks oriented toward violent behavior (Haynie & Payne, 2006) and that after controlling for these friendship network characteristics, ethnic differences in violent offending disappear (Rabold & Baier, 2011). Second, it is likely that individual-orientated psychological explanations could help explain violence offending among ethnic minority youth. Child abuse and domestic violence seem to be more prevalent among some ethnic groups (Alink et al., 2011; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Finkelhor, Turner, Omrod, & Hamsby, 2005; Lamers-Winkelmann, Slot, Bijl, & Vijlbrief, 2007). If minority adolescents experience violence at home, they may learn to see violence as an appropriate way of dealing with conflicts. Lahlah, Van der Knaap and Bogaerts (2013) show that Moroccan-Dutch boys are the victims of parental violence much more frequently than Dutch boys are. This frequent confrontation with parental violence may result in more frequent imitation of them too (Widom, 1989); Third, cultural approaches focus on the existence and maintenance of specific orientations (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2008) and assert that value systems for minority groups, might be qualitatively different from those of natives

(Berry, 1997). Cross-cultural studies have shown much evidence that in particular traditional family values in non-Western cultures seem to be strongly adhered to and tend to persist in second and third generation individuals through both conservatism and/or intergenerational transmission (Idema & Phalet, 2007; Vollenbergh, Iedema, & Raaijmakers, 2001). Youths who are involved in two cultures can experience problems when these two cultures have partly different value systems and/or prescribe different behavior in particular situations (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2005; Berry, 1997; Junger & Polder, 1992).

A different yet related approach would be to see violence among ethnic minority boys with a non-Western background as associated with a culture of honor, characteristic of some ethnic groups, since a significant overrepresentation of violent offenders is found only for certain ethnic groups and only for boys (Lahlah et al., 2013). It might be assumed that there is an ethnic specific cultural factor that is associated to violent behavior in general and male violent offending in particular (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). The culture of honor, which is said to be a strong motivation of violence (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996), may not be uniformly distributed among different ethnic groups. Despite the notion that culturally accepted norms of violence, in many studies conceptualized through the role of masculinity norms (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003), may mediate ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending, prior research has not tested this assumption directly. Only few studies have addressed the extent to which culturally accepted norms of violence explain ethnic differences in violent offending; Instead, most studies examined the effects of masculinity norms on violent offending separately for each cultural or ethnic group (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). In addition, these studies do not yield consistent results regarding whether similar relationships between masculinity norms and criminal involvement exist among youth of different ethnicities (Pleck & O'Donnell, 2001). Few studies have found similar associations between masculinity norms and deviant behavior such as substance use, alcohol use and violent offending for white, African-American and Latino males (Huselid & Cooper, 1994; Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1994; Pleck & O'Donnell, 2001), while other studies did find differences between ethnic groups (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). Furthermore, to our knowledge there are no Dutch studies that investigate the influence of masculinity norms and ethnic differences in violent offending.

### **Theoretical framework**

Theories of masculinity have undergone a number of conceptual shifts throughout the twentieth century (for a review see Smiler, 2004). Prior to 1970, masculinity research was largely influenced by the biologically grounded male sex role theory. This approach conceptualized masculinity as a bipolar construct, placing masculinity on one end of a scale and femininity on the other (Young Yim & Mahalingam, 2006). During the 1970s, researchers posited masculinity and femininity as separate constructs, and considered androgyny (high

scores on both masculinity and femininity scales) as the ideal for well-being (Bem, 1974; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). However, this point of view challenged ideas of gender as biologically inherent and emphasized the learned acquisition of gender roles (Smiler, 2004). Further examinations of masculinity as a psychological construct began to consider certain elements of normative masculinity as dysfunctional (e.g., Goldberg, 1976). This perspective, described in the gender role strain paradigm (Pleck, 1995), recognized that a large proportion of males deviate from the traditional male gender norm and may consequently experience various forms of strain, subsequently leading to anger and anxiety.

More recently, researchers have argued that beliefs about masculinity, defined as expectations, rules and standards that guide and constrain masculine behavior (Mahalik et al., 2003), are embedded and shaped by the specific demands of a cultural context (Levent et al., 2003; Nisbett, 1993). For instance, Nisbett and Cohen (1996) introduced 'the culture of honor' which places a unique emphasis on upholding and defending the reputation of oneself and one's family. According to their theoretical reasoning, in honor cultures, in particular cultures where historically official (governmental) intervention instances are missed or where confidence in such instances is low and citizens have to depend on themselves for protection, the use of violence for the purposes of protection becomes culturally permissible and, to a certain degree, a necessity (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003): Those who are known or appear to be capable of protecting their resources and themselves, by resorting to violence, are less likely to become the victims of theft and violence. Indeed, the relationship between cultures of honor and violence has been well established (e.g., Brown, Osterman, & Barnes, 2009; Lee, Bankston, Hayes, & Thomas, 2007; Osterman & Brown, 2011). In societies influenced by a culture of honor, most notably participants in majority Muslim counties, reputation, an unwillingness to tolerate insults, and the ability to impose one's will on others are considered to be critical to socio-economic well-being (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Therefore honor cultures strengthen their codes of conduct into definitions of what it means to be a real man, and what a man has to do. Once such norms are incorporated into the culturally defined gender roles they tend to persist (Gilmore, 1990). Research has showed that these honor cultures espouse the most conservative gender-role values (Idema & Phalet, 2007).

Although *culturalistic* concepts draw a rather static picture (Idema & Phalet, 2007; Windzio & Baier, 2009), the impact of masculinity norms may be examined most directly through a boy's gender role identity. Given the importance of gender, as a component and predictor of juvenile violent offending, self-reference to notions of masculinity may be a central pathway through which distinctive gender-related styles of pathology can develop. Gender role orientations are related to sex-role characteristics and behaviors influenced by family, friends, media and community what leads to supposed behavior for boys and girls to possess (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Lansford et al., 2007; Merton, 1969; Rabold &

Baier, 2010). Gender role orientations are socialized by sharply defined divisions of labor by sex, with child rearing assigned primarily or even exclusively to mothers, resulting in relative father absence during childhood (Pleck & O'Donnell, 2001). Paternal absence can increase cross-gender identity during childhood that has to be transferred in adolescence by displays of manly behavior and traits, notably fortitude, courage, dominance, aggression, and delinquency (Barnes, Brown, & Tamborski, 2011; Bem, 1981; Walters, 2001). The period of adolescence might be a critical period since a number of studies show that socialization becomes more sex-differentiated with increasing age, reaching a maximum in adolescence (Eccles et al. 1990). Adolescence is often characterized as a period of life in which a person's identity undergoes marked changes to adjust to new body appearance and societal expectations (Kroger, 2007). Gender role socialization processes encourage men and boys to behave in aggressive or violent ways. Identification with this role might elevate levels of aggressive, acting out and antisocial behaviours (Barnes et al., 2011). Through social control, boys might feel pressured to act like 'real' men by exerting their male power (Kilmartin et al., 2008; Weaver, Vandello, Bosson, & Burnaford, 2010). From this perspective, violent behavior might not be primarily rooted in anger but might represent a legitimate mean of asserting authority and one's masculine identity (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009) and might appear to be requisite for maintaining one's reputation as well as one's personal sense of masculinity (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). Indeed, research has shown that masculinity norms are correlated with high self-reported violent offending in males (Cullen, Golden, & Cullen, 1979; Huselid & Cooper, 1994; Pleck & O'Donnell, 2001; Pleck et al., 1994; Walters, 2001), although it is important to note that their respective influences can be shaped by social status as well (Stevens, 2004).

Social status might have substantial effects on the internalization of gender role definitions (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Galambos, Almeida, & Petersen, 1990; Heimer, 1996; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). In modern societies, scarcity of economic resources and social disadvantaged residential environments (e.g., residential instability, poor housing conditions) of inner-city areas, might create the need for individuals to protect themselves and show their capability for self-protection. In addition, it is proposed that masculinity is a perilous social status that can easily be lost through social infringements and flaws, for example unemployment, being unable to support the family, letting others down (Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008) and thus requires continuous validation (Bosson et al., 2009). In this sense, for men and boys violence display can be seen as a mean of validating their masculinity (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Research has shown that conceptions of masculinity are negatively reinforced by economic and social deprivation such as unemployment, educational deficits, and discrimination, all of which contribute to the prevalence of violent delinquency (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Whitehead, Peterson, & Kaljee, 1994).

Theoretical work on juvenile crime argues that boys use delinquency as a way to display gender when other avenues for accomplishing masculinity are blocked (Messerschmidt, 1993). This might be even truer for boys with an ethnic minority descent. Economical adversity, prejudice, (social) exclusion and experiences of cultural threat by these boys may increase the likelihood for criminal involvement (Froggio & Agnew, 2007). Such an explanation assumes a *direct* link between conventional masculinity norms and criminal involvement (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003). Boys who are confined to the margins of society reconstruct their notions of masculine dignity around aggressive and violent behavior (De Jong, 2007). In other words, a boy's sense that he is a 'real man' (and also his reputation for being such) depends on his ability to protect himself and show physical strength (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003).

Whether there is a relationship in masculinity identity and inappropriate aggressive and violent delinquency, is of interest. Rather than being mere pawns of larger social structural forces, Moroccan-Dutch boys may be active agents seeking dignity, even if self-destructive and violently. Increasingly large proportions of frustrated Moroccan-Dutch boys have taken refuge in a street culture of resistance (De Jong, 2007). Economical adversity, prejudice, (social) exclusion and experiences of cultural threat by these boys (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2005; Crul & Heering, 2008) may lead to '*doing gender*' (Messerschmidt, 1993) i.e., boys use violent offending as a way to display gender when other avenues for accomplishing masculinity are blocked.

### *Hypotheses*

From these perspectives, it is hypothesized that ethnic differences in serious violent offending will be found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting higher prevalence of serious violent offending (Hypothesis 1). In addition, it is hypothesized that Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys differ significantly in their awareness and acceptance of social norms regarding behavior as appropriate for males, with Moroccan-Dutch boys holding more conventional expectations, rules and standards, that guide and constrain masculine behavior (Hypothesis 2). We further hypothesize that conventional gender role orientations will also be more prevalent among lower class boys (Hypothesis 3). In addition, it is expected that conventional gender role orientations are associated with a higher tendency to violent offending (Hypothesis 4). Furthermore, we assume that the social-structural variables, i.e. lower class and a low educational level, increase the risk of violent offending (hypothesis 5) and that in line with previous research (Jennissen, 2009; Leuw, 1997) after controlling for these factors, a residual in violent offending between Moroccan-Dutch and Dutch boys should remain (Hypothesis 6a). After additional controlling for gender role orientations, we expect that ethnic differences in serious violent offending between both groups are significantly reduced (Hypothesis 6b). While hypothesis 2 generally reflects the assumptions

of the *culture of honor* theory and describes the social learning process of an individual which is for a large part initiated by cultural or intergenerational transmission, hypothesis 3 reflects Messerschmidt's concept of *doing gender*, in which boys use delinquency as a way to display gender when other avenues for accomplishing masculinity are blocked.

## METHOD

### Procedure and participants

The data used to test these hypotheses are taken from both a school survey and a youth probation office survey. The self-report questionnaire focused on the life-style of adolescents, with a particular interest in both risk and protective factors of juvenile offending, in three major cities and two rural districts in the Netherlands in the year 2011.

The intention of the school survey was to survey all ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade pupils of five participating high schools (senior high) via paper-and-pencil interviews during a one hour lesson, while a research staff member was present and surveyed 941 adolescents, both boys and girls. Except for special need schools, all types of schools are represented in the survey. The following analyses were based only on data from 364 Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Compared with the original sample, the number of cases was significantly lower because only adolescent boys who designated themselves as Dutch (295) or Moroccan-Dutch (69) were included in the present analyses.

Second, with the goal of oversampling delinquent boys (Loeber et al., 2005), participants were recruited among Dutch (70) and Moroccan-Dutch (43) boys subjected to a supervision order either at the time of the study or in the period preceding the study (113), in two (regionally operating) youth probation offices. The boys of our sample were not in custody nor sentenced to prison. They were all school-going youth who lived with (one or both of) their parents. In addition, we would like to emphasize that these boys were suspected of or convicted for **any** criminal offense and not necessarily suspected of, or convicted for a violent offence. It may very well be the case that some boys were convicted for example skipping school, fare dodging in public transport or shoplifting. To avoid that boys were selected twice, via both school and the youth probation office, probation officers were asked to exclude boys attending one of the five participating high schools. In addition, when a research staff member contacted the boy for scheduling an appointment, a boy was asked which school he attended too. None of the boys attended one of the five participating high schools. A research staff member was present while the boys completed the questionnaire on their own either at their school or at a time and place convenient to them but did not look at the participants' responses unless the subject asked for help.

An information letter describing the study was sent to parents who could indicate if they did not wish their son to participate. Participants were informed that the information

provided in the questionnaire would remain confidential and that they were free not to participate in the research; Participants' anonymity was maintained by ascribing identification numbers to surveys rather than names. Inclusion criteria were (a) sufficient reading ability to complete self-report measures (b) age between 15 and 18 years old. As no background information of the non-participants was available, possible non-response bias could not be estimated.

At the project site, surveys were inspected for validity (e.g., incomplete sections or identical responses to every item). Fifteen boys (all from the school survey) subsequently were disqualified because they failed the initial validity check. Five boys did not complete the questionnaire, the remainder either filled in identical responses to every item (2) or filled in 'abnormally' high scores on all juvenile delinquency items (8) (for example, stating that he committed each offence thousand times).

More than three quarters of the sample classified themselves as Dutch (76.5%), the remainder as Moroccan-Dutch (23.5%). Participants of the study ranged in age from 15 to 18, with a mean age of 15.77 years (SD = 0.86). Almost 12% of the sample rated their family's wealth as "not (so) rich (lower class)". In addition, slightly more than a quarter of the sample indicated that one or both of their parents were unemployed. Further, the overall educational level was low; more than half of the sample followed vocational training (i.e., low education level).

## Measures

*Violent Delinquency.* Violent delinquency was assessed using the Youth Delinquency Survey of the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice (2005), a self-report measure of delinquent behaviour by the youngsters, comprising six categories of specific criminal acts: Internet offences, drug offences, discrimination, vandalism, property offences and violent offences. Questions relate to minor and frequently occurring offenses, e.g., "fare dodging in public transport", "vandalism" or "shoplifting", and also to serious and less frequent ones, "robbery" or "hurting someone with a weapon". For each offense, the youngster was asked whether he/she had 'ever' committed it (lifetime prevalence) and, if so, 'how often in the previous twelve months' (number of incidences in the previous year). For the present analyses, only the prevalence of severe violent delinquency in the previous year was considered. Responses to four items (assault, assault with a weapon, robbery and extortion) were first summed and subsequently recoded to 0 for 'no offense' and 1 'for having committed at least one offence' during the previous twelve months to obtain a prevalence measure of serious violent delinquency, due to limited representation at higher frequencies of serious violent offending. The internal consistency reliability (Alpha coefficient) was 0.71 for Dutch boys and 0.85 for Moroccan-Dutch boys, indicating an acceptable to good reliability (Kline, 1999; Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998).



*Ethnicity.* In the Netherlands, a categorization is made between native and non-native or autochthonous and allochthonous. These definitions are derived from the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS, Statistics Netherlands], and are widely used in the media and everyday language. Non-native inhabitants are further categorized into non-Western and Western and further stretched per generation. Initial immigrants are labeled first-generation allochthonous. A second-generation allochthonous is born in the Netherlands, but at least one parent was born abroad. Children from this generation are often referred to as third-generation allochthonous. However, the aforementioned definitions are not neutral. The stretching of this definition to second and third generation makes it become a discursive impossibility for descendants of Moroccans to ever become Dutch. Therefore adolescents were classified into ethnic categories according to their responses on a single item in the questionnaire: “What ethnic group best describes you?” (see also Deković, Wissink, & Meijer, 2004). Only those adolescents who designated themselves as Dutch, or Moroccan-Dutch were included in the present analyses. Dutch boys serve as the reference category in all regression models in this research.

*Gender role orientations.* Gender role orientations are assessed by the Stereotypes scale (10 items) and the Genderbased Family Roles scale (10 items) of the Gender Attitude Inventory (for a more detailed description of this questionnaire, see Ashmore, Del Boca, & Bilder, 1995). Each summative scale consists of seven Likert-type items (e.g. 1-7). Examples of items constituting the Stereotype scale are “Men are more competitive than women” and “Men are more independent than women”. Examples of items constituting the Family Roles scale are “I would not respect a man if he decided to stay at home and take care of his children while his wife worked” and “The husband should have primary responsibility for taking care of the children”.

To examine whether the two subscales of the gender attitude inventory show similar factor loadings for our sample as compared to the sample in which the original questionnaire was validated, a Principal Component Analyses (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed. Prior to performing the PCA, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed. First, the sample size was examined. Although there is little agreement among authors concerning how large a sample should be (Pallant, 2001), our sample size of 477 was suitable to meet the standard of a 10 to 1 ratio, that is 10 cases for each item to be analyzed (e.g., Nunnally, 1978). Second, the strength of the relationship among the items was examined. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.3 and above, which indicates medium to large correlation effects (Cohen, 1988). Furthermore, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.84. This exceeds the recommended value of 0.5, which means the sample is sufficiently large to conduct a PCA (Kaiser, 1974). Finally, Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1950) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.



The PCA initially revealed the presence of four components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 26.6%, 13.7%, 7.5% and 6.6% of the variance respectively. Using Cattell's (1966) scree test, it was decided to retain two components for further investigation. To aid in the interpretation of these components, varimax rotation was performed. The rotated solution revealed the presence of simple structure (Thurstone, 1947), with all components showing a number of strong loadings, and all variables loading substantially on only one component.

The results using this approach are almost identical to those using the subscales constructed from the gender attitude questionnaire with the two-factor solution explaining a total of 40.3% of the variance, with component 1 contributing 26.6%, component 2 contributing 13.7%. Inspection of the two components revealed coherent underlying construct with the original questionnaire. Component 1 consists of items referring to gender-related social roles, in which a crucial aspect of these roles is that they constrain the behavior of individuals via cultural or societal "shoulds" (Gender Based Family Roles), while component 2 concerns items connected to the individual male and female targets, the so called evaluative beliefs about what the sexes are like (Stereotypes), which is consistent with the Gender Attitude Inventory (Ashmore et al., 1995).

*Social-structural factors.* The social circumstances of the families of the boys were assessed by several measures. Participants were asked to indicate their educational level, ranging from low (vocational training) to middle and high educational level. A measure of social class was captured through the boy's rating of his family's wealth. Responses were given from not rich (lower class) to medium rich and very rich (not lower class).

*Social Desirability.* Given the possibility of cultural variance in willingness to self-disclose socially undesirable behavior (e.g., Junger-Tas, 1996), the social desirability scale from the "Dating Violence Questionnaire" (Douglas & Straus, 2006) was used as a control. The scale consists of 13 items, using a 4-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree) on behaviors and emotions that are slightly undesirable but true for almost everyone, such as 'There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone' and 'I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget'. The more of these items the respondent denies, the more likely a respondent is to avoid admitting the undesirable criminal behaviors that are the focus of this study. Scale reliability of the social desirability measure in this study was fair as coefficient alpha was 0.63. In general, an alpha coefficient of 0.60 or higher is considered a minimum acceptable level in the case of short instruments used (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998), although some methodologists apply a stricter standard of at least 0.70 (Kline, 1999).

## Statistical Analyses

As a first step, initial descriptive statistics were computed. Means and standard deviations were computed for continuous variables, while percentages are presented for categorical variables. Additionally, independent sample-t-tests and chi-square tests were performed to compare means and percentages for Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Further, independent t-tests and chi-square tests were used to examine differences in levels of gender role orientations and serious violent offending between the two ethnic groups: Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys. Next, a hierarchical binary regression analysis of lower class and ethnicity on gender role orientations was performed to assess whether ethnic differences in gender role orientations still hold after controlling for lower class. Finally, a series of hierarchical binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to assess the effect of gender role orientations for the explanation of ethnic differences in the prevalence of serious violent offending. In the first model (model 0), which serves as a baseline, only ethnicity was entered as independent variable. In the second model (model 1) lower class (step 1), vocational training (step 2) and ethnicity (step 3) were entered as independent variables. Finally, in model 2 gender role orientations were entered at step 3 before entering ethnicity in the final step. This will show whether gender role orientations explain ethnic differences that remained in model 1 for serious violent offending.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive study variables

The prevalence of serious violent offending (see Table 1) reveals ethnic differences in serious violent delinquency. The prevalence rates for Moroccan-Dutch boys are about two to nine times higher than the rates in the Dutch group. There is no single offense for which the Dutch boys' rates exceed the rate of Moroccan-Dutch boys, although the ratio does vary considerable across types of offending. It is noteworthy that with respect to (simple) assault there is only a small *and* non-significant difference between the two groups.

Significant differences in gender role orientations (Table 1) between the two ethnic groups are found; with Moroccan-Dutch boys having more conventionally defined family roles compared to Dutch boys. Further, the results show significant differences in stereotypes (Table 1) between the groups, with Moroccan-Dutch boys holding a more conventional belief in comparison with their Dutch peers.

The social circumstances of Moroccan-Dutch boys are particularly poor (Table 1). The rates of Moroccan-Dutch boys attending vocational training are significantly higher than their Dutch peers. In addition, they rate their family's wealth significantly lower than their Dutch peers.

Given the possibility of cultural variance in willingness to self-disclose socially undesirable behavior (e.g., Junger-Tas, 1996), a social desirability scale was used as a control. The overall

mean score on social desirability was 32.56 ( $SD = 4.74$ ). No significant differences in mean scores were found between the two groups.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Information

	Dutch boys ( $N = 365$ )	Moroccan boys ( $N = 112$ )			
	% ( $N$ )	% ( $N$ )	$\chi^2$	$P$	$V$
<i>Dependent variables</i>					
Assault	20.8% (76)	24.1% (27)	0.55	0.46	0.03
Assault with a weapon	4.4% (16)	19.6% (22)	27.22***	0.00	0.24
Robbery	1.4% (5)	11.6% (13)	24.74***	0.00	0.23
Extortion	1.9% (7)	17.0% (19)	37.65***	0.00	0.28
Total violent offending	23.3% (85)	34.8% (39)	5.93*	0.02	0.11
<i>Independent variables</i>					
Vocational training	49.9% (181)	60.7% (65)	3.93*	0.04	0.09
Lower class	6.3% (23)	28.6% (32)	41.67***	0.00	0.30
	$M$ ( $SD$ )	$M$ ( $SD$ )	$t$	$p$	$D$
Gender based Family Roles	40.97 (11.01)	57.04 (13.52)	-11.47***	0.00	1.03
Stereotypes	43.43 (10.56)	47.84 (9.61)	-3.95***	0.00	0.44
Social Desirability	32.46 (4.75)	32.88 (4.71)	-0.83	0.41	-0.09

Note. Missing data were not included in calculations of percentages.

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

### Effect of ethnicity and lower class on gender attitudes

A hierarchical regression analysis of lower class and ethnicity on gender role orientations yields two remarkable results (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Gender role orientations regressed on lower class and ethnicity ( $N = 477$ )

<i>Gender based Family Roles as dependent variable</i>	$B$	$SE B$	$\beta$
<i>Step 1<sup>a</sup></i>			
Lower class	11.84***	1.86	0.28
<i>Step 2</i>			
Lower class	6.07***	1.73	0.14
Ethnicity	14.71***	1.30	0.46
<i>Individual Stereotypes as dependent variable</i>			
<i>Step 1<sup>b</sup></i>			
Lower class	1.98	11.50	0.06
<i>Step 2</i>			
Lower class	0.28	1.55	0.01
Ethnicity	4.35***	1.17	0.18

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = 7.9\%$ , Step 2:  $\Delta R^2 = 19.6\%$ ,  $\Delta F(1,474) = 127.95$ ,  $p = 0.00$ .

<sup>b</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = ns$ , Step 2:  $\Delta R^2 = 2.8\%$ ,  $\Delta F(1,474) = 13.80$ ,  $p = 0.00$ .

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

First, the boys from lower class families hold more conventional gender roles than boys from higher class families. Secondly, even after controlling for lower class, a significant effect of ethnicity on gender role orientations remains if ethnicity is entered simultaneously as a last block. Thus, differences in gender role orientations are not only related to differences in social status. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis show no significant relationship between lower class and stereotypes.

### Effect of gender role orientations on the relationship between ethnicity and violent offending

As a first step in the preparation for the logistic regression analysis, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients between the independent variables and the dependent variable (serious violent offending) are calculated. Table 3 shows four variables that have a significant correlation with serious violent offending: vocational training, lower class, gender based family roles and ethnicity. Therefore these variables are further included in the model.

**Table 3.** Pearson Correlation Coefficients among study variables

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Serious Violent Offending	-					
2. Vocational Training	0.07*	-				
3. Lower Class	0.12*	0.10	-			
4. Gender Based Family Roles	0.15**	0.17	0.28**	-		
5. Stereotypes	0.08	0.04	0.06	0.36**	-	
6. Ethnicity	0.11*	0.09*	0.30**	0.51**	0.18*	-

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

In the first model (model 0), ethnic differences in serious violent offending are found (see Table 4). Compared with Dutch boys, Moroccan-Dutch boys have a significant odds ratio (1.76) for the prevalence of serious violent offending (Model 0).

Model 1 demonstrates a significant direct effect of lower class on serious violent delinquency (Step 1). However, vocational training has no significant effect on serious violent delinquency (Step 2). Furthermore, model 1 shows that after controlling for lower class and vocational training, a significant effect of ethnicity on serious violent delinquency remains (Step 3). Although the odds-ratio decreased slightly (1.69), the prevalence rates of Moroccan-Dutch boys are still significantly higher compared to Dutch boys.

Finally, Model 2 shows that the variable gender based family roles is a significant predictor of serious violent offending, even after controlling for lower class and vocational training (see step 3). After controlling for this variable too (step 4), ethnic differences in serious violent offending disappear completely.

**Table 4.** Hierarchical regression analyses for cross-sectional violent offending ( $N = 477$ )

		<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
<i>Model 0</i>	Ethnicity	0.57*	0.23	1.76
<i>Model 1</i>	( <i>Step 1</i> )			
	Lower Class	0.72*	0.30	2.05
	( <i>Step 2</i> )			
	Lower Class	0.68*	0.31	1.97
	Vocational Training	0.28	0.22	1.32
	( <i>Step 3</i> )			
	Lower Class	0.48	0.32	1.60
	Vocational Training	0.25	0.22	1.28
	Ethnicity	0.52*	0.25	1.69
<i>Model 2</i>	( <i>Step 3</i> )			
	Lower Class	0.42	0.32	1.53
	Vocational Training	0.19	0.22	1.21
	Gender Based Family Roles	0.02**	0.01	1.02
	( <i>Step 4</i> )			
	Lower Class	0.36	0.33	1.43
	Vocational Training	0.19	0.22	1.21
	Gender Based Family Roles	0.02*	0.01	1.02
	Ethnicity	0.26	0.29	0.77

Note: Reference group = Dutch

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship of gender role orientations to serious violent offending in a sample of nearly 500 Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys. Results from the current study demonstrate that the prevalence of violent offending is about two to nine times higher for Moroccan-Dutch boys compared to Dutch boys (*hypothesis 1*). This is in line with the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in the official crime figures (e.g., De Jong, 2007; Jennissen et al., 2009; Veen et al., 2011).

Results build upon the extant literature in several ways. First, previous research has focused primarily on contextual risk factors, such as social deprivation arising from greater exposure to poverty and low educational level (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Gould, Weinberg & Mustard, 2002; Pratt, 2001). Indeed, this study finds that social circumstances of Moroccan-Dutch boys are particularly poor: They attend vocational training more often, they rate their family's wealth significantly lower and they report having unemployed parents more often than Dutch boys. All of these variables are associated with violent offending independently of ethnic descent. This study extends the literature by demonstrating that aforementioned factors are not sufficient to explain the existing differences in violent offending between Moroccan-Dutch and Dutch boys.

Second, based on the 'culture of honor' mechanism supported by Nisbett and Cohen (1996), this study emphasized two distinct concepts of gender role orientations: gender based family roles and stereotypes, empirically supported by previous research (e.g., Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Lansford et al., 2007). Significant differences in gender role orientations between the two ethnic groups are found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys having more conventionally defined family roles and stereotypes compared to their Dutch peers (*Hypothesis 2*). The current study builds upon this literature by highlighting two distinct results: boys from lower class families hold more conventional gender roles than boys from higher class families, supporting the doing gender mechanism (*Hypothesis 3*). After controlling for lower class there remains a significant effect of ethnicity on gender role orientations if ethnicity is entered simultaneously as a last block. Thus, differences in gender role orientations are not only due to differences in social status, but are also related to ethnic background, reflecting the assumptions of the culture of honor theory (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Further, consistent with previous research, this study provides empirical evidence for the relationship of gender role orientations and severe violent offending (*Hypothesis 4*). It is noteworthy to mention that only gender based family roles were significantly associated to severe violent offending and not stereotypes. This might be due to the fact that the stereotype scale, in contrast to the gender based family roles scale, was limited in the sense that it conceptualized masculinity as a bipolar construct, placing masculinity on one end of the scale and femininity on the other end. Current research has posited masculinity and femininity as separate constructs (Young Yim & Mahalingam, 2006). In addition, it had little attention to the learned acquisitions of gender roles.

In line with previous research (Boom et al., 2010; CBS, 2012; Demuth & Brown, 2004) the results show a significant direct effect of lower class on serious violent delinquency (*Hypothesis 5*). However, after controlling for lower class, vocational training has no significant effect on serious violent delinquency. It may very well be the case that severe violent offending might transcend social status, affecting among others educational level, which might offer an explanation why vocational education was not significantly related to violent offending. Much of the current research, similarly to this study, has focused on associations between violent offenders and SES. It might be of interest to examine how education is affected by juvenile violent offending, rather than vice versa.

By demonstrating that ethnic differences remain evident even when socio-structural variables, i.e. lower class and vocational training, are controlled for (*hypothesis 6a*), this study extends findings from previous research that focused primarily on structural factors. When accounting for gender role orientations in the model, which is essential given the strong association between these constructs (Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003), this study added strength to previous findings since it directly demonstrated that ethnic differences in the

prevalence of violent offending disappear (*hypothesis 6b*), suggesting that ethnicity per se plays only a small part, if any, in accounting for ethnic differences in violent offending crime (Perez, 2001).

Although cautiousness with these findings is warranted because of the exploratory nature of this study and the relatively small sample size, there are certain implications for the interpretation of the association between ethnicity and violent offending. The transitional stage of adolescence is a critical period of life in which a person's identity undergoes marked changes to adjust to new body appearance and societal expectations. To enhance their own sense of identity and level of confidence, many adolescent boys act out and impulsively use violence (Brown & Mann, 1991; Keating, 1990). This may be reinforced by peer pressure, as research has shown that to win the approval of other men, males might behave in sexist ways (Kilmartin et al., 2008). This may be particularly true for boys with an ethnic minority descent, for who the task of identity formation is compounded by multiple societal expectations (Go & Le, 2005). On the one hand, cultural definitions and expectations of what it means to be a 'real' man and what a 'real' man has to do. On the other hand economical adversity, prejudice, (social) exclusion and experiences of cultural threat by these boys may lead to a higher risk for criminal involvement as a way to display gender (Messerschmidt, 1993). Although we can only speculate, both mechanisms might emphasize and reinforce the incorporation of gender role orientations and subsequently violent offending for Moroccan-Dutch boys. However, our survey data did not inform us on these potential qualitative differences. Further exploration of these findings is necessary. Interventions to reduce violent offending for boys, specifically boys with an ethnic minority background, may be more effective if they include providing positive male role models who provide concrete information about how to behave, as source of support and guidance, but also to provide concrete information to boys regarding what is possible for them as members of specific social groups.

While results of this study delineate the relationship between ethnicity, gender role orientations, and violent delinquency, it is important to consider additional influences on violent offending. Specifically, future studies should examine the influence of additional cultural (e.g., migration history, acculturation, cultural treat), structural (economical adversity, prejudice, (social) exclusion, peer network) and child (family violence, coping confidence, identity or self-esteem problems) factors that may contribute to violent offending, as well as resiliency factors. In addition, subsequent research should try to replicate results to other populations (e.g., girls and within samples of broader ethnic backgrounds).

### *Limitations*

Some limitations must be considered. First, conclusions were based on a sample of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, in which juvenile delinquents were oversampled which implicates

that our sample is not necessarily representative of all Moroccan-Dutch and native Dutch adolescent boys. Second, the study's reliance on cross-sectional data limits causal inferences. Without longitudinal data, temporal ordering of the variables cannot be determined, nor can ethnic differences be assessed in individual pathways to violent offending. However, our intention was to conduct associational research what makes cross-sectional data certainly suitable. Third, as in many studies, the study utilized self-report instruments to operationalize all constructs, rather than using multi-methods of assessment (e.g., juvenile criminal records, parents reports), which would have addressed potential effects of shared method variance by breaking up variance accounted by methods of assessment. However, although concerns about the relative merits of self-reported delinquency and official statistics exist (Juby & Farrington, 2001), self-report measures provide a widely preferred method of measuring juvenile delinquency in research (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000; Wells & Rankin, 1991). Whereas reliance on official reports might introduce layers of potential bias between the actual behavior and the data (e.g., a substantial amount of crime is not reported, and even many crimes that are reported or brought to the attention of law enforcement agents are not officially recorded), self-reports of delinquency are considered as the data source nearest to the actual behavior (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). Fourth, the results regarding masculinity and culture of honor are limited to differences between men & women on the family roles scale. The stereotypes scale offers a broader assessment of masculine norms, however was non-significant in the focal analysis.

Finally, data relied on boys of Dutch or Moroccan-Dutch descent. To increase generalizability, future studies should investigate the relationship among ethnicity and violent offending, within lower risk environments, with various age groups, among girls, and within samples of broader ethnic backgrounds and multiple informants.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is a growing concern among scientists, policy makers, and educators about the plight of young Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys, so many of whom are falling behind in education and employment (Boom et al., 2010; CBS, 2012). In addition, Moroccan-Dutch boys have the highest crime rates compared to other ethnic groups (De Jong, 2007; Jennissen et al., 2009) and are about four times more often charged with violent offenses as would be expected from their estimated proportion of the population. While results from concurrent analyses support the hypotheses that an ethnic minority background is associated with higher prevalence rates in serious violent offending, examination of the relationship among these variables suggested that conventional gender role orientations are predictive of prevalence rates in serious violent offending rather than an ethnic minority background per se. The study builds upon findings from previous researchers by investigating class and ethnic



differences among constructs. In addition, direct examinations of the effects of ethnicity on serious violent offending demonstrated the influential role of gender role orientations in the prevalence rates of serious violent offending. Specifically, boys from lower class families and Moroccan-Dutch boys reported more conventional gender role orientations than their counterparts. As several studies have shown, a brief intervention aimed at directly challenging and changing the beliefs that support masculinity, might be already successful (Kilmartin et al., 2008). The results therefore highlight the importance for youth probation officers and prevention practitioners, including school counselors and school psychologists, of considering the critical need of positive male role models who provide concrete information about how to behave, as source of support and guidance, but also to provide concrete information to boys regarding what is possible for them as members of specific social groups. The psychosocial need for affirmation, convention and support may be an important consideration in addressing violent offending.

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# Chapter 7

## Conclusions and Discussion







## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, juvenile delinquency has been studied intensively in criminological, psychological and sociological research, resulting in several theories concerning the emergence of juvenile delinquency (e.g., Titzmann, Raabe, Silbereisen, 2008; Sampson & Laub, 1992). In the Netherlands, an overrepresentation of ethnic minority boys, in particular Moroccan-Dutch boys, in correctional youth facilities (Broekhuizen & Driessen, 2006) has led to discussions on the risk factors that increase juvenile delinquency among ethnic minority boys in general and Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular. To a certain extent, the (social) processes leading to juvenile offending can be assumed to be the same for ethnic minority as for native adolescent boys (Titzmann et al., 2008), and one factor that has been found repeatedly to contribute to the development of juvenile delinquency is a low socioeconomic status (Vogel & Messner, 2012). Studies using court records, police records, and other official records of juvenile delinquency have almost invariably shown that there is a strong relationship between a low socioeconomic status and juvenile delinquency (see for example Demuth & Brown, 2004; Elliot & Ageton, 1979; Gould, Weinberg, & Mustard, 2002; Pratt, 2001). However, despite the explanatory contribution of low socioeconomic status in (minority) crime, comparisons of various ethnic groups of comparable socioeconomic status reveal that, their rates of involvement in crime still differ (Blokland, Grimbergen, Bernasco, & Nieuwbeerta, 2010; Jennissen, 2009). The divergent levels of onset and participation in crime by the various ethnic groups suggest that there might be specific cultural and contextual factors that correlate with the special nature of minorities' involvement in crime (Blokland et al., 2010). Furthermore, it is known that, in comparison with first-generation Moroccans, second-generation Moroccans are more overrepresented in crime figures (Jennissen & Blom, 2007). This indicates that in line with results from international research (see Martinez & Lee, 2000; Enzmann & Wetzels 2003), the process of acculturation to Dutch society might be associated with additional stress for the juveniles and their families and might create an internal conflict for some of the migrant boys who have to adapt to the expectations of the host society and their peers, on the one hand, and are confronted with the traditional norms of their ethnic group at home on the other hand. This internal cultural conflict may result in intra-familial conflict since research has shown ethnic differences in the rates of child abuse exposure (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamsby, 2005; Vaugther, Jelley, Ferrari, & Bernstein, 1997). Supporting these findings, research has identified several risk factors for child abuse that are specifically prominent among ethnic minority families and are commonly associated with an ethnic minority status (Ferrari, 2002). This might suggest that rather than ethnicity, the unfavorable conditions of ethnic minority boys may be due to the, on average, stronger presence of several stressors in the family. These unfavorable conditions may play an important role in the explanation of the overrepresentation of ethnic minority youth in crime statistics.

## **Invisible victims?**

This dissertation's major goal was to explain the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in juvenile violent offending by examining how structural, cultural, and individual factors are related to juvenile violent offending and to provide insight into the underlying nature of the overrepresentation by examining empirical evidence for possible feedback from victimization to juvenile offending. A conceptual theoretical model (introduced in Chapter 2) formed the theoretical core of this project. While chapter 3 examined the agreement of the theoretical model with empirical evidence, other chapters offered an in-depth study on some parts of the conceptual model.

What are the main findings? First of all, this dissertation shows unprecedented rates of both violent perpetration and victimization among Moroccan-Dutch boys. Based on the findings of this dissertation, it can be concluded that structural, cultural and individual factors are important in explaining the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys in crime figures. Several prior studies came to similar conclusions when examining these relations. However, most studies focused on one particular approach. This fragmentation might diminish awareness of the complexity of juvenile offending (see the literature review described in Chapter 2). Since our study consists of integrating the main concepts of the three most influential perspectives into a single unified theoretical framework, it allowed us to assess not only the independent effects of the main concepts underlying the relation between ethnicity and juvenile violent delinquency, but also enabled us to examine the interplay between different concepts and as such, explore some of the ways structural, cultural and individual factors influence and combine to influence juvenile violent delinquency. An important result of this dissertation is that different (social) processes seem to work together in translating several disadvantages into juvenile violent offending. A combination of structural, cultural and individual theories yields the best model explaining a large share of ethnic variation in juvenile violent offending. This can be seen as a strong point for theory integration (see Chapter 3).

Secondly, this study has constituted an initial effort towards understanding the effect of perceived parenting on violent offending for Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys while testing the unique contributions for each parent. This is one step further compared with previous work in this area that has focused solely on maternal parenting factors or combined maternal and paternal factors in a single categorization (Hoeve et al., 2011; Milevsky et al., 2007; Williams & Kelly, 2005). Ethnic differences in the degree to which Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys perceive their parents' upbringing are found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting lower levels of parental emotional warmth and parental consistency, and higher levels of parental rejection and strictness in comparison with Dutch boys. In addition, ethnic differences are found in the strength of the association between perceived parenting and violent offending, with the associations of almost all parenting variables and juvenile offending

being stronger for Moroccan-Dutch boys. However, despite these differences, the results suggest great similarity in the patterns of associations as well. Both paternal and maternal parenting variables are significantly related to juvenile violent delinquency for Moroccan-Dutch boys in a manner similar to their Dutch peers (see Chapter 4).

Most importantly, however, this study clarifies whether victimization in the home is more or less prevalent among our sample of Moroccan-Dutch boys compared to Dutch boys. To our knowledge only few empirical studies on child abuse have examined the prevalence of child abuse among different ethnic minority groups in general, or among Moroccan-Dutch youth in particular. The results demonstrate that Moroccan-Dutch boys are significantly more likely to report exposure to child abuse than Dutch boys. They are significantly more likely to experience parental physical violence (60.7%) than Dutch boys (21.6%). Furthermore, they are significantly more likely to report sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member (17.0%) than Dutch boys (4.9%). Lastly, Moroccan-Dutch boys (45.5%) report significantly more exposure to witnessing physical violence between parents than Dutch boys (17.8%). The differences in exposure to child abuse are of sufficient magnitude to partially explain the observed differences in levels of violent offending between Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys (see Chapter 5).

Finally, the association of gender role orientations to juvenile violent offending was examined. It might be assumed that there is an ethnic specific cultural factor that is associated with violent behavior in general and male violent offending in particular, since a significant overrepresentation of juvenile offenders is found only for certain ethnic groups and only for boys. Direct examination of the effects of ethnicity on juvenile violent offending demonstrates the influential role of gender role orientations in the prevalence rates of serious violent offending (see Chapter 6).

Considering all the above, can we conclude that Moroccan-Dutch families are more violent than native Dutch families or that explanations for the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in violent crime can be found in the Moroccan-Dutch familial sphere only? Although the results might suggest such a conclusion, this is a too simplistic understanding of the results. Ethnicity is treated as an independent variable to explain differences in the outcome and predictor variables. However, ethnic belonging does not work on its own or in a vacuum, but in interaction with other factors at other ecological levels. Both youth violence and child abuse are complex social phenomena that are the result of the combination of multiple factors and multiple processes. Many paths can end in an act of violence by an adult against a child and by a child against an adult. This dissertation has shown that different (social) processes, focused on by different theoretical approaches, seem to work together in translating several disadvantages into violent behavior by adolescent boys of an ethnic minority descent. Ethnicity cannot solely explain why Moroccan-Dutch boys commit violent crimes, and neither can solely structural, cultural, or individual factors. Since most factors in

this study intersect, and an ethnic minority status is associated with those specific factors, a conclusion to be drawn from this study is that ethnicity may be relevant as an additional variable predicting juvenile violent offending, although indirectly. Thus, rather than ethnicity per se, the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in juvenile delinquency is due to the, on average, presence of more risk factors.

Furthermore, despite empirical evidence that the individuals most likely to become crime victims are young, ethnic minority males who are economically and socially disadvantaged, and as such are at high risk for becoming not only offenders but crime victims as well (see for example Baier & Pfeiffer, 2007; Enzmann & Wetzels, 2003), relatively few resources have been used to address victimization among this vulnerable group at risk. When the topic of crime interacts with concerns about children, most of the time the focus is on juvenile offenders and not juvenile victims (Finkelhor, 2008). The victimization of Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular is often underreported and overlooked by authorities, perhaps because Moroccan-Dutch boys are less likely than their Dutch peers to be seen as victims. Young, low-income or unemployed Moroccan-Dutch boys are routinely labeled as risks for offending rather than a vulnerable, heavily victimized group. Just recently, Dutch politician Geert Wilders held a speech in Australia, where he, among other things, claimed:

*“Almost every week there are incidents with Moroccan youths. In the Netherlands, 65 percent of all the Moroccan boys between 12 and 23 years have already been arrested at least once by the police. The list of violent incidents involving Moroccans, whether occurring in our streets, our schools, our shopping malls or on our sports fields, is endless. But the victims are almost never Moroccans or Muslims.”*

[Speech held in Melbourne, Australia, 19 February, 2013]

Without elaborating upon and contesting all the above, this example clearly illustrates that debates and policies that focus on crime victims and vulnerability are neither neutral nor independent from wider ideological and economic interests in society. The prototypical victim is typically seen as innocent and appeals for sympathy that elicits support for the use of resources for victim services (Green, 2007). We strongly need to overcome this fragmentation that permits research and professionals to study juvenile delinquency without also factoring whether these juveniles have been victimized. We strongly advise a more holistic approach to research and practice on these two phenomena, i.e. juvenile offending and juvenile victimization.

### **Methodological considerations**

When interpreting the findings presented in this dissertation, there are some methodological considerations that need to be addressed. Although the chapters 2 through 6 discussed strengths and limitations related to the analyses and findings of those specific studies, this

section will address the more general methodological considerations with regard to the design of our study.

### *Cross-sectional design*

The current dissertation describes a cross-sectional, retrospective study among nearly 500 Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys in the Netherlands. The study's reliance on cross-sectional data limits causal inferences, because cross-sectional studies are confined to one specific point in time. The complexity of models of human behavior that try to integrate structural, cultural and individual perspectives renders an empirical research particularly arduous and expensive. The collection of longitudinal data, although multiplying the efforts and costs of empirical research, can help to get round this dilemma and test the individual pathways to violent offending more rigorously. Although research is moving in the direction of longitudinal studies analyzing pathways in crime, empirical studies are predominantly based on cross-sectional data so far. These existing studies cannot tell the whole story, but nevertheless represent an important (starting) point for this research field. In addition, many cross-sectional studies attempt to go further than just providing information on the frequency (or level) of the attribute of interest in the population under study by collecting information on both the attribute of interest and potential risk factors. In our study, data was collected on potential risk factors for juvenile violent offending. A causal relationship was explicitly sought by considering for example the lifetime prevalence exposure of different types of child abuse as potential risk factors of violent offending in the preceding year, in the course of which it seems quite probable that the abuse preceded the offending. However, due to the design of the study, causal inferences are limited.

### *Generalizability*

Due to the commonly high non-response rates of Moroccan-Dutch in general, specifically boys, a convenience sample was used. Participants were recruited through five high schools and through two regionally operating youth probation offices. Violent delinquency involves a broad spectrum of minor and major violent acts as well as differences in frequency in these minor and major acts. With a sample including Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys who were not suspected of or convicted for a criminal offence (school survey), there might be an inherent and very limited range of violent acts identifying "violent" boys, which could have led to exclusion of a specific group of high risk boys. With the goal over oversampling delinquent boys, we therefore recruited participants among Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys subjected to a supervision order either at the time of the study or in the period preceding the study. Although a main advantage of this sampling method was the ability to recruit a relatively large sample, there are also some limitations related to the use of convenience samples. These samples may lack representativeness and therefore it might be

more difficult to generalize results to the general population. That means that we miss other ethnic groups and in addition, we cannot make statements about Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch girls. Results, therefore, have to be interpreted with caution.

### *Self-reports*

This study utilized self-report instruments to measure all constructs. In general, juvenile delinquency is defined in either legal terms (arrest) or in behavioral terms (for example stealing, assault, murder). Official records of arrests or court contacts are the sources for legal definitions of delinquency, while self-reports of delinquent behavior and/or victimization are the most common sources of information for behavioral based definitions from a perpetrator or victim perspective. Both sources have advantages and disadvantages. Although concerns about the relative merits of self-reported delinquency exist, for example they tend to underestimate incidence rates at the higher frequencies, self-report measures provide a widely preferred method of measuring juvenile delinquency in research (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000; Wells & Rankin, 1991). Whereas reliance on official reports might introduce layers of potential bias between the actual behavior and the data, self-reports of delinquency are considered as the data source nearest to the actual behavior (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). However, the use of these self-report instruments may entail a limitation, especially when it concerns ethnic minorities. It has been suggested that adolescents with an ethnic minority background possibly underreport problems (e.g., Junger-Tas, 1996). Since they are aware of their low status in society, they might not want to confirm the negative perception about themselves. Given this possible cultural variance in willingness to self-disclose socially undesirable behavior, the Social Desirability Scale was used as a control. No significant differences between Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys were found. We therefore argue that this limitation may have been less prominent in our study.

### *Ethnic differences*

Within the discourse of this dissertation, ethnic differences in risk factors of juvenile violent delinquency were examined. Adolescent boys were classified into ethnic categories according to their responses on a single item in the questionnaire: "What is your ethnicity?" Self-perceived ethnicity may possibly constitute a selective group within the total group of migrants, namely those who still choose to identify with their original ethnic background, whereas those who identify as belonging to their host country are no longer detectable. Thus, boys who identify with the host culture are left out of the comparison, possibly leading to a biased picture of the ethnic specificity of the relationship between risk factors and juvenile delinquency. However, the definitions for autochthonous and allochthonous derived from the CBS, Statistics Netherlands [Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek] are not neutral either. Initial immigrants are labeled first-generation allochthonous. Individuals born

in the Netherlands with at least one parent born abroad are labeled as second-generation allochthonous and their children are often referred to as third-generation allochthonous. The stretching of this definition to second and third generation makes it a discursive impossibility for descendants of Moroccans to ever become Dutch.

In addition, although ethnic differences in risk factors of juvenile violent delinquency run throughout this dissertation, some connected supplementary issues should be mentioned as well, the most important of which is the questionability of the usefulness of ethnic attributes such as Moroccan or Moroccan-Dutch for comparing or predicting victimization and offending. These ethnic attributes can contribute to and construct stereotypes of victims and offenders in policy, public, criminological, and victimological discourse. They rest on cultural essentialism of one kind or another and therefore might deny the fluidity and variety of cultural or ethnic identity and human behavior (Korbin, 2002). Children, for example, are not passive individuals of socialization but shape and reinterpret it (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Culture can be experienced differently by different members of one group, and both interpretations and interactions are fluid (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Thus, when ethnic group differences are detected, researchers can only speculate about the mechanisms that are responsible for those differences. Obviously, more studies are needed to broaden our knowledge of ethnic diversity in the relationship between risk factors and juvenile violent offending. Accordingly, it can be argued that the use of ethnic homogeneous designs allow 'culture' to be unwrapped so that researchers can begin to identify the processes through which culture and ethnic belonging have implications for youth.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The findings of this dissertation are not only of scientific interest, but of societal importance as well. Identifying the combined factors that increase or reduce the risk for juvenile violent delinquency is an important step forward towards preventing youth violence in both Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Taken together, the interplay of structural, cultural, and individual factors speak to the complexity of ethnic minority involvement in juvenile violent offending and the many challenges faced by prevention and intervention specialists. In many respects, it is far easier to identify the factors that place juveniles at risk for violent perpetration than it is to design interventions and programs to reduce this risk. However, since the majority of the findings in this dissertation do extend our knowledge on the risk factors, specifically on victimization in the home, this section will address some practical implications of the research.

First, intervening with youth at risk for violence should be a national priority. Primary prevention efforts are clearly needed to disrupt the potential pathways that lead to violent behavior in adolescence and young adulthood for Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Given that juvenile violence is the result of a complex interplay of individual, familial, and

environmental factors, primary prevention and intervention efforts are necessary on several levels, from the individual to the family and to communities where young people live.

Individual-level approaches should try to change information-processing skills, social cognitions, and perceptions of risk, and provide boys with information on how to manage feelings and situations and give them the tools to resolve potential conflicts in a nonviolent manner. Particularly for Moroccan-Dutch boys, these individual approaches should include manhood development programs, paired with mentoring programs to provide youth with additional guidance and support. By considering the critical need of positive male role models who provide concrete information about how to behave, as source of support and guidance, but also to provide concrete information to boys regarding what is possible for them as members of specific social groups, the psychosocial need for affirmation, convention and support may be an important consideration in addressing violent offending (Kilmartin et al., 2008).

When considering the implications of ethnicity as it relates to victimization in the home, it is crucial to have an understanding of the global impact and scale of the problem. In Western societies, it is rather common to subdivide abuse and neglect into different categories, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse and witnessing abuse. However, some of these categorizations may be debated in other societies and there is controversy regarding whether various social problems are or should be considered child abuse, for example corporal punishment and witnessing physical abuse between parents. The difficulty in reaching consensus arises from several factors, including variations in beliefs about childrearing and socialization and acceptability of behaviors that occur in a complex and multifaceted cultural context (Forrester & Harwin, 2000). These variations may sometimes lead to competing paradigms regarding universal rights on the one hand and respect for cultural differences on the other hand. Developing interventions that are culturally sensitive or ethnic specific should therefore be considered as a process and should never be treated as a one-time effort (McPhatter & Ganaway, 2003). Family intervention programs should focus on a number of factors related to aggression and antisocial behavior in children and provide education and training to parents with the goal of teaching parents how to effectively discipline, monitor, and supervise children. These intervention programs should also try to improve the family environment by focusing on family relationships, communication, and problem-solving.

The devastating effects of physical abuse and witnessing inter-parental violence are well documented (Gold, Sullivan, & Lewis, 2011; Lewis et al., 2007; Smith, Ireland, & Thornberry, 2005). As this study has shown, both physical abuse and witnessing parental violence are significantly associated with juvenile violent offending with the latter having the strongest associations with violent offending. However, while a fair amount of intervention programs mitigating the effect of physical abuse have been developed, programs attenuating the



effect of witnessing inter-parental violence are almost non-existing. Much can be changed by bringing this problem into the open: Witnessing parental violence is damaging. Customs that dismiss or ignore the impact of witnessing parental violence must be challenged, for example through public information campaigns (Wolfe & Jaffe, 1999). The overlap in risk of child abuse in families where inter-parental violence occurs (Goddard & Bedi, 2010; Jouriles et al., 2008) and the impairment in parenting as a consequence of victimization by intimate partner violence suggest that parenting interventions may be effective for children in such high risk environments. Parenting interventions that are designed to address the parent-child relationship, child behavior and parenting strategies might hold promise for children who are at risk for the enduring and negative outcomes resulting from IPV exposure (MacMillan et al., 2009). Research has supported the use of positive parenting interventions to improve child behaviors and enhance the parent-child relationship, leading to less coercive parenting practices in families at risk for maltreatment (for example Chaffin et al., 2004; Prinz & Sanders, 2007).

In addition, although for Moroccan-Dutch boys sexual abuse by a family member was not associated with violent delinquency, they report significantly more sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member than their Dutch peers. In most cultures, sexual abuse of children is considered the most severe form of abuse (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). However, research literature on sexual abuse has given more attention to girl than to boy victims (Holmes & Slap, 1998). This might be particularly true for ethnic minority boys in general and Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular. Moroccan-Dutch girls are reared with more discipline, monitoring and support than Moroccan-Dutch boys (Pels & De Haan, 2003). While more efforts are made to protect Moroccan-Dutch girls, most likely due to the 'myth' that sexual abuse affects girls more often than boys, it seems that Moroccan-Dutch boys are not generally perceived as victims of sexual abuse. This might be central to their masculine gender socialization, which is picked up on very early in life. However, boys are not men, they are children. They are weaker and more vulnerable than those who sexually abuse or exploit them. Although many cultural groups limit or avoid talking about sex and sexuality and issues of shame come up whenever the subject of sex is raised, Moroccan and Dutch parents should talk and teach their children, girls and boys, how to protect their body spaces. Basic sexual education should be provided in addition to emphasizing open communication to teach children that they should feel free to report any abuse to them or any other trusting adult.

Furthermore, as this dissertation has shown, it is almost impossible to focus solely on familial abuse, as familial abuse is often intertwined with issues of poverty and (gender) inequality. Social and cultural norms may hinder the ability of policy makers and social organizations to fully implement prevention programs. For example, cultural norms, such as masculinity norms and gender attitudes are deeply imbedded in many cultures. To challenge this patriarchal ideology would mean to challenge gender inequality and the structures that

support this norm. However, several studies have shown that a brief intervention aimed at challenging and changing the beliefs that support masculinity, might be already successful (Kilmartin et al., 2008). The results therefore highlight the importance for youth probation officers and prevention practitioners, including school counselors and school psychologists, of considering the critical need of offering positive male role models who provide concrete information about how to behave, as source of support and guidance, but also to provide concrete information to boys regarding what is possible for them as members of specific social groups. The psychosocial need for affirmation, and support may be an important consideration in addressing juvenile violent offending. Acknowledging that external factors and demands influence family functioning, and this may be particularly true for ethnic minority families, preventative approaches should emphasize social support systems and try to provide families with skills and resources to address external demands.

Lastly, Dutch society should be aware of the repressive and punitive approach towards criminal Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Just recently, the state secretary for Security and Justice, Fred Teeven, served a proposal on adolescent criminal law. This *adolescent criminal law* comprises a coherent sanction package for a specific group- 15-23 year old adolescents- which centralizes a firm approach to risk youth. This dissertation shows that when taking decisions on sanctions concerning this specific target group, it seems inevitable that a developmental victimological approach should be taken into account. After all, in order to be able to make informed decisions, actual knowledge about causes and development of juvenile offending and child abuse and knowledge of effective intervention in this area are essential.

### **Suggestions for future research**

Future research is needed to further unravel the mechanisms underlying the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in juvenile crime. (Ethnic-specific) prevention programs need to build on a clear understanding of the risk factors and etiology of juvenile violent delinquency and need to continuously examine the meaning of the differential risk ratios across groups. In this dissertation, indications were found for the influence of various explanatory factors. However, as causal relationships could not be established due to the cross-sectional design, future research should include a longitudinal design allowing the study of Moroccan-Dutch youth crime from childhood into adulthood and by comparing the characteristics of Moroccan-Dutch boys to Moroccan-Dutch girls as well as other ethnic groups.

In addition, culture or ethnic belonging must be ‘unwrapped’ (Korbin, 2002), that is, research needs to go beyond census or self-identification categorizations and strive to understand how ethnicity, in its entire context, is involved in the etiology and consequences of both juvenile delinquency as well as child abuse. When researching the complex and

multifaceted role of ethnic belonging and violence, several questions arise: 'Can ethnicity be a legitimate explanation for abuse?' or 'What are reasonable ethnic or cultural explanations for (violent) behaviors and when do they overrule the rights of the child?' Despite the fact that ethnic considerations in research are highly political, regardless of how carefully they are conducted, and despite the fact that certain implications for certain groups cannot be minimized, ethnicity and culture should be included in all research on juvenile offending and child abuse, just as other 'standard' variables such as socio-economic status, gender and age.

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**Summary in English**

**Summary in Dutch**

**Curriculum Vitae**

**Publications**







## **Summary in English**



## SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

There is a concern among scientists, policy makers, and educators about the plight of young Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys: Moroccan-Dutch boys have the highest crime rates compared to other ethnic groups and are about four times more often charged with violent offenses as would be expected from their estimated proportion of the population.

Much (theoretical) attention has been devoted to the fact that juveniles have high rates of violent offending and violent victimization. This pattern suggests that some youth are both perpetrators and victims of violence and there is the very real possibility that victimization is a precursor to certain forms of offending, especially those of a violent and interpersonal nature. Studies in this line of research focus on the intergenerational transmission of violent behavior, specifically, the impact of abuse and neglect in childhood on the risk of violence in adolescence and adulthood. However, although many risk factors for abuse are overly present among ethnic minority groups no research to date (only few studies) has examined the extent to which the relationship between ethnicity and violent offending is mediated by exposure to child abuse. This lack of insight in familial abuse and violent offending among ethnic minorities in general and Moroccan-Dutch in particular represents an important gap in our understanding of violent offending and might hinder prevention and treatment efforts. This dissertation therefore aims to examine whether the overrepresentation of juvenile delinquency of Moroccan-Dutch boys is associated with victimization in the home.

Participants of the study were recruited from five high schools (364) and two youth probation services (113) in three major cities and two rural districts in the Netherlands. The intention of the school sample was to survey all ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade pupils of five participating high schools (senior high) via paper-and-pencil interviews during a one hour lesson, while a research staff member was present. Boys in the youth probation sample were recruited through the collaboration of two regionally operating youth probation organizations by having staff inform eligible clients about this study. Clients, who indicated interest in participating, were contacted by a research staff member to schedule an appointment either at their school or at a time and place convenient to them. A research staff member was present while the boys completed the questionnaire on their own. Participants were informed that the information provided in the questionnaire would remain confidential and that they were free not to participate in the research. Participants were included in our study 1) if they had sufficient reading ability to complete self-report measures, (2) if they were aged between 15 and 18 years old, (3) if they were male, and (4) if they designated themselves as Dutch or Moroccan-Dutch.

The first aim of this dissertation is addressed in Chapter 2 and 3: to explain the overrepresentation of ethnic minority boys, particularly of Moroccan-Dutch boys in juvenile violent offending. A comprehensive literature review of European studies was conducted. This yielded a vast literature that can be classified into three categories: structural, cultural and

individual perspectives (see Chapter 2). Structural approaches explore relationships between social conditions and levels of juvenile crime in a given situation or place. These approaches suggest that harsh economic, political, and social conditions that a population faces account for the disparate rates of criminality. Indeed, research has shown that structural factors such as low socioeconomic status, unemployment, and social marginalization are associated with the overrepresentation of ethnic minority youth among juvenile offenders. Cultural perspectives assert that value systems for minority groups are qualitatively different from those of natives. Youths who are involved in two cultures can experience problems when these two cultures have partly different value systems and/or prescribe different behavior in particular situations. Meeting the normative demands of two different cultures may involve conflict and stress and subsequent dysfunctional behavior such as delinquency. Individual-level approaches have tended to see ethnic differences in juvenile violent offending as largely indistinguishable from individual-level explanations. Concluding this literature review, it can be stated that each perspective possesses its own strengths and weaknesses. Each perspective aims at different objectives and defends specific interests. However, this does not mean that juvenile delinquency can be viewed as a typical pathway that is built on simple ethnic differences in structural, cultural and individual factors. Most studies lack the possible interplay between different sets of factors and as such the possible combination of influences on juvenile delinquency. As opposed to examining them as separate approaches, it should be explored how these systems mutually construct and influence one another into a one unified theoretical framework.

In Chapter 3 a theory-driven hypothetical model is tested. By integrating structural, cultural or individual considerations into one unified model, both the independent effects as well as the interplay between different sets of factors are assessed. The model shows that ethnicity cannot solely explain why boys with an ethnic minority background commit more violent crimes, nor can solely structural, cultural or individual factors and shows that aforementioned factors cumulatively play a role in severe violent offending, with parental connectedness and child abuse having the strongest associations: Moroccan-Dutch boys report significantly lower levels of parental emotional warmth and report significantly more child abuse than their Dutch peers.

Three Chapters in this dissertation are dedicated to in-depth studies of the most important risk factors for juvenile delinquency. Chapter 4 constitutes an initial effort towards understanding the effect of perceived parenting on violent offending for both Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys while testing the unique contributions for each parent. Previous work in this area has focused solely on maternal parenting variables or combined maternal and paternal characteristics in a general categorization. Ethnic differences in the degree to which Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys perceive their parents' upbringing were found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting lower levels of parental emotional warmth and parental

consistency, and higher levels of parental rejection and strictness in comparison with Dutch boys. In addition, ethnic differences were found in the strength of the association between perceived parenting and violent offending, with the associations of almost all parenting variables and juvenile offending being stronger for Moroccan-Dutch boys. However, despite these differences, the results suggest great similarity in the patterns of associations as well. Both paternal and maternal parenting variables are significantly related to juvenile violent delinquency for Moroccan-Dutch boys in a manner similar to Dutch peers.

The second aim of this dissertation is addressed in Chapter 5: providing additional insight into the underlying nature of the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys among juvenile offenders by examining empirical evidence for feedback from victimization to criminal offending. This study clarifies whether victimization in the home is more or less prevalent among our sample of Moroccan-Dutch compared to Dutch boys. To our knowledge, only few empirical studies on child abuse have examined the prevalence of child abuse among different ethnic minority groups in general, or among Moroccan-Dutch youth in particular. The results demonstrate that Moroccan-Dutch boys are significantly more likely to report exposure to child abuse than Dutch boys. In addition, differences in exposure to child abuse are of sufficient magnitude to partially explain the observed differences in levels of violent offending between Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys.

Chapter 6 examines the association of gender role orientations to juvenile violent is examined. Since a significant overrepresentation of violent offenders is found only for certain ethnic groups and only for boys, it might be assumed that there is an ethnic specific cultural factor that is associated with violent behavior in general and male violent offending in particular. Direct examination of the effects of ethnicity on juvenile violent offending demonstrates the influential role of gender role orientations in the prevalence rates of serious violent offending. Specifically, lower class boys and Moroccan-Dutch boys report more conventional gender roles attitudes than their counterparts.

This dissertation is the first to examine the relationship between child abuse and juvenile delinquency of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, in relation with structural, cultural and individual factors, using quantitative data from both the general population as well as a youth probation sample. In Chapter 7 it is concluded that both youth violence and child abuse are complex social phenomena that are the result of the combination of multiple factors and multiple processes. Many paths can end in an act of violence by an adult against a child and by a youth against an adult. This dissertation has shown that different (social) processes, focused on by different theoretical approaches, seem to work together in translating several disadvantages into violent behavior by adolescent boys of an ethnic minority descent. Ethnicity cannot solely explain why Moroccan-Dutch boys commit violent crimes, and neither can solely structural, cultural, or individual factors. Since most variables in this study intersect, and an ethnic minority status is associated with those specific

characteristics, a conclusion to be drawn from this study is that ethnicity may be relevant as an additional variable predicting juvenile violent offending, although indirectly. Thus, rather than ethnicity per se, the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in juvenile delinquency is due to the, on average, presence of more risk factors.

Furthermore, this dissertation argues for more attention to the victimization of Moroccan-Dutch boys. Despite empirical evidence that the individuals most likely to become crime victims are young, ethnic minority males who are economically and socially disadvantaged, and as such are at high risk for becoming not only offenders but crime victims as well, relatively few resources have been used to address victimization among the group most at risk. The victimization of Moroccan-Dutch boys in particular is often underreported and overlooked by authorities, perhaps because Moroccan-Dutch boys are less likely than their Dutch peers to be seen as victims. Young, low-income or unemployed Moroccan-Dutch boys are routinely labeled as risks for offending rather than a vulnerable, heavily victimized group. A more holistic approach to research on these two types of violence needs to be rooted in an understanding of the relationship among the variables in a system of violence production.

Finally, various implications of the findings for practice, recommendations for further research, and implications for the public opinion on Moroccan-Dutch boys are discussed in Chapter 7. Summarizing, Dutch society should be aware of the effects of a repressive and punitive approach towards Moroccan-Dutch boys. Given that both Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys report committing violent delinquent acts and that exposure to child abuse is significantly related to violent offending for both groups, it is important that both groups receive prevention services that reduce risk, enhance protection, and lessen the likelihood of violent offending. This may be particularly important for Moroccan-Dutch boys. Given that Moroccan-Dutch boys are significantly more likely to report exposure to child abuse and that these differences in victimization are of sufficient magnitude to partially explain the observed differences in levels of violent offending between Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch, this study emphasizes the need for increased recognition of and procedures to raise awareness to the vulnerable position of Moroccan-Dutch boys.







**Summary in Dutch**



## SUMMARY IN DUTCH

Gewelddadig en overlastgevend gedrag van jongeren enerzijds en huiselijk geweld en kindermishandeling anderzijds vragen bijzondere aandacht. Belangrijk is dat hier twee onderscheiden problemen spelen wat betreft de relatie geweld en (Marokkaans-Nederlandse) herkomst. Er is meer geweldcriminaliteit buitenshuis onder allochtone jongens, in het bijzonder Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens. Daarnaast is er een verband tussen een problematische gezinsachtergrond en jeugdcriminaliteit en in dat verband wordt verondersteld dat er in het bijzonder een relatie is tussen geweld buitens- en binnenshuis. De thema's "jeugdcriminaliteit onder allochtonen" en "kindermishandeling" worden vaak als losstaande fenomenen bestudeerd. In dit onderzoek hebben we beide vormen van geweld – binnens- en buitenshuis - onder de loep gelegd vanuit de vraag, of en zo ja, hoe deze met elkaar verband houden, hoe de relatie tussen kinderen en ouders daarin een rol speelt, en of daarin een verschil bestaat tussen autochtone Nederlandse en Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens.

De studies die beschreven worden in dit proefschrift zijn gebaseerd op een steekproef van 477 Nederlandse en Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens geworven bij vijf middelbare scholen (364) en twee jeugdreclasseringdistricten (113) in het zuiden van Nederland. Alle scholieren in de klassen vier tot en met zes (bovenbouw) kregen tijdens een lesuur maatschappijleer de vragenlijst voorgelegd, terwijl een onderzoeksmedewerker aanwezig was. Jongens uit de reclasseringsgroep werden benaderd door hun eigen jeugdreclasserder. Wanneer deze jongens hun belangstelling kenbaar maakten voor het onderzoek, werden zij benaderd door een onderzoeksmedewerker en werd een afspraak gemaakt op een tijdstip en locatie die de jongens geschikt achtten. De deelnemers werden geïnformeerd dat alle informatie vertrouwelijk zou blijven en dat ze vrij waren niet deel te nemen aan het onderzoek. Deelnemers werden geïncludeerd 1) als zij over voldoende leesvaardigheid beschikten om de vragenlijst zelf in te vullen, (2) als ze tussen de 15 en 18 jaar oud waren, (3) en als ze zichzelf aan wezen als Nederlandse of Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens.

Het eerste doel van dit proefschrift wordt in Hoofdstuk 2 en 3 beschreven: het zoeken naar mogelijke verklaringen voor de oververtegenwoordiging van etnische minderheden, in het bijzonder Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens, in de jeugdcriminaliteit. Met behulp van een uitgebreide literatuurreview van eerdere Europese studies wordt gezocht naar mogelijke verklaringen (zie Hoofdstuk 2). Deze review beschrijft een omvangrijke literatuur die ingedeeld kan worden in drie categorieën: structurele, culturele en individuele verklaringen. Structurele verklaringen richten zich op de relatie tussen sociale omstandigheden en jeugdcriminaliteit in een bepaalde situatie of plaats. Deze verklaringen suggereren dat ongunstige economische, politieke en sociale omstandigheden waarmee een (herkomst) groep geconfronteerd wordt, kunnen leiden tot verschillen in betrokkenheid bij criminaliteit. Culturele verklaringen richten zich zowel op het verschijnsel dat in andere culturen andere

opvattingen over de toelaatbaarheid van bepaald gedrag kunnen voorkomen, als ook op het verschijnsel dat etnische minderheden tussen twee sterk verschillende culturen leven. Dit zou kunnen leiden tot conflicten en problematisch gedrag, in het bijzonder bij jongeren. Ten slotte, individuele verklaringen richten zich op individuele oorzaken van jeugdcriminaliteit, waarbij gebruikt wordt gemaakt van een specifieke psychologische invalshoek. Hoewel elk perspectief zijn unieke invalshoek heeft, met zowel sterke en zwakke punten, zouden de afzonderlijke verklaringsmodellen niet op zichzelf moeten staan; ze staan immers in wisselwerking met en tot elkaar. Jeugdcriminaliteit is een te complex probleem om enkel vanuit één perspectief te benaderen. Een nieuw conceptueel model wordt voorgesteld waarbij het mogelijk is niet alleen de relatieve invloed van de afzonderlijke benaderingen te onderzoeken, maar ook de wisselwerking tussen de verschillende perspectieven.

In Hoofdstuk 3 wordt het voorgestelde conceptueel model getoetst, waarbij wordt onderzocht of bovenstaande factoren op elkaar inspelen en welke factoren het meeste gewicht in de schaal leggen bij het al dan niet plegen van geweldsdelicten. Uit het toetsen van het theoretisch model komt naar voren dat etniciteit (of een etnische minderheidsstatus) niet afdoende verklaart waarom Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens meer geweldsdelicten plegen dan Nederlandse jongens. Zowel structurele (lage sociaaleconomische status), als culturele (traditionele masculiniteitnormen) als ook individuele factoren (minder hechte band met ouders, incidentie van kindermishandeling binnen het gezin) dragen bij aan het plegen van geweldsdelicten. Van bovengenoemde factoren zijn zowel de emotionele band met ouders als ook de incidentie van victimisering binnen het gezin de sterkste voorspellers. Dit geldt voor zowel Nederlandse als ook Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens. Bovendien, Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens ervaren de emotionele band met hun ouders als minder warm en rapporteren significant meer geweld binnen het gezin.

Drie Hoofdstukken bieden een dieptestudie van de meest belangrijke risicofactoren voor jeugdcriminaliteit. In Hoofdstuk 4 wordt gekeken naar eventuele etnische verschillen in de waargenomen opvoeding van zowel vader als ook moeder. Empirisch onderzoek heeft zich tot nog toe voornamelijk gericht op de opvoedingsvaardigheden van moeder of heeft de opvoedingsvaardigheden van moeder en vader gecombineerd. De resultaten laten etnische verschillen zien in de mate waarin jongens zich gesteund en gewaardeerd voelen door hun ouders, waarbij Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens een minder warme en emotionele band met beide ouders rapporteren in vergelijking met Nederlandse jongens. Ondanks deze verschillen suggereren de resultaten ook grote overeenkomsten tussen Nederlandse en Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens. Een minder warme band met de ouders verhoogt het risico op geweldscriminaliteit in beide groepen. Het effect is echter sterker voor Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens.

Het tweede doel van dit proefschrift wordt in Hoofdstuk 5 in kaart gebracht: het onderzoeken van etnische verschillen in de prevalentie van kindermishandeling en

onderzoeken of deze verschillen de oververtegenwoordiging van Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens in geweldsdelicten kunnen verklaren. De resultaten van deze studie tonen aan dat in onze onderzoeksgroep Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens vaker worden blootgesteld aan alle vormen van kindermishandeling; ruim 60% van de Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens rapporteert te zijn blootgesteld aan fysiek geweld door een ouder in vergelijking met 21% van de Nederlandse jongens, 17% rapporteert blootstelling aan seksueel misbruik door een familielid in vergelijking met 5% van de Nederlandse jongens en ruim 45% rapporteert te zijn blootgesteld aan fysiek geweld tussen ouders in vergelijking met 17% van de Nederlandse jongens. Verder laat deze studie zien dat deze verschillen van voldoende omvang zijn om de waargenomen verschillen in criminele betrokkenheid deels te verklaren, waarbij getuige zijn van geweld tussen ouders de grootste impact heeft op het al dan niet vertonen van geweldscriminaliteit.

Hoofdstuk 6 richt zich op het verschijnsel dat in andere culturen andere opvattingen over de toelaatbaarheid van bepaald gedrag kunnen voorkomen. Deze studie laat zien dat een traditionele genderattitude (masculiniteitsnormen; man-vrouw verhoudingen), een significante en sterke voorspeller is van geweldscriminaliteit. Traditionele genderattitudes komen vaker voor bij jongens met een lage sociaaleconomische achtergrond (dit geldt voor zowel de Nederlandse als ook de Marokkaans-Nederlandse onderzoeksgroep). Bovendien laat deze studie zien dat deze traditionele genderattitudes van voldoende omvang zijn om de waargenomen verschillen tussen Nederlandse en Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens in criminele betrokkenheid te verklaren.

Dit onderzoek is de eerste studie die de relatie tussen kindermishandeling en jeugdcriminaliteit bij Nederlandse en Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens onderzoekt, tezamen met structurele, culture en individuele factoren, met behulp van kwantitatieve data uit zowel de algemene bevolking als ook een jeugdreclasseringpopulatie. In Hoofdstuk 7 wordt geconcludeerd dat zowel jeugdcriminaliteit als ook kindermishandeling complexe sociale verschijnselen zijn, en het gevolg van diverse factoren en meerdere processen. Veel paden kunnen eindigen in een daad van geweld door een volwassene tegen een kind, en door een kind tegen een volwassene. Dit proefschrift heeft aangetoond dat verschillende (sociale) processen lijken samen te werken in het al dan niet plegen van jeugdcriminaliteit. Etniciteit alleen kan niet verklaren waarom Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens meer geweldsdelicten plegen, noch kunnen structurele, culturele of individuele factoren dat afzonderlijk verklaren. De meeste factoren werken op elkaar in en versterken elkaar, bijvoorbeeld in het feit dat etnische minderheden vaak een lage sociaaleconomische status hebben, en dat bijvoorbeeld een lage sociaaleconomische status de kans verhoogt op kindermishandeling, en kunnen daardoor niet afzonderlijk beschouwd worden. Aangezien de meeste variabelen in deze studie op elkaar in werken, en een etnische minderheidsstatus in verband kan worden gebracht met die specifieke kenmerken, is een conclusie te trekken

uit deze studie dat etniciteit betekenisvol kan zijn als een extra voorspellende factor van jeugdcriminaliteit, zij het indirect. De oververtegenwoordiging van Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens in de jeugdcriminaliteit is dan ook vooral te wijten aan de aanwezigheid van meerdere risicofactoren.

Tot slot worden verscheidene implicaties van onze bevindingen voor de praktijk, aanbevelingen voor verder onderzoek en implicaties voor de publieke opinie over jongens met een Marokkaans-Nederlandse achtergrond besproken in Hoofdstuk 7. Samenvattend kan gesteld worden dat er in de Nederlandse samenleving bedachtzaam omgegaan zou moeten worden met een eenzijdige bestraffende aanpak van (Marokkaans-)Nederlandse jongens. Gegeven het feit dat zowel Nederlandse jongens als ook Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens geweldsdelicten rapporteren en gegeven het feit dat blootstelling aan kindermishandeling voor beide groepen geassocieerd is met geweldsdelicten, is het belangrijk dat bij beide groepen aandacht wordt besteed aan de preventie en interventie van kindermishandeling. Dit geldt in het bijzonder voor Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongens: zij rapporteren significant meer geweld en juist hun kwetsbare positie dreigt vaak over het hoofd gezien te worden. Doordat we niet alleen te maken hebben met 'criminele' jongens, maar ook met een groep gevictimiseerde jongens, zou er meer aandacht moeten komen voor mogelijk beperkte verwijtbaarheid van delictgedrag.







## **Curriculum Vitae**



## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Esmah Lahlah was born on October 13, 1979 in Helmond, the Netherlands. She studied developmental psychology at Tilburg University, where she obtained her Master's degree in 2003. After working in the welfare branche, she started working as a lecturer and researcher at Avans University for applied Sciences. In 2008, Avans University for applied Sciences offered her the possibility to write her own PhD proposal, which she accepted. With complementary funding of the Province of North-Brabant, she started her PhD research at the International Victimology Institute Tilburg (INTERVICT), Tilburg University in November 2008 while working as a lecturer at Avans as well. She conducted her research on ethnic differences in risk factors of juvenile violent offending of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, which is the subject of this dissertation. Since April 2013, she has been working as an assistant professor in victimology at INTERVICT, Tilburg Law School, Tilburg University.



## **Publications**



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