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From baker to banker

The influence of parents' social origin on the educational attainment of their children from an intersectional lens.

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Bachelor thesis

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Abstract

The goal of this study was to look at the influence of social origin of parents on the educational attainment of their children. Furthermore, this study included an intersectional approach taking into account the effects of gender and ethnicity. Overall three hypotheses were drawn out. The first hypothesis expected an influence of parents' social origin on the educational attainment of their children. It was expected that the social background of parents influences the way parents are able to navigate their children in the Dutch educational system. Secondly, two contracting hypotheses were drawn out. On the one hand, according to the Double disadvantage Hypothesis and parents' traditional gender attitudes it was expected to see a negative effect of the intersectional identities of being both women and having a non-western migration background on the relationship between social origin and educational attainment. On the other hand the Subordinate Male Target Hypothesis and the reverse gender gap imply that boys with a migration background face disadvantages of their social origin on their educational attainment. This study used data from the LISS data panel to run different linear regressions. The results show that the intersectional identities of gender and migration background do not influence the relationship between social origin and educational attainment. Overall no effect was found between social origin and education attainment however what was found was that girls have lower educational attainment than boys and that the intersectional identities of being an non-western migrant woman and a native Dutch woman has a negative influence on educational attainment compared to being a native Dutch male. These findings suggest the existence of intersectional differences, a subject that future research could look into more closely.

Keywords: Intersectionality; Social origin; Migration background; Educational attainment; gender.

1. Introduction

In the late 20th century the Netherlands strived to slowly change from a traditional industrial society to a meritocratic one (RMO, 2011). In this meritocratic society capacities and talents of the individual would rise above social background. This change created a different view on education. For students, specifically, this meant that the level of education was no longer predominantly dependent on a student's, and their families, position in society but on individual capacities and learning potentials (de Beer, 2016; Meijnen, 2004). In reality, this meritocratic society proved to be difficult to realize. The Dutch educational council in 1997 spoke about eliminating "improper differences" pointing at the difference between what students can potentially do and what they actually achieve in education. Today this difference in student's potential and the actual level of placement still appears to be an issue. A possible explanation for this was implied by the Dutch educational inspectorate (2019) who stated that pupils with highly educated parents get higher school recommendations than pupils with less highly educated parents given the same school performance. Another study done by the European center for the development of vocational training found that the inequality between pupil's educational opportunities in the Netherlands has in recent years increased. The reasons they identified were; increasing differences between individuals schools and programs, the tendency to manage the educational system based on averages, and lastly a growing influence of, and intervention by, parents on the one hand and a lack thereof on the other (CEDEFOP, 2018). The latter is an interesting finding as it shows that the interference of parents plays an important role in the educational attainment of their children.

Several studies have explored the mechanisms that could influence the relationship between the social origin of parents and the educational attainment of their children where social origin refers to the socio-occupational position of an individual in society (Bourdieu, 1984; Merry & Boterman, 2020). Social origin is influenced by different factors. The human capital theory proposes that education is an important human capital investment where the "cost-benefit" framework is the primary principle for families to make educational investment decisions and the difference between pupils' school performance is mainly caused by the family's educational investment. Due to limited family resources, some families are unable to invest in their children's education which affects their school performance (Caire & Becker, 1967). I would therefore like

to better understand the extent to which a parent's social origin influences educational attainment on their children.

To understand and answer this question and how it relates to the Netherlands, specifically, we have to take into account its socio-cultural context. The Netherlands is considered a “multicultural” nation. Rapports in 2020 showed that one-fifth of all Dutch residents have a migration background. Of all migrants with a non-western background, 1,3 million are first-generation and a little less than 1,1 million are second or third-generation immigrants (CBR, 2021). Because of this relatively new population composition in the Netherlands, it has become a global status symbol of diversity and is often referred to as a multicultural society; where multiple different ethnicities, ages, and religions live together and are to be “treated equally in equal cases” under the Dutch constitution. The Dutch constitution further describes that discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, gender, or on any other ground is not allowed (Grondwet, 1983). In reality, however, treating people equally in equal cases is often not so easy to achieve. One example of this can be seen in the Dutch educational system, a system that according to Allmendinger (1989) is a big segregator and an important area where different groups are sometimes discriminated against based on their ethnic and/or religious background .

One aspect of the educational system that could increase segregation is the CITO-test. In the Netherlands, all students entering high school are expected to take a multiple-day test called the CITO-test which results, together with the input of teachers, serve as a guiding tool for teachers to determine the level of high school the pupils are to attend. A test that, as the Dutch “Centraal Plan Bureau” (CPB) found, provided results which in one-fifth of the cases were attributable to the background of the students, such as the education level of their parents (CPB, 2019). Statistically, there is a substantial difference (17%) in the number of students with migration backgrounds who get advised to go to the highest levels of high school, HAVO or VWO, compared to those whose background is Dutch native.

In 2017, 59% of native Dutch students got HAVO or VWO advice while for Moroccan-Dutch students this was only 42% (CBS, 2018). The different test outcome amongst different groups is a great indicator for the distribution of future economic capital between Dutch natives and Dutch citizens with a migration background. The distribution of resources in the form of human capital between parents of different Ethnic backgrounds could cause a big gap between educational levels of Native Dutch and Dutch citizens with a migration background.

Family Ethnic background undoubtedly plays a role in determining these CITO-test outcomes and thus the educational attainment of children. However, Studies of ethnic groups often ignore gender issues. Both boys and girls may face prejudices within the educational system that could influence the relationship between social origin and educational attainment. An example is illustrated by Golu (2013) who in her research on prejudice within the school environment found that for some subjects boys are graded higher by teachers at the same level of performance, than girls. It thus seems that both gender and ethnicity play a role in educational attainment; however, there is a relative scarcity of research that deals with ethnicity and gender issues simultaneously (Reid & Comas-Diaz, 1990).

When looking at the education level of children and the influence parents play earlier scholars are falling short to identify the complex reality of the multiple factors that influence someone's identity. I would therefore like to use an intersectional lens. Intersectionality is the phenomenon of interference between different inequalities that together form a social identity. It was first introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. In the years that followed publications on this topic have been multiplied. According to different hypotheses, this can mean different things. The double disadvantage hypothesis states that migrant women experience additional difficulties in their daily life because disadvantages can occur on different grounds. The subordinate male Target Hypothesis however argues that males with a migration background experience more discrimination than females with a migration background, because males pose a greater threat to the position of the dominant group in society.

Taken together, this study will focus on understanding the intersectional influence, the interplay of gender and ethnicity, in influencing the relationship between parent's social origin and educational attainment of children in the Netherlands. I would like to first examine the influence social origin plays on educational attainment in general followed by an examination of the extent to which the combination of sex and ethnic differences influence these outcomes my research question thus being: Are there sex and ethnic differences in the influence of parental social origin on educational attainment?

This thesis fills a lacuna in existing literature, which fails to take into account an intersectional perspective when considering the influence of social origin on educational attainment. I will thus be looking both at possible disadvantages of boys with a non-western migration background and girls with a non-western migration background. This approach will give

us excessive new information. It is relevant because gaining a better understanding of the complex structures that influence educational attainment better provides fitting solutions.

To examine this I use LISS panel data, an extensive longitudinal study performed among households within the Netherlands. This LISS panel was conducted out of a true probability sample of the Dutch population register. I think the LISS data panel is suited because it provides a lot of information about diverse groups of the Dutch population and therefore is easily generalizable (LISS, 2015).

2. Theory

2.1 Parents' socioeconomic status on the educational attainment of their children.

In 1995 an educational law was introduced in the Netherlands that had as one of its main premises the “the accessibility of education, especially for disadvantaged groups” (wetten.nl - Regeling – Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs). Even though the “doors' ' of education are indeed accessible to everyone, not everyone can attain the top or even the middle of the ladder. Allmendinger (1989) argued that the Dutch educational system is highly stratified. It consists of different tracks at the secondary level of schooling that ranges from a four-year vocational program called VMBO to VWO, a six-year academic track preparing students to enter research universities. A test at the last year of primary school, age 12, and the advice of teachers determine which students enter with the school (Pásztor, 2010).

Social origin of parents can help children's educational attainment in different ways. Studies on ethnic differences in educational attainment in various countries show that educational disparities are largely the result of differences in social background and are a matter of social rather than specific ethnic inequalities (Kristen & Granato). Sociological literature highlights the way that various markers of social class influence parents' communication styles and behavior norms especially pertaining to how the child is formally educated (Merry & Boterman, 2020). An example of this is illustrated by Gracia et al. (2015) who found that even though human capital is partly influenced by a person's unique capacity, one's social position is often randomly established at birth and is therefore not subjected to any meritocratic processes. The mere fact that some children grow up with little to no resources that could assist them in their quest in life might put them in a situation with great socioeconomic disadvantages in the schooling system. For example, parents with more resources can provide extra academic help for their children in, for instance,

private tutoring to prepare for tests. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education identified this growing intervention by parents on the one hand and the lack thereof on the other as one of the main reasons behind the growing inequality within the educational system (CEDEFOP, 2018b).

Different scholars have tried to identify the underlying mechanisms that play a role in the influence of parents on educational attainment, one of which is the EMI thesis. The EMI thesis states that if a particular level of education becomes common to attain, VMBO (vocational level), for instance, middle-class families seek ways to keep their offspring ahead within the levels and send their children to the more academic tracks. Children of less advantaged social origin often enroll in VMBO which causes inequalities to persist within levels of education even when this level of education becomes “saturated”. According to the EMI thesis social origin affects educational attainment in two ways. Firstly, middle-class parents actively maintain the tracking system and secure the best places for their offspring, and secondly, parents' social status affects individual track placements of children through the various resources that children may benefit from. Often middle-class parents know, through personal experience, how important it is for their children to be enrolled in a particular program to improve further chances in life, and thus put great effort in attaining the best possible educational outcomes for their children (van de Werfhorst & Luijkx, 2010). This would lead me to argue that the stratified educational system we have in the Netherlands reinforces the influence of social origin. Parents that are highly educated are better able to navigate their children through the educational system which leads to the better educational attainment of their children. This, then, reinforces the stratification within the Dutch educational system which in turn reinforces the influence of social origin on educational attainment, which creates a sort of spiraling effect that continues to widen the educational gap maintaining or even worsening the social and economic status quo.

Another important aspect to look at is social mobility. Social mobility refers to the change of social position of a person or a group over time. Intergenerational social mobility refers to the relationship between the socio-economic status of parents and the status their children will attain as adults (Causa & Johansson, 2009). Education seems to play an important role in intergenerational social mobility as it is one of the predominant factors shaping one's later status in life. With the rising number of students enrolled in universities and laws that enforce obligatory enrollment in school until the age of eighteen, it seems plausible that the educational attainment of children differs from their parents and a significant change in social mobility may have occurred

in the last decade. However, the extent to which social mobility occurs is also determined by factors mentioned earlier, such as the ability of parents to provide resources to assist their children. Sullivan et al (2014) found that pupils with graduate parents had over three times more chances of gaining a degree than pupils with parents who had no qualifications. They also mentioned that the parents' greater knowledge of the educational system plays a big role in the educational success of their children. Overall it might be likely that parents with high social origin are more fit to navigate their children through the educational system. This would lead me to derive from this the following hypotheses:

H1: *The social origin of parents influences the educational attainment of their children.*

2.2 Influence of socioeconomic status of parents on the educational attainment of their children from an intersectional perspective.

Ethnic minorities in the Netherland face multiple forms of discrimination and are often disadvantaged in society. Labor market discrimination, prejudice, and ethnic profiling are amongst the many things that target this group. According to professors from the University of Tilburg, next to stereotypes, taste-based discrimination is one of the main causes of discrimination in the Netherlands (Tilburg University, 2018). Taste-based discrimination stresses that prejudice or dislikes in the organizational and hiring culture can have negative effects on the employment of minority workers. It is likely to assume that some sort of discrimination also exists within the educational system but discrimination in a system that is “free for all” to take part in expresses itself differently. In the Netherlands, different parties have done research looking at taste-based discrimination within the educational system. De Provinciale Monitor Discriminatie (2005) asked 92 students from Rotterdam and 63 teachers about their experiences with discrimination. They found that one-third of the students experienced discrimination. Most of these students had an immigrant background. The results also showed more feelings of discrimination amongst girls. Het Bureau Discriminatiezaken Den Haag (2004) found that students with migrant backgrounds have less trust in their teachers than native Dutch students. A study done by Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau in 2020 showed that perceived discrimination within education has risen (SCP, 2020). Discrimination might influence the assumption a teacher has about an individual with a migration background. In the case of the Dutch educational system, this could influence the level of education

the student is assigned to. That implicit attitudes of teachers play a role in assessing pupils was made even more clear in a recent study that found that children with highly educated parents are often “over advised” at the CITO-test meaning they get a higher placement than they should. In Amsterdam, 63% of students with highly educated parents ended up getting over-advised VWO advice while students with low education parents were under-advised 36% of the time (Truijens, 2020). In the Netherlands parents with migration backgrounds are generally less educated than Dutch natives. In 2017, 38% of native Dutch were highly educated and in the same year only 27% of non-western migrants were among that same group.

Studies that focus on disadvantages amongst ethnic minorities and individuals with a migration background often fail to take into account gender inequalities. There is a relative scarcity of research that deals with ethnicity and gender issues simultaneously (Brethouwer, 2020). However, a study done by CPB on educational inequality amongst children showed that gender is an even bigger indicator of this inequality than socioeconomic or migration background (CPB, 2020).

An intersectional approach of disadvantages is therefore essential. Intersectional theory was first introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw as an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person’s social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination. Crenshaw (1989) states that the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis can have problematic consequences because this tendency is perpetuated by a single-axis framework that will overlook the problems that occur on a multiple-axis framework. One of its main objectives is to go beyond the “mere comprehensions of social relations of power” but bring the often hidden dynamics forward and transform them (Hermans, 2002). This would argue then when looking at the disadvantages caused by a person's identity we look at how the crossing of different identities causes and amplifies them. These aspects can be gender, race, class, sexuality, or religion. An example of this is a Moroccan woman who experiences discrimination on the labor market that is not distinctly due to her race because maybe the labor market does not discriminate against Moroccan men, nor due to her gender, because the majority of the employees are white women, but due to the combination of these two. In this case, Moroccan women receive an additional penalty for being part of two disadvantaged groups.

Crenshaw (1989), in her article, mentions how discrimination affects migrants and refugee females in several ways. Sometimes this group gets affected because they are female and sometimes they get affected because they are non-white or native. This phenomenon is further coined by Boyd as the “Double disadvantage” theory. Boyd argues that sex adds another dimension to the stratification of immigrants. He further states that in addition to the status of being a migrant, migrant women experience additional difficulties in their daily lives as women. Boyd found that migrant women experience a much greater loss than migrant men in the process of transition from one labor market to the other. Also, she found that even though women that are part of ethnic minorities participated in the labor force more than native women, they accrued less occupational prestige. Intersectionality, however, is more than the addition of another dimension when looking at a problem. It touches on the understanding of the inextricable interaction of the two aspects. (Browne & Misra, 2003).

Double disadvantage theory might argue that there is a hierarchical gender gap between women and men of color in such a way that women face a bigger disadvantage on education attainment compared to men with the same social background. Existing scholars have looked at a pattern of gender-specific upbringing patterns within black families, whereby girls and boys are socialized to meet different challenges and standards shaped by the intersectional dynamics of race and gender (Collins 2000; Hill 2000; Lopez 2003). This might express itself in boys being told from a young age that they are the ones who should provide for the future family and therefore do their best in schools. At the same time, this could lead to girls being expected from a young age to help in the household and not focus so much on school as they are not the ones expected to bring in the money. A study performed in Morogoro found that girls who help in household activities spend less time in schoolwork which negatively influences their school performance. Traditions, economic problems, and negative attitudes towards education for girls have led many to decrease the value they assign to girls receiving education (Emmanuel, 2015).

Gender attitudes are of particular importance because they positively influence gender-equal outcomes and behavior within families and across institutions. There is quite limited research done on the influence of traditional gender socialization on the extent to which girls are encouraged or able to take ownership over their educational achievement. What is known is that the ideology of parents influences the preferences of their children (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991; Thornton, Alwin & Camburn, 1983). The socialization perspective stresses that attitudes are formed during

childhood and remain stable. This would imply that immigrants adopt gender attitudes that reflect the cultural attitudes of the context in which they grew up. In this thesis, specific emphasis is placed on at non-western migrants. This group is quite big and therefore it is difficult to talk about specific characteristics that explain the relationship with gender socialization. Pessin and Aripino (2018) did find that adult migrants hold gender attitudes that reflect more strongly the country of origin's gender culture. Due to discrimination that might express itself in a double disadvantage and traditional gender roles and norms that some migrant families might impose on their children, I assume that the intersection of being both a migrant and a woman harms the educational attainment of girls. This would lead me to derive the following hypotheses:

H2: Non-western migrant women have a stronger reduced effect of parent social origin on educational attainment than non-western migrant men.

2.3 The reverse gender gap.

Interestingly, counter to the above-mentioned hypotheses a phenomenon has occurred called the reverse gender gap. Although men used to receive more education than women, in recent decades a so-called “gender gap in education” has reversed these numbers in most western and many non-western countries. Davis and Keese (2015) wrote in their article on education attainment amongst black students in the United States that different scholars see race and gender intersecting to create a hierarchical stratification among blacks that is interestingly opposite amongst whites. Black women are advantaged in comparison to black men because they are perceived as less visible or less threatening to white men. This finding is in line with social dominance theory and the subordinate male target hypothesis. Social dominance theory states that there is a hierarchical order of all social groups in a society. This hierarchy is based on different characteristics within a society such as age, ethnicity, and gender. The dominant group is the group that belongs to the ethnic majority in that particular society and holds the position at the top. The position of other groups within this hierarchy is based on the degree of stereotypes about these groups. The group that possesses the larger threat to the dominant group is positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy. The subordinate male target hypothesis was inspired by social dominance theory and states that males with a migration background are discriminated against more regularly than females with a migration background, because they pose a greater threat to the position of the dominant group

(Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). A study in support of this claim was done by Veenman (2003), who found that males reported much more discrimination than females from the same population. Another study done by the “Cultureel plan bureau” found that teachers judge attitudes in boys far less favorable than that of girls (CPB, 2020).

In a review of performed field experiments in different national contexts involving both genders, Sidanius and Pratto (2001) found that the mean discrimination rate is 29.5 percent for minority men and 22.5 percent for minority women (controlling for experimental method and skill level). Another explanation for this could be drawn back to other studies within social psychology that show that stereotypes about a group are often closely correlated to the stereotypes held about the men belonging to that group while at the same time stereotypes about women from that same group may differ greatly from the group stereotype. When Eagly and Kite (1987) empirically examined these hypotheses for 28 nationalities they found significant evidence to support this hypothesis. These findings would suggest that women can compensate for a large part of their ethnic penalties by rejecting group stereotypes leading me to formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses 3: Non-western migrant men have a stronger reduced effect of parents' social origin on educational attainment than non-western migrant women.

3. Methods

3.1 Data description

In my study, I will be using the 12th wave of LISS panel (longitudinal internet studies for the social sciences) data. The LISS panel is the main component of the MESS project (Measurement and Experimentation in the Social Sciences). The project is strongly geared to integrate the different academic disciplines and to develop and test new and innovative approaches and techniques on research. The LISS panel consists of 5,000 households, comprising around 7,500 individuals. The questionnaires were fielded among panel members aged 16 years or older who had the position of head of the household. The panel is based on a true probability sample of households drawn from the population register by Statistics Netherland and thus is a good representation of the Dutch population. The respondents were selected by a true probability sample of the Dutch population register. Households that needed computer and internet access to

be able to participate in the panel were provided with such. Panel members would complete online questionnaires every month for about 15-30 minutes in total. They were paid for each completed questionnaire. The payment of the participants might have contributed to the high quality and participation of the questionnaire. One part of the interview time available in the LISS panel was reserved for the LISS core study, a longitudinal study which repeated every year and was introduced to follow changes in the life course and living conditions of the participants (LISS, 2007).

The LISS panel consists of multiple themed questionnaires. These range from family and household to political orientation. I use the background variables and the Life History Questionnaire to conduct my research. The second wave of “The Life History Questionnaire” had 6271 participants selected to participate in the questionnaire. 1024 did not respond and 16 participants left the questionnaire incomplete. In total 5231, which is 83,4% completed the questionnaire. (center data, 2021) In total the sample size of participants that participated in both questionnaires was 3119. These participants had no missing values on the variables and were thus included in my model.

I added the two questionnaires together leaving in the usable variables. I will focus mainly on data surrounding education and occupational status. I will use information about the respondents from the children's perspective. The liss panel life-history table provides information about the occupational and educational reality of parents of the respondents when the respondents were 10 years old. This allows me to provide sufficient information about the social origin and education of all respondents.

3.2 Operationalization.

This thesis focuses on the influence of parents' social origin on the educational attainment of their children, particularly looking at the intersection of gender and ethnicity as a moderation Effect.

Dependent variable

To measure educational attainment we look at the variable “*Highest level of education with diploma*”. The variable looks at the level of education that the respondent has finished. They do this according to the What is your *highest level of education with a diploma?* Respondents could answer this question by choosing from 1. Primary school, 2 vmbo (intermediate secondary

education, US: junior high school) 3 havo/vwo (higher secondary education/preparatory university education, US: senior high school) 4 mbo (intermediate vocational education, US: junior college) 5 hbo (higher vocational education, US: college) 6 wo (university) 7 other 8 Not (yet) completed any education and 9 Not yet started any education. To use this variable as an independent variable we will recode it to mirror the cumulative years of education a respondent has received that are needed to attain a certain level of education. The years of education can provide significant information about the educational attainment of respondents since the Dutch educational system is shaped in such a way that the highest level of education requires the most years of study (Hallden, 2008) Respondents who answered that they did not yet start any education will be recorded to 0. The range of education will therefore be 0-22 years. Respondents who answered “other” will be taken from the analysis. I will take out 9 “not yet started education” and 8 “not yet completed any education” via missing listwise because we cannot tell how many years of education this group has received.

Independent variable

The independent variable of the hypotheses is parents' social origin. In the literature, there is some debate as to what variables are fitting to measure social which is often interchangeable used as social status as it refers to the social background an individual has in a society. I measure this by looking at the variable that asks the profession of the parents of the respondent when they were ten years old. This question gives a good indication of the occupational position of the parents at the time when the respondents started their educational paths (Laosa, 1982; McLoyd, 1989; Green et al., 2007).

The answers to the questions “*What was your father’s occupation or position at that time?*” and “*What was your mother’s occupation or position at that time?*” both range from 1. Higher intellectual or independent profession (e.g. architect, physician, scientific researcher, academic lecturer, engineer), 2. Higher management occupation (e.g. manager, director, owner of a big company, senior civil servant) 3. Intermediate intellectual or independent profession (e.g. teacher, artist, medical nurse, social worker, policy officer) 4. Intermediate or commercial occupation (e.g. senior representative, department head, or shopkeeper) 5. Other intellectual occupations (e.g. administrative assistant, bookkeeper, salesperson, family carer) 6. Skilled and supervisory manual labor (e.g. car mechanic, foreman, electrician) 7. Semi-skilled manual labor

(e.g. driver, factory worker, carpenter, baker) 8. Unskilled manual labor (e.g. cleaner, packer) 9. Agrarian occupation (e.g. land laborer, independent agrarian)

The European Socioeconomic Classification Scheme (ESeC) divides the labour market into different classes that are typified by a particular form of employment relationship. The first class is “the higher salariat” consist of; large employers, higher grade professionals, administrative and managerial occupations. For the purpose of this thesis both 1. Higher intellectual or independent profession (e.g. architect, physician, scientific researcher, academic lecturer, engineer) and 2. Higher management occupation (e.g. manager, director, owner of a big company, senior civil servant) fall under this classification and will therefore be used to mirror high status of parents. I will thus make a dummy variable for high-status parents for both mother and father. I make one new variable measuring the highest score of either father or mother. For this research it was more likely to be impactful that one of the parents have a high status than it is for both parents.

Intersectional independent variables

One of my main objectives in this study is to examine the influence of an intersectional perspective on the influence of parents' social origin on educational attainment. I will look at the interplay of being a non-western migrant on both boys and girls. For the operationalization of the gender of the respondent, I will use the variable “*Geslacht*” this is a dichotomous variable with answer options male (0) or female (1). When looking at the ethnicity of the respondent the LISS panel data has answer options 1. Dutch 2. First-generation foreign from western background 3. first-generation foreign non-western background 4. second-generation foreign western background 5. second-generation foreign non-western background. For my analysis, I will recode first-generation and second-generation migrants of both non-western and western descent into a new variable measuring overall migration background to keep the number of participants high enough.

Control variables

To avoid the effect of parents' social origin and educational attainment of both boys and girls with non-western migration backgrounds being spurious, I included control variables in my analysis. There will not be a focus on this variable but they could influence the independent and

dependent variables. The control variable will be the (experienced) material situation of the respondent. Answering the question “*How would you describe the material situation of the family in which you lived at the time?*” talking about the family the respondent lived with when he/she was age 10. Answer options are 1. Poor, 2. Plain but not poor, 3. Average prosperity level, 4. Fairly prosperous, 5. Very prosperous. In table 2 the descriptive statistics of the independent, dependent, moderation, and control variable are displayed.

3.3 Analysis

To test my hypotheses I will be using multiple linear regression. In total there will be three models tested. To test the first hypothesis I will test if the occupational status of parents influences the educational attainment of their children. In the second model, I would like to look at the influence of gender and ethnic differences on the effect of social origin on educational attainment independently. After that in the third model, I will test for intersectionality. I will make six different interaction variables crossing ethnicities and gender. These new variables will be interacting with occupational status to test both hypotheses 2 and 3. This interaction aims to see how the intersection of gender and ethnicity influences the effect parental occupation has on educational attainment. For all models, I expect to see a positive relationship.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables (N=3119)

| | M | SD | RANGE |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| <i>Dependent variable</i> | | | |
| Education level children | 12.39 | 2.6 | 6-16 |
| <i>Independent variable</i> | | | |
| Occupational status parents | 0.16 | 0.37 | 0-1 |
| <i>Interaction variable</i> | | | |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| Non western | 0.05 | 0.22 | 0-1 |
| Western | 0.08 | 0.26 | 0-1 |
| Native | 0.87 | 0.33 | 0-1 |
| Sex | | | |
| Female | 0.53 | 0.5 | 0-1 |
| Male | | | |

Control variable

Material 2.65 0.8 0-5

4. Results

Three models were used to find out if there is an intersectional effect on the influence of occupational status on educational attainment. Model 1 shows that the effect of occupational status on educational attainment was not statistically significant (B= 0.01, P= 0.91). This means that the highest occupation of the mother and father of the respondent when they were ten years old did not influence the level of schooling they attended (R2 change = 0.00, F change = 0.539, p =0.608). The control variables in model 1 show that the Material situation of the family at the time also did not have a significant effect on educational attainment. (b = 0.05, p=0.402)

Table 2. Linear regression dependent variable educational attainment(N=3119)

| Model | 1 | |
|---------------------|------|--------|
| | B | SE |
| High-status parents | .01 | .14 |
| Material | .05 | .06 |
| Constant | 12.3 | .00*** |
| R2 | 0.00 | |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ Ref = reverence category

In the second model, sex was first added to the analysis in model 2a. Adding sex showed significant improvement to the model. (R2 change = 0.00, F change = 10.762 $p < .001/2$). It was found that on average women are less highly educated than men (B=-0.30 $P < 0.05$) This means that women have 0.30 less educational attainment than men.

The control variable material status was still not significant (b = 0.04, p=0.328). After testing for sex in model 2b, a test was run for migration background. The incremental F-test showed that the regression was statistically significant (R2 change = 0.00, F change = 4,578 $p < .001/2$). This means the migration background has a significant effect on educational attainment.

In the analysis, native Dutch was used as the reference category. Having a nonwestern background showed a negative effect on educational attainment compared to having a native Dutch background ($b=-.46$, $p= 0.03$), and having a western background showed a positive effect on educational attainment ($b=0.34$, $p= 0.05$).

In model 2c an interaction of sex and migration background was added into the analysis. The addition of this new variable showed us a significant improvement to the model (R^2 change = .007, F -change = 4.227, $p < 0.01/2$). This implies that the intersectional model explains more of the variance in educational attainment. Both nonwestern females ($b = -.83$, $p=0.003$) and native Dutch females ($b=-.32$, $p=0.001$) showed a negative effect in comparison to native Dutch when it comes to educational attainment.

Table 3.. Linear regression dependent variable educational attainment(N=3119)

| <i>Model</i> | <i>2a</i> | | <i>2b</i> | | <i>2c</i> | |
|---------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | B | S.E | B | S.E | B | S.E |
| High status parents | .00 | .14 | .02 | .14 | .00 | .14 |
| Sex (ref male) | -.30*** | .09 | | | | |
| Material | .06 | .06 | .05 | .06 | .06 | .06 |
| Non western | | | -.46* | .21 | | |
| Western | | | .34* | .17 | | |
| Non western *female | | | | | -.83** | .29 |
| nonwestern *male | | | | | -.37 | .31 |
| western *female | | | | | .18 | .23 |
| western *male | | | | | .16 | .26 |
| natedutch *female | | | | | -.32*** | .09 |
| constant | 12.3 | .00** | 12.2 | .00** | 12.4 | .00** |
| R2 | .00 | | .002 | | .007 | |

*Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Ref = reverence category*

After testing for sex in model 2 an interaction of sex and occupational status was added to into the analysis to test model 3a. The F-change of the model shows that the addition of this interaction did not improve the model. (R2 change = .00, F-change = .092, p = .761/2). This would suggest that the effect of occupational status on educational attainment is not influenced by the sex of the respondent. (b =0.076 p = 0.761/2). In model 3b an Interaction of background and high-status parents was then added to the analysis. The F change of this model shows that the explanatory power of this model did not improve. (R2 change = .00, F-change = .324, p = .723/2). Finally, the last model was tested, model 3c. Here, an interaction was made with the new variable of sex and background with the occupational status of the parents and added it into the analysis. This did not show significant results (R2 change = .001, F-change = 0,521, p= 0,760). No difference was found in the influence of occupational status of parents on educational attainment between non-western men and non-western women (b=0.02 p=0.78).

Table 4.. Linear regression dependent variable educational attainment(N=3119)

| Model | 3a | | 3b | | 3c | |
|-------------------------|---------|-----|-------|-----|----|-----------|
| | B | S.E | B | S.E | B | S.E |
| High status parents | -.03 | .19 | .22 | .56 | | |
| Sex (ref male) | -.32*** | | .10 | | | |
| Material | .06 | .06 | .05 | .06 | | .06 .06 |
| Non western | | | -.49* | .23 | | |
| Western | | | .39* | .19 | | |
| Sex *occupation | | | .08 | .25 | | |
| Western *occupation | | | -.38 | .47 | | |
| Non-western *occupation | | | .18 | .57 | | |
| Nonwestern-female | | | | | | -.80* .30 |
| Nonwestern-male | | | | | | -.50 .35 |
| Western-female | | | | | | .28 .26 |
| Western-male | | | | | | .12 .29 |
| Nativedutch female | | | | | | -.36 .10 |
| Nonwestern-female | | | | | | -.23 .82 |
| *occupation | | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------|---------|------|-------|-----------|
| Nonwestern-male | | | | .66 | .78 |
| *occupation | | | | | |
| Western-female | | | | -.55 | .60 |
| *occupation | | | | | |
| western-male | | | | .30 | .76 |
| *occupation | | | | | |
| Native female | | | | .20 | .27 |
| *occupation | | | | | |
| Contstant | 12.4 | .00 *** | 12.2 | .00** | 12.4 00** |
| R2 | .003 | | .002 | | .008 |

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001 Ref = reverence category

5. Conclusion and discussion

In this paper, the aim was to study the extent to which the interplay of sex and ethnic differences influence the effect of social origin on educational attainment using LISS panel data. My first hypothesis about the influence of the social origin of parents on the educational attainment of their children was not supported by my findings. A few explanations can be given for the outcome. As mentioned, social mobility plays an important role in the causation between educational attainment and parents' social origin. The modernizing thesis of social mobilization argues that in a modern society that is characterized by a systematic employers market the divide of who gets what position in the labor market is shifting from ascribed characteristics, like social origin, to achieved characteristics like education. (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, 2010) This would mean that the society is slowly shifting to one in which prejudices and favoring based on social status are decreasing. In this new society, it does not matter so much where one has its origin. This, however, refers to the labor market and does not provide significant information about students in high school. Previous research has emphasized the influence of parents and especially human capital to determine CITO test scores; it would be questionable to argue that parents' origins do

not play a role in this. Another reason as to why no significant results were found could be due to the operationalization of the variables. Social origin was only measured through occupational status and not through other aspects that scholars argue to determine social status like income or parents' educational levels (Gracia et al., 2015).

The operationalization of the dependent variable, educational attainment could also explain the results. I measured this by looking at the years a person attended education. Even though the years of a person's education say a lot about an individual's educational levels some errors might be prone to this method since it comes with quite strict assumptions.

The second hypothesis tested if non-western migrant women had a stronger reduced effect of parents' social origin on educational attainment than non-western migrant men. This hypothesis was not confirmed. When testing for the interaction of sex, background, and social origin on educational attainment, no effect was found. Interestingly the influence of sex, migration background, and the interaction of sex and background on educational status were significant. This in itself was an intersectional observation, however, when social origin was added into the analysis the model and it was no longer significant. This suggested that intersectional differences are caused by other factors.

For the third hypothesis, I tested if there was an intersectional influence that would suggest men with a non-western migration background have a stronger reduced effect of parent's social origin than women with non-western migration background. The same model was used to measure this as the one used for hypothesis 2 . This means no significant results were found here either.

There were also a few limitations in my study. More time could have been spent to further think about the operationalization of my variables. Even though the LISS panel provided sufficient data I could have been more conscious of the fact that by choosing certain variables or data lists the number of respondents I took into my analysis would shrink. The LISS data consists of a true probability sample of households drawn from the population. Maybe for my analysis, an oversampling of migrants was needed to provide better information. I could also have further theorized what would influence educational attainment in a system like the Netherlands. Maybe other aspects like language proficiency and income could have been used as a dependent variable. Furthermore, this study did not take into consideration other aspects that might have influenced the results such as family compensation, having divorced parents, or income. Another significant flaw of this study is that it did not sufficiently take into account the complex mechanisms that

might influence social mobility amongst youth with migration background. This thesis did not take into consideration how the influence of social origin of parents with migration background on their children's education attainment would manifest itself. It is quite plausible that children with parents that have less human capital in the form of, for instance, educational background experience extensive social mobility during their life course. This could show itself in no influence of the social background of their parents as their human capital is mainly provided by other factors like schools or other institutes. I did not consider this in my approach when studying the influence of social origin. My hypothesis states that the intersectional identities.

These aspects could have further improved my study of educational attainment.

In my research, I looked at different mechanisms that could influence the relationship between a parent's occupational status and the educational attainment of their children. Even though we did not see this effect when looking at occupational status we did find an intersectional effect on educational attainment. I saw that girls with a non-western migration background have less educational attainment than girls with a native Dutch background or a western migration background compared to native Dutch men. This highlights that an intersectional perspective on educational attainment is valid. Further research would be needed to see if other dependent factors in place show this same phenomenon.

Looking at the findings, schools and educational policy should be more sensitive to factors underlying the differences of educational attainment for girls with non-western migration backgrounds, being aware of this during the selection period of high school could influence tracking outcomes. Policies should be set in place to protect migrant girls within educational systems that fail to see their capacity by building upon false narratives and invalidating their capacities.

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