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Abstract

This study examined the attitude toward parental control of mate choice, and two potential factors related to this, that is, opposition to out-group mating and ethnic identification, in the five major ethnic groups from the Republic of Surinam ($n = 500$), that is, Hindustani, Creoles, Maroons, Javanese, and people of Mixed descent. Some of the main differences between groups were the following: Hindustani and Maroons had a more positive attitude toward parental control than all other groups, Hindustani were more opposed to out-group mating than all other groups, and Maroons expressed more identification with their ethnic group than any other group. Women, as compared with men, valued parental control of mate choice more and expressed more opposition to out-group mating. All effects of ethnic group and gender were independent of the demographic variables on which the groups differed significantly. A positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice was associated with more opposition to interethnic mating and

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with more ethnic identification. The results are discussed in the context of research on the persistence and independence of cultural differences.

Keywords

arranged marriage, Surinam, mate choice, parental control, ethnic identification, cultural differences, out-group mating

Although in social and evolutionary psychology it is assumed that individuals freely select their spouse on the basis of their own preferences, this is cross-culturally and historically not the most common pattern of mate choice. In fact, such individual preferences have in many societies been considered the completely wrong basis for the choice of a spouse (e.g., Apostolou, 2012; Coontz, 2006; Goode, 1959; Harris, 1995; Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, & Verma, 1995; Murstein, 1974; Twamley, 2013). Indeed, all over the world, often in addition to other community members, parents have been—and often still are—the ones who eventually decide with whom their child should marry (e.g., Merali, 2012). In about 70% of contemporary hunter-gatherer societies, the most common form of mate-choice is parental arrangement; moreover, fathers usually choose the spouse for their children (Apostolou, 2007). For example, among the !Kung of South Africa, first marriages were usually arranged by parents and other close relatives (Shostak, 1983), and in a community of Australian aboriginals, marriages were predominantly arranged (Burbank, 1995). Arranged marriages are also common in agro pastoral societies (Apostolou, 2014). Buunk, Park, and Duncan (2010) argued that parental control over mate choice should be viewed as a continuum ranging from the situation in which a father can marry out his daughters without any consent from her, to complete free mate choice of individuals without any role of their parents.

Attitudes toward parental control over mate choice have not been examined extensively in current populations with distinct cultural and historical backgrounds. The present research intends to shed more light on this issue. First, in a sample of adults who were actual or prospective parents, we examined differences in the attitudes toward parental control over mate choice. Second, we investigated some factors that might underlie these attitudes in the Republic of Surinam. Surinam is made up of a number of ethnic groups that have quite different attitudes toward marriage, but that nevertheless share a common language and culture. Surinam is a former Dutch colony, but is, since 1975, a sovereign state on the northeastern coast of South America. It is the smallest country in South America, with a population of approximately

566,000, but it is ethnically one of the most diverse countries in the world. Although over the years there has been a considerable degree of acculturation among the various groups, the different groups have kept to an important extent their own behavioral patterns, both culturally and socially (Hassankhan & Hira, 1998). It appears that the closer the contacts between groups become, the more they both try to maintain their uniqueness and at the same time embrace the common characteristics to make intercultural exchange possible (Helman, 1977). In association with this acculturation process, a new ethnic group has been formed, now generally referred to as the Mixed. Although also a number of Chinese, Lebanese, and Brazilians are living in Surinam (Binnendijk & Faber, 2008), the present study focused on the five major ethnic groups: the Afro-Surinamese, which are divided into the Creoles and Maroons; the Javanese; the Hindus; and the Mixed.

Maroons

The Maroons constitute about 22% of the population and are the descendants of slaves who fled during slavery from the plantations and settled inland (Helman, 1977). The Maroon community is known as a closed group that has kept its traditions, standards, and values (Landveld, 2005). The Maroons consist of various tribes who live in the jungle in small societies or villages, led by traditional leaders, referred to as *Granman*, *Captain*, and *Basja*. The *Granman* is the chief and spiritual leader of the people, who is assisted by the *Captain*, who is in turn assisted by the *Basya* (Fey, 2009). The social organization is based on matrilineal kinship, in which the role of the mother is crucial. Men belong to their mother's matrilineal line, and the name of the mother and not the father is passed on to the children (Landveld, 2005). Although there is often no official marriage according to Western norms, a commitment is made in rituals through which the couple gets married in the eyes of the village. Mate shifting and temporary unions are common, and polygyny is allowed—often with wives living in different villages (in part because men often work elsewhere and stay away from home for a long time). Having more than one woman may not cause problems as long as the man can provide his material and financial support to all his women (Fey, 2009). Due to education and Christian influences, the acceptance of polygyny has decreased over the years.

Creoles

The word Creole is derived from the French word *crioulo*, meaning born in house or home-grown. The children who were born on the plantations were

called Creoles, to make a distinction between them and the slaves from Africa. Today, the word Creole is used in Surinam to describe a person mainly settled in the city, descending from ex-slaves from Africa and mostly Dutch Europeans. The Creoles constitute about 16% of the population. In the Creole community, there are many single-parent households, where the mother is the breadwinner and head of the family. The father is often absent due to, among others, work-related factors. Compared with other ethnicities, there is more tolerance in the Creole community for men who do not fulfill a father role, making the occurrence of stepfathers and mothers not uncommon (Helman, 1977). Concubines are common within the creole community. This kind of relationship originates from the 17th and 18th century, when men of European descent took women of African descent as housekeepers, who also fulfilled the sexual needs of these men as concubines. Cohabitation is institutionalized and recognized by private employers and the Government (Tanner, 1974). Marriages are not uncommon within the Creole community, but the number of married Creoles is much smaller than the number of Creoles that cohabit without being married.

Hindustani

The largest ethnic group in Surinam, forming about 27% of the population, is the Hindustani, descendants of contract workers who came from India to Suriname in 1873. They were free to express their culture after working hours, and their Indian culture has been well preserved (Bloemberg, 1995). Although some Hindustani are Muslims or Christians, the vast majority of them profess two forms of Hinduism, the *Sanatan Dharm* and the *Arya Samaj*. Marriage in this religion is an essential event and marks the transition to adulthood. Marriage is seen as sacred and for life (Ramdas, 2006). Characteristic of the Indian family system is the joint family. This family may live in the same house or on the same property and may consist of three or even four generations, including the daughters-in-law. Respect and reverence for parents is the most important guideline within the Hindustani community, and deviance from this rule is not tolerated and seen as bringing shame to the family (Lalmahomed, 1992). The women are often not considered as equal, but tend to tolerate their position out of fear of the consequences, in particular losing support from their family. In general, the culture is quite hierarchical. The values and norms are slowly changing due to education, western influences, and other religions. Women are slowly gaining more freedom and rights, but some core values within this community are deeply rooted and still have a large impact on women's daily lifestyle (Ramdas, 2006).

Javanese

The Javanese are the fourth largest population of Suriname, and constitute about 14% of the population. They were brought to Suriname as contract workers from Indonesia between 1890 and 1939. One of the core values within the Javanese community is keeping peace or harmony among each other and having a good relationship with one's fellow men, which is referred to as *rukun*, meaning harmony (Helman, 1977). Avoiding conflicts and confrontations is perhaps the most important trait of the Javanese attitude to life. The family system of the Javanese has characteristics of the joint-family system, in the sense that the family consists of parents, children, grandchildren, spouses, and other live-in family members of the husband and wife. Due to the unequal sex ratio among the Javanese, women feel free to end relationships and form new relationships or sexual relations. They also feel free to enter into loose relationships with different men (Suparalan, 1976). The Javanese are predominantly Muslims, and most Muslims in Surinam are Javanese (Hendrix & van Waning, 2009). The Javanese Muslims are divided into the East and West intercessors. This is due to disagreement over the location of Surinam compared with Mecca. The East intercessors are more traditional and adhere to the stricter use of the Islam (such as praying 5 times a day). The West intercessors profess Islam in name but combine their faith with Hindu elements. Some Javanese are Christians, whereas others profess *Javanism*, a traditional religion of which ancestral worship is an important part. The aim of this group is the preservation of the Javanese culture, which is considered very important (Binnendijk & Faber, 2008).

Mixed

The now increasing group of individuals of Mixed descent consists of people with ancestors with different ethnicities and currently constitutes about 13% of the population. Mixed is the official name given to the mixed ethnic group in the National Census of Suriname. There is no further distinction, mainly because there are endless possible combinations of mixed ethnic groups (Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek van Suriname, 2012). A person who identifies as mixed can be born out of parents who both have a different ethnic background or one of them or both of them are also mixed. Being of Mixed descent has become an identity itself; people of mixed descent see themselves as a mixed person and take an active role in choosing their identity. Making one's identity and culture unique to oneself is a common characteristic of plural Caribbean societies. There have been various names to refer to people of various combination of their two parents, like *Dougla* for

the mixture of a Hindu and an Afro-Surinamese, and *mulatto* for the mixture of a Creole and an individual of European descent, but because of the many ethnicities and mixed marriages among the various ethnicities in Suriname, these words are no longer commonly used (Helman, 1977).

Attitudes Toward Parental Control of Mate Choice

The Surinam population is in the present context particularly interesting given the ethnic diversity and the variety in the attitudes toward freedom of mate choice and monogamy in a small country without a single dominant culture. In South Asia, and especially in India, parental control of marriage has been—and still is—rather common (Gautam, 2002; Madathil & Benschhof, 2008; Pimentel, 2000). Even though societal norms are changing, parental consent continues to be of crucial paramount importance for a socially accepted *marriage* (Polzenhagen & Frey, 2017). This tendency also pertains among many immigrant communities from South Asia living in Western countries. For example, near the end of the 20th century, about half of the marriages of Indian immigrants in the United States were arranged by the parents (Menon, 1989). In a study among second-generation South Asian immigrants living in North America, about a quarter of the participants indicated that their parents would likely arrange their marriage (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). In general, in these immigrant groups, parents often try to control their children's mate choice to a considerable extent, and second-generation immigrants indicate that conflicts with their parents about their dating behavior and marital choice are common (e.g., Dugsin, 2001; Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006; Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004). Indeed, in a study in the Netherlands, second-generation young people of Turkish and Moroccan descent—both cultures where such control has historically been quite prevalent—preferred much more parental control over mate choice than the native Dutch (Buunk, 2015).

We can therefore expect that in the present population, parental control over mate choice will be particularly valued positively by the Hindustani, even though this ethnic group has been in Surinam for four of five generations. This will even be more the case as there was and is in Surinam no dominant culture to which immigrants could assimilate. As arranged marriages were and are less common in Java, parental control over mate choice may be expected to be less positively valued. As the Maroons fled from plantations and resumed an agricultural and hunter-gatherer lifestyle like their ancestors in Africa, they may also value parental control over mate choice because Indigenous populations are typically characterized by arranged marriages, and because traditionally in Africa, marriages were arranged (e.g., Apostolou,

2014). Indeed, arranged marriages are not uncommon among the Maroons; however, unlike in many other cultures, it is primarily the mother who chooses her children's future partner. We would expect the least positive attitudes toward parental control among the Mixed, given the influence of a variety of cultures, and next among the Creoles, given the influence of Western culture.

Opposition to Outgroup Mating

According to Buunk, Parks, and Dubbs (2008), overall, a major reason why parents want to control the mate choice of their offspring is that they want to maintain the homogeneity and cohesion of the in-group. Indeed, Buunk et al. found that parental control of mate choice was valued more in cultures where individuals are highly dependent on the in-group, that is, collectivistic cultures. Collectivistic cultures are characterized by values such as group solidarity, duties and obligations, and group decisions, and especially an emphasis on loyalty to one's family and on giving in to the wishes of one's family (Hofstede, 1980). In contrast, romantic love—which represents individual interests—is considered a more important basis for marriage in more individualistic cultures, that is, cultures characterized by values such as autonomy, right to privacy, and pleasure seeking (e.g., Levine et al., 1995). This explains why particularly collectivist cultures such as China, India, and Japan have historically been characterized by arranged marriages (e.g., Applbaum, 1995; Riley, 1994; Xie & Combs, 1996).

To foster and preserve the homogeneity and cohesion of the in-group, a major concern of parents all over the world is that the mates of their children have the same social, ethnic, and religious background. Marriages between members with different backgrounds are in many cases considered as something to be circumvented, and in some cultures even regarded as taboo (Murdock, 1949). For example, a series of studies conducted by Buunk et al. (2008) showed that in a variety of countries, including such diverse cultures as the United States and Iraqi Kurdistan, individuals perceived that their parents would object if they chose a mate with traits indicating a poor fit with the in-group, such as a different ethnicity, a different religion, or from a lower social class (see also, for example, Apostolou, 2007, 2014). Considering the specific culture of the Hindustani, we can expect that in this group, the opposition to inter-group mating will be the strongest. In contrast, given the fact that marrying with members from other ethnic groups is by definition characteristic of the Mixed, we would expect the lowest level of opposition to interethnic mating here. Moreover, considering the unbalanced sex ratio among the Javanese, we can also expect relatively little opposition to interethnic mating, as women are more or less forced

to look for partners in the other ethnic groups. Finally, given the mate shifting and temporary unions, Maroons may be more open to having casual relationships with members of other ethnic groups as this would enlarge the pool of eligibles. In general, we expected that opposition to out-group mating would be an important predictor of a positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice. In line with this notion, Buunk, Pollet, and Dubbs (2012) found in the Oaxaca region of Mexico that, overall, opposition to out-group mating was a strong predictor of a positive attitude toward parental control on mate choice, and more so among men than among women. Buunk (2015) found the same effect among young people in the Netherlands, especially among those of Moroccan and Turkish descent (see also Buunk & Dijkstra, 2017).

Ethnic Identification

In addition to opposition against out-group mating, a positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice may depend to an important extent on the degree of ethnic identification. In line with the argument that a main motive behind parental control over mate choice is to preserve the homogeneity and cohesion of the in-group, one would indeed expect that such control would be particularly valued by individuals with a strong identification with their ethnic group. For people with low identification, it would matter less if people from their group marry people from other groups. There is indeed considerable evidence that individuals who identify strongly with their in-group tend to have a stronger preference for in-group marriages as an important way to maintain their culture and to preserve their ethnic in-group distinctiveness (e.g., Kalmijn, 1998; Nave, 2000). As is the case for parental control of mate choice, the rate of out-group marriage varies considerably across ethnic groups (e.g., Qian & Lichter, 2007). For example, in a study in Mauritius, it was found that, especially among Hindus, and to a lesser extent among Muslims, the higher the ethnic identification, the lower the willingness to marry someone from another ethnic group (Ng Tseung-Wong & Verkuyten, 2015). Especially relevant in the present context, a study among young Hindu immigrants in the United States showed that intra-religion *marriage* was considered very important for group identity-related reasons, such as preserving Hindu culture and maintaining Hindu identity (Kay, 2012). We did not have specific predictions about differences between the ethnic groups in ethnic identification, but, as the main function of parental control is fostering in-group marriages, we expected that, overall, a positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice would be higher, the stronger the ethnic identification.

Summary of Research Questions

Among our sample of adults who were actual or prospective parents, we first asked if there are differences between the ethnic groups in Surinam in the attitudes toward parental control of mate choice, in the opposition to out-group mating, and in ethnic identification. Second, we examined to what extent differences in attitudes toward parental control of mate choice between the groups might be explained by differences in opposition toward out-group mating and in ethnic identification. Third, we examined if there were differences between the ethnic groups in the associations of attitudes toward parental control with opposition to out-group mating and ethnic identification. Fourth, because men in traditional Indigenous groups such as the Mixtecs in Mexico (Buunk et al., 2012), as well as young men of Turkish and Moroccan descent living in the Netherlands (Buunk, 2015), tend to have a more positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice than women, we included gender as a factor in all analyses. Finally, we examined if the associations were upheld when controlling for potentially relevant demographic variables (i.e., employment status, civil status, income level, educational level, and presence of a father during childhood).

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 500 actual or prospective parents, aged 25 to 50 years, $M = 36.56$, $SD = 7.79$. There were about equal numbers of randomly selected participants in each ethnic group (see “Procedure” section below), that is, 102 Creoles (20.4%), 95 East Hindustani (19.0%), 98 Javanese (19.6%), 102 Maroons (20.4%), and 103 people of Mixed descent (20.6%). There were 243 men (48.6%) and 257 women (51.4%). About half (248) of the participants (49.6%) came from rural areas, and the other half (252) from the capital Paramaribo (50.4%). A large majority of 77.2% had at least one child. The level of education was in general rather low: a large minority (43.5%) had an education of elementary school or less, 29.6% had a lower level of high school, 20.7% had a higher level of high school, and only 6.2% had a higher education. In terms of religion, the majority were Christians (Catholics 21.8% and Protestants 34.9%), followed by Muslims (18.5%), Hindu’s (17.1%), other religions (2.4%), with only 5% reporting no religion. With respect to civil status, 29.3% were married, 34.4% were living together, 14.6% had a steady partner without living together, 4.2% had several or changing partners, and 13.7% did not have a steady partner. About half of the

respondents (51%) grew up with a father present during all childhood. The father had left for 12% when the respondent was between 13 and 18 years of age, for 19% when the respondent was between 7 and 12 years of age, for 9% when the respondent was 6 years or younger, and 18% grew up without a father. Of the respondents, 11.6% had no income, 17.4% earned less than S\$1,000 (Surinamese dollars), 38.0% between S\$1,000 and S\$2,000, 14.8% between S\$2,000 and S\$3,000, 4.8% between S\$3,000 and S\$4,000, and 4% more than S\$4,000. The value of S\$1,000 was at the time of the interview equivalent to around US\$450 or €400.

Procedure

All participants were individually interviewed. The interviews were held in Dutch, the official language of Surinam. The survey took place between October 2015 and December 2015. The random sample was drawn from the five largest ethnic groups using the figures of the Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek in Suriname (2012) based on ethnicity and the area. Based on the highest concentration of ethnicity according to this institute, the following areas were chosen: the Paramaribo district as the urban area, and Saramacca, Commewijne, Marowijne (Moengo), and Para as rural areas. Next, the streets were randomly drawn in these areas and all houses in the drawn streets were visited. The interviews were conducted privately, face to face with that person at home who was between the age of 25 and 50 years of age.

Measures

Parental control of mate choice. To assess the attitudes toward parental control of mate choice, the scale developed by Buunk et al. (2010) that has been used in many subsequent studies was included. This scale was based on various sources (e.g., Goode, 1959; Hortaçsu & Oral, 1994; Pool, 1972; Rao & Rao, 1976; Riley, 1994; Theodorson, 1965; Xie & Combs, 1996) and covers the range of possible forms of parental control of mate choice (ranging from *complete autonomy of children to complete control by parents*). The scale was developed to be sensitive to variations in the degree of parental influence within and between ethnic groups and cultures. For instance, it includes an item that represents the most extreme form of parental control, “If he has good reasons for it, a father has the right to give his daughter away for marriage”; more moderate items like “If they take into account the wishes of their children, parents have the right to demand that their children accept the partner they have chosen for them” and “Children have the right to reject a partner their parents have chosen for them”; and items that represent the other

side, for example, “Parents have the right to say how they feel about it, but in the end, it is up to the children to select their own partner” and “Children have the right to select their own partner without any interference by their parents.” All 10 items had the format of a statement with which people could respond on a 5-point scale from *I strongly disagree* (1) to *I strongly agree* (5). Seven items were statements expressing parental control of mate choice, whereas three items consisted of statements expressing individual choice. The scale has proved to be a reliable indicator of positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice in many cultures and ethnic groups, including young people from Iraqi Kurdistan and from Argentina, young Moroccan and Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, and Afro-Mexicans, Mestizos, and Mixtecs from Mexico (Buunk, 2015; Buunk & Castro Solano, 2012; Buunk et al., 2010, 2012). In the present sample, the alpha reliability was .72, which was somewhat lower than in some previous studies. The total score was divided by the number of items, $M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.74$.

Opposition to out-group mating. This scale consisted of five items used by Buunk (2015), a shorter version of a scale developed by Buunk et al. (2012), that was based on the scale for intergroup mating competition developed by Klavina and Buunk (2013). The items were “Men and women from different ethnic groups have too different backgrounds to get married”; “People who marry people from another ethnic group are responsible for the deterioration of their community”; “When a man/woman receives attention from many women/men who want to date him, he or she should give priority to the women/men of his own group”; “I become angry when I see that so many men/women are interested in women/men from other ethnic groups”; and “I find it disgusting men/women from other ethnic groups are flirting with women/men from my ethnic group.” Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they did agree or disagree with the statements. All items had the same possible answers as the scale for parental control of mate choice. The reliability was high, $\alpha = .82$. The total score was divided by the number of items, $M = 1.94$, $SD = 0.98$.

Ethnic identification. The measure of this variable was loosely based on the Collective Self-Esteem Scale developed by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992). The following five statements were included: “I identify strongly with (my ethnic group)”; “My identity as member of (my ethnic group) is an important part of my self”; “If someone says something bad about (my ethnic group), it is as if they say something bad about me”; “I consider myself as a typical member of (my ethnic group)”; and “I am proud of being a member of (my ethnic group.” For each item, the name of the ethnic group was filled in. All

items had the same possible answers as the scale for parental control of mate choice. The reliability was moderate, $\alpha = .62$. The total score was divided by the number of items, $M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.76$.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

We first did some preliminary analyses, examining the correlations between the three attitudinal variables, and then we looked for differences between the ethnic groups in demographic variables that might explain differences in the attitudinal variables.

Correlations between the variables. Ethnic identification correlated weakly with the attitudinal variables, and only among women was it significantly correlated with opposition to out-group mating (for women, $r = .13$, $p < .01$; for men, $r = .10$, $p = .11$). Opposition to out-group mating correlated positively with a positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice (for women, $r = .37$, $p < .001$; for men, $r = .33$, $p < .001$). The degree of ethnic identification correlated positively with a positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice among women, $r = .24$, $p < .001$, but not among men, $r = .10$, $p = .11$. These correlations underline the relevance of examining whether possible differences between the ethnic groups in the attitudes toward parental control of mate choice could be explained by differences in ethnic identification and opposition to out-group mating, and the relevance of examining gender differences in this respect.

Differences between the ethnic groups in demographic variables. There were large differences between the ethnic groups in the demographic variables. As shown in Table 1, in terms of employment status, the most remarkable difference is the high percentage of housekeepers among the Hindustani, and the somewhat elevated level of unemployment among the Maroons, although a large majority of Maroons were employed. Large differences were observed with respect to marital status: only among the Hindustani were the majority legally married (over two third of the respondents), whereas among the Maroons, fewer than 10% were married, with the figures for the Javanese and Mixed between these extremes. As noted in the Introduction, among Maroons, living together without being married is common, but often they engage in a ritual in which a commitment is made. But also among the Creoles, Javanese, and Mixed, about a third or more were living together. In line with what was outlined in the Introduction, among the Hindustani a large majority, and

Table 1. Differences Between the Ethnic Groups in Demographic Characteristics for Men and Women.

	Creoles	Hindustani	Javanese	Maroons	Mixed	Difference
Gender						
Men	50%	45%	49%	48%	51%	
Women	50%	55%	51%	52%	49%	$\chi(12) = 27.43^{***}$
Employment						
Employed	74%	63%	76%	69%	81%	
Student	6%	1%	2%	5%	5%	
Unemployed	4%	4%	0%	9%	5%	
Housekeeper	13%	26%	18%	14%	9%	
Other						
Civil status						$\chi(16) = 139.00^{***}$
Married	7%	68%	37%	8%	28%	
Living together	42%	9%	34%	55%	32%	
Various relationships	4%	4%	8%	3%	3%	
Steady, not living	30%	6%	5%	22%	15%	
No partner	17%	13%	16%	12%	10%	
Father presence						$\chi(16) = 45.84^{***}$
Never	31%	9%	11%	20%	17%	
Until age 6	12%	5%	6%	10%	10%	
Until age 7 to 12	9%	11%	8%	11%	12%	
Until age 13 to 18	10%	5%	13%	20%	12%	
Whole childhood	38%	70%	61%	40%	50%	
Income ^a	1.91 (1.30)	1.72 (1.21)	1.83 (0.93)	1.66 (1.24)		2.71 (1.09) $\chi(16) = 68.99^{***}$
Educational level ^b	2.86 (1.01)	2.54 (1.15)	2.77 (0.89)	2.48 (1.04)		3.32 (1.06) $\chi(16) = 57.29^{***}$

a | = none; 2 = less than \$81,000; 3 = between \$81,000 and \$82,000; 4 = between \$82,000 and \$83,000; 5 = between \$83,000 and \$84,000; 6 = more than \$84,000.

b | = kindergarten; 2 = elementary school; 3 = lower level of high school; 4 = higher level of high school; 5 = higher education.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 2. Ethnic Group and Gender Differences in Attitudes Toward Parental Control of Mate Choice.

	Creoles	Hindustani	Javanese	Maroons	Mixed	Men	Women
<i>M</i> ^a	1.91	2.24	1.96	1.82	1.78	1.80	2.07
<i>SD</i>	0.95	1.17	0.90	0.83	1.03	0.91	1.03
% ^b	23.5	50.5	25.0	35.6	22.3	25.9	36.2

^aHigher scores indicate a more positive attitude.

^bPercentage of individuals with a positive attitude (scores higher than the midpoint of the scale).

among the Javanese a substantial minority, grew up in a family in which the father was present, whereas this occurred only for minorities of around 40% of the Creoles and Maroons. Finally, income and educational level were highest among the Mixed, with minor differences between the other ethnic groups. These differences between the ethnic groups underline the importance of controlling for demographic variables.

Effects of Ethnic Group and Gender

To examine the effects of ethnic group and gender, univariate General Linear Modeling (GLM) analyses were executed with ethnic group and gender as independent variables, and attitudes toward parental control of mate choice, opposition to out-group mating, and ethnic identification as dependent variables.

Attitudes toward parental control of mate choice. There were significant effects of ethnic group, $F(4, 497) = 18.44, p < .001$, and of gender, $F(1, 497) = 7.19, p < .01$, but no interaction between both factors, $p = .45$. As shown in Table 2, and as predicted, the Hindustani were more in favor of parental control than all other groups, all $ps < .005$, with large effect sizes (i.e., $>.81$) for the differences with the other groups, except for the difference with the Maroons, who were also more in favor of parental control than the other three groups, all $ps < .014$, with somewhat smaller effect sizes than found among the Hindustani (between .36 and .67). The Javanese, the Creoles, and the Mixed were all equally in favor of parental control. Women, $M = 2.73, SD = 0.71$, were overall more in favor of parental control than men, $M = 2.54, SD = 0.75$ (unadjusted means), $d = .26$, a rather small effect size, although as noted above, the sex difference was significant. To obtain insight into the prevalence of approval of parental control of mate choice in the various groups, we

Table 3. Ethnic Group and Gender Differences in Opposition Against Out-Group Mating.

	Creoles	Hindustani	Javanese	Maroons	Mixed	Men	Women
M	2.45	3.08	2.56	2.80	2.32	2.54	2.73
SD	0.71	0.62	0.65	0.63	0.81	0.75	0.71

also examined the proportion of individuals in each group who were on average in favor of parental control by calculating the percentage of individuals in each group who scored above the midpoint of the scale (i.e., 3). As Table 3 shows, no less than half of the Hindustani, a third of the Maroons, and about a quarter of all other ethnic groups had a positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice. Table 2 also shows that about a third of the women and a quarter of the men had a positive attitude toward such control.

When we controlled for the demographic variables mentioned in Table 1, the main effects of gender, $F(1, 374) = 3.94, p < .05$, and of ethnic group, $F(4, 374) = 8.51, p < .001$, remained significant, with only civil status, $F(4, 374) = 4.10, p < .01$, and educational level, $F(4, 374) = 7.83, p < .001$, having significant effects, the others, $F_s < 2.11, p_s > .06$. Thus, the effect of ethnic group on attitudes toward parental control of mate choice were independent of the considerable differences in relevant demographic variables.

Opposition to out-group mating. There were significant effects of ethnic group, $F(4, 500) = 3.20, p < .05$, and of gender, $F(1, 500) = 9.11, p < .01$, but no interaction between both factors, $p = .91$. As shown in Table 3, as expected, Hindustani were more against out-group mating than all other groups. The p s of the differences with the other groups were between .02 and .001, with small effect sizes, $.27 < d_s < .43$, but there were no significant differences between the other ethnic groups, all $p_s > .20$. Women, $M = 2.07, SD = 1.03$, were overall more against out-group mating than men, $M = 1.80, SD = 0.91$ (unadjusted means), $d = .28$, again a small effect size for the sex difference.

When we controlled for the demographic variables, the main effects of gender, $F(1, 377) = 4.36, p < .05$, and of ethnic group, $F(4, 377) = 2.59, p < .05$, remained significant, and none of the demographic variables had a significant effect, $F_s < 1.42, p_s > .22$. Thus, the predicted effect of ethnic group on opposition to out-group mating choice could not be explained by any demographic variable on which the groups differed.

Ethnic identification. There were significant effects of ethnic group, $F(4, 499) = 10.40, p < .001$, and of gender, $F(1, 499) = 9.34, p < .01$, on degree of

Table 4. Ethnic Group and Gender Differences in Ethnic Identification.

	Creoles	Hindustani	Javanese	Maroons	Mixed	Men	Women
<i>M</i>	4.20	4.20	3.97	4.53	3.94	4.06	4.27
<i>SD</i>	0.72	0.78	0.75	0.52	0.87	0.82	0.69

ethnic identification, but no interaction between both factors, $p = .96$. As shown in Table 4, Maroons expressed the strongest identification with their ethnic group. Their identification was significantly higher than that of all other groups ($ps < .01$), with large effect sizes for the differences with the Javanese ($d = .87$) and the Mixed ($d = .82$), but medium effect sizes for the differences with the Creoles ($d = .52$) and the Hindustani ($d = .50$). The Maroons were followed by the Creoles and the Hindustani who had the same level of ethnic identification ($p = .97$, $d = .01$), and both these groups expressed a significantly higher ethnic identification, but with small effect sizes, than the Javanese and people of mixed descent ($ps < .05$, $.34 > ds > .29$). These latter two groups expressed, thus, the lowest level of ethnic identification, but did not differ from each other in this respect ($p = .78$, $d = .04$). Women, $M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.03$, expressed a stronger ethnic identification than men did, $M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.76$, $d = .11$, a very small effect size.

When we controlled for the demographic variables, the main effects of gender, $F(1, 376) = 7.67$, $p < .01$, and of ethnic group, $F(4, 376) = 5.95$, $p < .001$, remained significant, and only educational level had a significant negative effect, $F(4, 376) = 2.94$, $p < .05$, all other F s < 2.07 , $ps > .10$. The lower the educational level, the higher the ethnic identification. This effect was independent of that of ethnic group and gender. The effect of ethnic group on ethnic identification could not be explained by any demographic variable, including educational level.

Opposition to Out-Group Mating and Ethnic Identification as Explanations of Ethnic and Gender Differences in Attitudes Toward Parental Control

Ethnic group. We examined if the effects of ethnic group on attitudes toward parental control could be explained by differences between the ethnic groups in ethnic identification and opposition to out-group mating. We did this by conducting analyses of variance (ANOVAs) with ethnic group as independent variable in which either ethnic identification or opposition to out-group mating was included as a covariate. If in such an analysis the effect of ethnic

group would become non-significant, that would imply that the difference between the ethnic groups in attitudes toward parental control of mate choice could be explained by differences in the covariate (i.e., ethnic identification or opposition to out-group mating).

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with attitudes toward parental control as dependent variable, ethnic identification as covariate, and ethnic group as factor showed that both variables had strong effects: for ethnic identification, $F(4, 495) = 9.41, p < .01$, and for ethnic group, $F(1, 495) = 16.06, p < .001$. In the same vein, a similar analysis with opposition to out-group mating as covariate showed that both variables had very strong effects: for opposition to out-group mating, $F(4, 496) = 64.41, p < .001$, and for ethnic group, $F(1, 495) = 16.62, p < .001$. These findings clearly suggest that both variables cannot explain differences between the ethnic groups in attitudes toward parental control of mate choice.

Gender. Next, as women and men differed on all three attitudinal variables, we examined in the same way if gender differences in attitudes toward parental control could be explained by gender differences in ethnic identification and in opposition to out-group mating. An ANCOVA with attitudes toward parental control as dependent variable, ethnic identification as covariate, and gender as factor showed that both variables had significant effects: for ethnic identification, $F(4, 495) = 9.41, p < .01$, and for ethnic group, $F(1, 495) = 16.06, p < .001$. However, a similar analysis with opposition to out-group mating as covariate showed that only such opposition had a—quite strong—effect, $F(1, 496) = 67.09, p < .001$, whereas the effect of gender was no longer significant, $F(1, 496) = 3.40, p = .07$. These findings suggest that ethnic identification cannot explain the gender differences in attitudes toward parental control, but that opposition to out-group mating can. Put differently, women tend to be more in favor of parental control of mate choice at least in part because they are more strongly than men opposed to out-group mating, but not because they identify more with their ethnic group.

Associations of Opposition to Out-Group Mating and Ethnic Identification With Attitudes Toward Parental Control in the Different Ethnic Groups

Next, we examined if opposition to out-group mating and ethnic identification were differently associated with attitudes toward parental control among men and among women in the five ethnic groups.

Opposition to out-group mating. To examine how opposition to out-group mating was associated with attitudes toward parental control for men and women in the five ethnic groups, a univariate GLM analysis was conducted with gender and ethnic group as factors, and with opposition to intergroup mating as continuous independent variable. All main effects and interactions were included in the model. As we described already the main effects of gender, ethnic group, and opposition to out-group mating, we only examined here the interactions. None the interactions approached significance, $F_s < .97$, $ps > .42$. When we excluded gender from the model, there was still no interaction between ethnic group and opposition to out-group mating, $F = .32$, $p = .87$. Thus, it seems that, overall, opposition to out-group mating (regardless of ethnic group) is a major factor underlying positive attitude toward parental control over mate choice.

Ethnic identification. To examine how degree of ethnic identification was associated with attitudes toward parental control for men and women in the five ethnic groups, a univariate GLM analysis was conducted with gender and ethnic group as factors and with ethnic identification as covariate. All main effects and interactions were included in the model. As we described already the main effects of gender, ethnic group, and ethnic identification, we only examined here the interactions. None of these effects was significant in this model, $F_s < 1.54$, $ps > .19$. When we excluded gender from the model, there was still no significant main effect of ethnic group, $F(4, 496) = 79$, $p = .53$. However, the findings were somewhat more complex, as there was a significant interaction between ethnic group and ethnic identification, $F(5, 496) = 2.30$, $p < .05$. Separate regression analyses within the five ethnic groups showed that only among the Hindustani was a positive attitude toward parental control over mate choice significantly related to degree of ethnic identification, $\beta = .25$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .06$, whereas the association between both variables was marginally significant among the people of Mixed descent, $\beta = .17$, $p = .09$, $R^2 = .03$. In the three other groups, the effect of ethnic identification was not significant, $ps > .16$.

Discussion

The present research examined the relationships between attitudes toward parental control of mate choice, opposition to out-group mating, and degree of ethnic identification among adults (most of whom were parents) from the five major ethnic groups in Surinam. As expected, overall, the attitudes toward parental control of mate choice were most positive among the Hindustani and the Maroons, with large effect sizes for the differences with

all other groups for the Hindustani, and somewhat smaller effect sizes for the Maroons. No less than half of the Hindustani and more than a third of the Maroons were at least to some extent in favor of parental control of mate choice. These findings suggest that Hindustani, and to a lesser extent the Maroons, favor the view that individuals follow the preferences of their parents when choosing a mate, and thus seem, even after four of five (or even more) generations, to hold on to the values of the culture their ancestors came from. The finding for the Hindustani is in line with findings from studies showing that among immigrants from South Asia in Western societies, parents try to a considerable degree to influence the mate choice of their children and have strong objections against out-group marriages (e.g., Bhopal, 1997; Das Gupta, 1997; Dugsin, 2001; Hynie et al., 2006; Lalonde et al., 2004; Menon, 1989; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). In Canada, people of East Asian descent have been found to be more in favor of parental control of mate choice than Canadians of European descent (Buunk et al., 2010). The findings are also in line with a recent study by Buunk (2015) that the attitudes toward parental control over mate choice were, compared with the native Dutch, considerably more positive among Turkish and Moroccan young people—whose parents came also from cultures in which the influence of parents on the mate choice of their children is generally quite strong. In addition, Hindustani were more opposed to out-group mating than all other groups. These other groups did not differ in this respect.

Although they were less opposed to out-group mating than the Hindustani, it is important to note that the Maroons were more in favor of parental control of mate choice than the Javanese, Creoles, and the Mixed. The pattern among the Maroons may be a residue of African culture as in many traditional African populations, arranged marriages were traditionally a common occurrence (e.g., Bettmann, Kilgore, Jeremiah, & Parry, 2013; Shostak, 1983), although this has changed considerably in the past decades (e.g., see the case of Ghana; Takyi, 2003).

Independent of their ethnic group, women were more in favor of parental control of mate choice than men were. About a third of the women and a quarter of the men had a positive attitude toward such control. Although the effect size was small, this is remarkable, as it seems that in other populations, men tend to have a more positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice. This has been found among traditional Indigenous groups such as the Mixtecs in Mexico (Buunk et al., 2012), as well as among young people of Turkish and Moroccan descent living in the Netherlands (Buunk, 2015). These latter findings may reflect that, traditionally, it was men who arranged the marriages for their offspring (Apostolou, 2014). In addition, at least in the Netherlands, Turkish and Moroccan women, compared with males, are more

likely to finish their education and to find a job from these groups, and may therefore assimilate more than males to make a career in the dominant Dutch culture. The more positive attitude toward parental control among women in the present sample could to an important extent be explained by a stronger opposition to out-group mating among women, but not by ethnic identification. This suggests that given the fact that there are many distinct ethnic groups in Surinam, women may feel that parents might protect young women from being approached by men from other ethnic groups. In addition, it may be that men favor more freedom to engage in short-term and long-term mating with whom they want, without control by their parents. Indeed, men in the present study showed less opposition to out-group mating than women, although again the effect size was small. The same has been found in Mexico (Buunk et al., 2012). Such findings are in line with the fact that men tend in general to be more open to marrying and dating members of other ethnic groups than women are (e.g., Feliciano, Robnett, & Komaie, 2009). For example, in study by Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan (1995) in California among African Americans, European Americans, and Latinos, men had more often than women engaged in out-group dating. The main reason for this may be that men, compared with women, see reproductive benefits from mating with out-group members, which is in line with the notion that, throughout human history, men have engaged conquering women from other groups (e.g., Chagnon, 1988; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996).

The positive predictive effects of ethnic group and gender on attitude toward parental control, opposition to out-group mating, and degree of ethnic identification appeared to be very robust, as they were upheld when simultaneously controlling for all potentially confounding demographic variables. This is particularly relevant as the ethnic groups differed substantially not only on income and educational level but especially on variables related to marriage and family life. Among the Hindustani, the relatively very high percentage of married individuals, the relatively high percentage of housekeepers, and the relatively high percentage who grew up with a father present during all childhood stand out. Nevertheless, such differences could not explain the fact that the Hindustani had the most positive attitude toward parental control over mate choice, suggesting that this is a persistent, independent, deeply rooted cultural characteristic of Hindustani culture. Remarkably, although among the Maroons, fewer than 10% were civilly married and most did not grow up in childhood with a father, the Maroons expressed the second most positive attitude toward parental control over mate choice. However, as noted in the Introduction, among Maroons living together without being married include those who practice a ritual in which a formal commitment is made.

Although opposition to out-group mating could not explain differences between the ethnic groups in a positive attitude toward parental control over mate choice, it was overall a major independent factor related to this attitude. This finding corroborates the findings from such divergent cultures as Mixtecs, Mestizos, and Afro-Mexicans, and Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands (Buunk, 2015; Buunk et al., 2012), and is in line with many studies showing that in most cultures, a major concern of parents is that the mate of their children comes from the same ethnic group (e.g., Buunk et al., 2008). In general, marriages between members of different ethnic groups are viewed as undesirable (Murdock, 1949) and do usually occur in relatively small numbers. A prime example of this is the United States where still only 4% of Americans of European descent marry those not of European descent (Qian & Lichter, 2007). However, despite the opposition to out-group mating, at least in Surinam, out-group marriages are increasing in numbers. In fact, it may be precisely this development that makes people concerned with maintaining the cohesion and identity of their own ethnic group. From this perspective, one would expect the Hindustani, the group most in favor of controlling the mate choice of one's offspring, to have the strongest ethnic identification. However, independent of demographic factors, it is the Maroons who expressed more identification with their ethnic group than any other group, followed by the Creoles and the Hindustani, with the lowest level of ethnic identification found among the Javanese and people of mixed descent. This high level of ethnic identification among the Maroons may reflect the fact that this group is actually quite different from the other groups: they have been living for centuries—and many still live—in relatively isolated, rather rural villages in the forest, and have been least influenced by Western culture than the other ethnic groups. However, ethnic identification could not explain differences between the ethnic groups in the attitudes toward parental control of mate choice, and only among the Hindustani was ethnic identification associated with a positive attitude toward parental control, showing that in this group, the notion of being a Hindustani may foster the willingness to accept that parents control with whom their children marry (cf. Kay, 2012).

Overall, the data clearly suggest that opposition to mating with members of other ethnic groups may be a very important factor underlying a positive attitude toward level of parental control over mate choice. In addition, theoretically meaningful differences were found between men and women and between the five ethnic groups. By examining how cultural factors and gender affect a positive attitude toward parental control of mate choice, the present research shows again that mate choice is not just a matter of individuals freely selecting a mate, but may be to an important extent be affected by the

parents, even in a nation that has been dominated by the Dutch, a culture that since centuries has been characterized by freedom of mate choice. Maybe as a consequence of the fact that out-group marriages are increasing in Surinam, parents may have become concerned with the defragmentation of their ethnic group and may therefore try to prevent out-group marriages by controlling the mate choice of their children. As a final note, the present study again demonstrates that for a more complete understanding of human mating, future research must attend more carefully to the role of parents in the mate choice of their children.

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Abraham P. Buunk was the first social psychologist to become a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences and is academy professor on behalf of this Academy at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. He is Profesor Visitante at the Catholic University of Uruguay. He focuses primarily on evolutionary and biological approaches of human behavior. Nevertheless, he has been involved in many social psychological studies on a variety of applied issues. He is also on the editorial board of various journals, and has over 500 scientific publications in a variety of journals and books.

Glenn Leckie, Surinamese, studied psychology at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, where he got his masters in clinical psychology and his PhD with the thesis: *Cervical Cancer, Proxies for HPV Exposure, Screening Scare and Use of Proximal and Distal Defense Behaviors in Fear Buffering*. For about 7 years, he counseled adolescents with emotional and behavioral issues, and for 32 years, he headed the Lobi (Love) foundation which provides reproductive health services in Suriname. Under his management, Lobi received a total of 17 international awards from the IPPF/WHO. Currently he is teaching sexuality, general and evolutionary psychology, and addictions at ADEKUS, the Anton de Kom University of Suriname.

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