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Immigrants Regulate Emotions in the Same Way as Majority Members in The Netherlands

Snežana Stupar

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Immigrants Regulate Emotions in the Same Way as Majority Members in The Netherlands

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"The will to overcome an emotion is ultimately only the will of another emotion or of several others."

Friedrich Nietzsche
in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1866).

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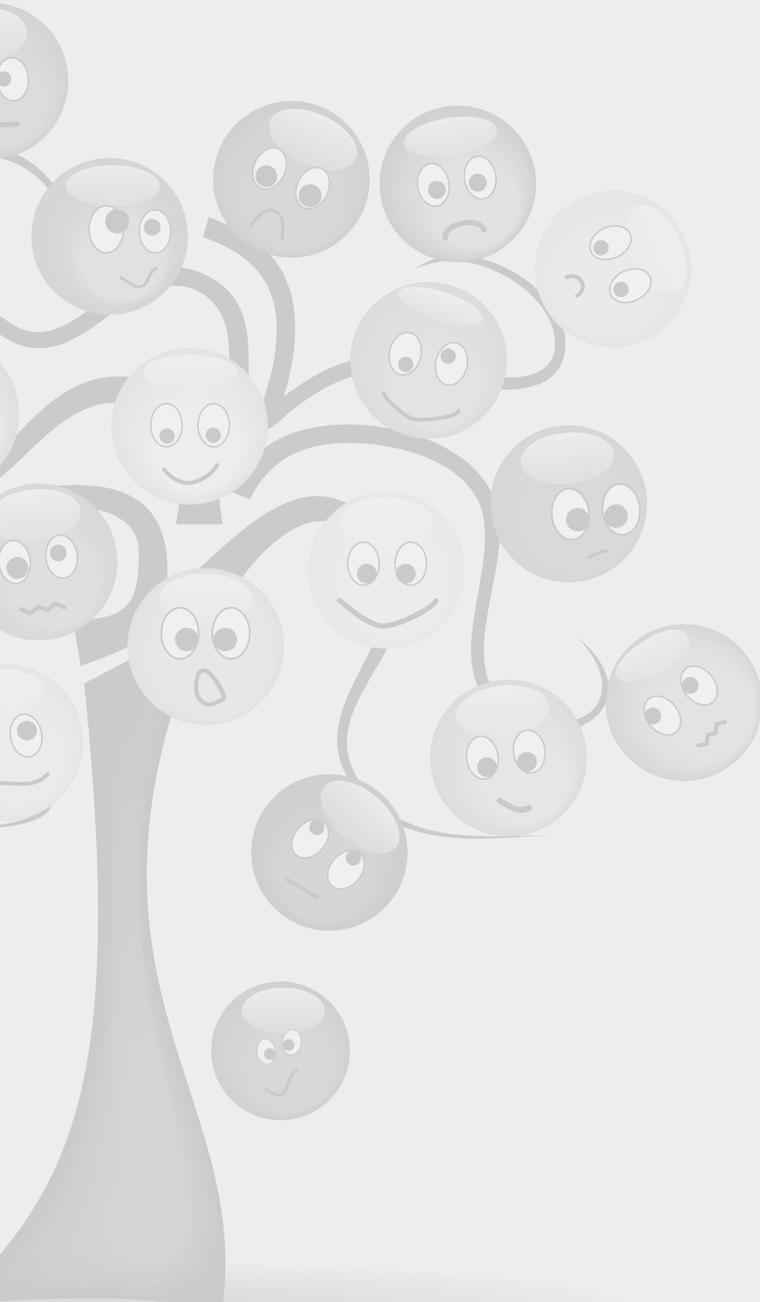
Chapter 1

General Introduction



INTRODUCTION

Samira is a young immigrant woman who emigrated at the age of 20 from a small town in Bosnia to the Netherlands without the ability to speak and understand the Dutch language and without any knowledge of the Dutch culture. As time passes, Samira becomes rapidly integrated into the Dutch society and even starts to neglect her own culture of origin (e.g., she speaks now only Dutch, watches only Dutch television, has only native Dutch friends and does not practice her religion). Her friends start telling her that she does not look very happy and that she should be more satisfied with all her achievements from the past years (she managed to complete her master degree in Dutch and to find a job at a very successful company). Samira does not understand the comments of her friends as she considers herself as a very happy, proud, and satisfied person who always motivates and advises others. However, her friends start to avoid her as in their view she is pretty "negative" or "cold". She confronts her friends with this observation, but most of them told her: "*But we can never see when you are happy, proud, joyful, or even in love!*" Samira thought often about it and after a while started to ask herself: "How comes that I don't show my happiness and proudness to my friends? Was I always like this?"

This is a typical example of a suppression of positive emotions that in this particular case of Samira can become dysfunctional as it can threaten the quality of her social relationships. Moreover, in the long term, such emotional suppression can even lead to socio-psychological malfunctioning. The challenging question is why Samira suppresses her happiness and proudness. Is it because she does not want to "hurt" others with her positive feelings? As her career advanced during the last years and she felt gradually more and more successful, she might realize that she is now at a career stage that is quite high compared to those of her friends and therefore she does not want to hurt their feelings by bragging. Or, is something else going on (note that she is saying that she *feels* proud and happy)? Although Samira is socially very well adjusted to the Dutch mainstream culture, is it possible that her adjustment never took place on an emotional level as her Dutch friends are criticizing her that she is never showing her positive emotions to others? And if so, why is she suppressing positive and not negative emotions? These are complex questions, which I try to answer from a scientific perspective.

Emotion regulation can be defined as a process of modification of experiences and expression of emotions (Frijda, 2005). It has a great impact on mental health as the emotional dysregulation is a core feature of most DSM-V (axes I and II) syndromes, such as depression and anxiety. Yet, not everyone who has difficulties to regulate

experienced emotions in a socially (and culturally) expected way becomes depressed or anxious. In other words, the question remains whether Samira would become "socially dysfunctional" or even depressed if she lived in her country of origin or whether she will become depressed in the Netherlands as the norms regarding emotional expression are different than those of her Dutch (native) friends. There is a fair chance that in Bosnia the expression of positive emotions is not desirable and therefore not reinforced by the society; so, Samira's friends from Bosnia would never comment on her behavior. To put it differently, does the suppression of positive or negative emotions (or both) form a potential risk for socio-psychological problems? The nature of emotion experience has a great influence on psychopathology and in particular, on the duration and intensity of (negative) emotion experience, because people who experience negative emotions for a longer period of time or who experience intensive negative emotions are prone to develop psychopathology (e.g., Beauchaine, Gatzke-Kopp, & Mead, 2007). Therefore, it is important to investigate how the nature of the emotion experience is related to emotion regulation in distinct ethnic groups. This relationship may differ across cultures. Moreover, as Samira asks herself why she suppressed her emotions, it would be interesting to explore the underlying motivations. Additionally, although much research has already been conducted on predictors and outcomes of emotion regulation, there is paucity of interethnic research delineating mechanisms behind emotion regulation in general, but also in immigrants compared to majorities. As some health disorders that are related with emotion dysregulation (e.g., depression and anxiety) are more observed in immigrants than in mainstreamers (De Wit et al., 2008; Schrier et al., 2009; Van der Wurff et al., 2004), the inclusion of this often neglected population in emotion regulation research becomes even more valuable.

The present dissertation attempts to contribute to our understanding of cultural similarities and differences in emotion regulation processes in immigrants and majorities in the Netherlands. The current chapter does not represent an exhaustive review of research on cross-cultural similarities and differences in emotion regulation, but highlights the key findings and challenges of research on the cultural aspects of emotion regulation. Therefore, the goals of the current chapter are to describe the emotion regulation process and its relationship with health, to provide a brief review of literature on emotion regulation in immigrants where in particular the influence of socio-cultural norms on emotion regulation are emphasized, and to present the conclusions regarding acculturation and emotion regulation in immigrants. Taken together, the work reported in this chapter aims to capture the cultural context of emotion regulation including findings from immigrant studies and findings on the acculturation of emotions.

EMOTION REGULATION: WHAT IS IT EXACTLY?

Emotions and Emotion Regulation Processes

Although understanding the nature of emotions is challenging, even after almost two centuries of emotion research, most researchers agree that an emotion can be best described as an emotion *process* that consists of several interrelated components such as cognitive appraisal of an event that triggers an emotion, physiological changes, action tendencies, and emotional expression (e.g., Frijda, 2005; Scherer, Shorr, & Johnstone, 2001). Emotions refer then to the emotional process as a whole. Additionally, emotions possess certain characteristics such as valence and intensity that can be easily empirically assessed. Specifically, each emotion can be experienced as a positive or negative response to an emotion-evoking event (emotion valence; Watson & Tellegen, 1985) whereas each emotion has certain intensity or strength (emotion intensity; Larsen, Diener, & Cropanzano, 1987).

Emotion regulation can be best defined as a mental control strategy in the emotion process that accounts for changing our experienced emotions or emotions that we did not yet experience (Frijda, 2005). In this view, emotions can be modulated by regulation processes that are triggered by characteristics of the event, such as its relevance, and/or the characteristics of the subject, such as affective predispositions or traits (Frijda, 2005). The process model of emotion regulation (Gross & John, 2003) takes a prominent position in the current emotion literature. According to this model, emotion regulation can occur at several levels of emotion processing. Based on this model, we can distinguish two types of cognitive emotion regulation strategies: antecedent-focused (reappraisal) and response focused (suppression) strategies. Reappraisal refers to a cognitive reevaluation of an emotional antecedent event resulting in a change of experienced emotion, while suppression refers to a general tendency to suppress the experience and overt expression of emotions. Besides reappraisal and suppression, social sharing is the most important or interesting regulation mechanism, especially when comparing cultural groups as the primary goal of this regulation strategy is to regulate interpersonal relations. Therefore, social sharing can be best defined as verbal or written communication of experienced emotions to others (Rimé, Finkenauer, Luminet, Zech, & Philippot, 2011).

Previous studies have demonstrated that emotion regulation depends on several characteristics of emotions such as the valence and intensity of experienced emotions. More specifically, people tend to suppress and reappraise negative emotions more

than positive emotions (Gross & John, 2003; Gross, Richards, & John, 2006). Additionally, emotion valence is not related to social sharing of emotions as both positive and negative emotions elicit a process of emotional sharing (Rimé et al., 2011). Research findings also suggested that high-intensity emotions induce more social sharing than low-intensity emotions; emotions apparently need to achieve a certain threshold in order to become regulated and thus to be socially shared (Luminet et al., 2000; Rimé et al., 2011). Finally, more intense emotions are more regulated and thus might be more reappraised and suppressed (Decker, Turk, Hess, & Murray, 2008; Westen, 1994). Put together, there is evidence that emotion regulation strategies depend on the characteristics of experienced emotions.

Why Do People Regulate Their Emotions?

People usually regulate their negative emotions more than their positive emotions because they want to feel good (Gross & John, 2003; Larsen, 2000). However, this may not be the only motivation for the suppression of negative emotions. Previous research demonstrated that individuals can delay suppression of experienced negative emotions in order to obtain long-term goals (Parrot, 2001). Clearly, individual personal motives influence whether an emotion will be regulated. A distinction can be made between two general reasons why people regulate their negative emotions: hedonic and instrumental (Tamir, Ford, & Giliam, 2012). Negative emotions are more suppressed because they usually make us feel bad and vulnerable, and therefore we want to protect ourselves (hedonic view). However, as expressing negative emotions can also make others feel bad, we can suppress negative emotions in order to protect others and to not make them feel bad (instrumental view).

Emotion Regulation and Health

We usually use different emotion regulation strategies in order to control our emotions with a purpose of feeling good or to make others feel good. However, overuse or underuse of the same strategies can lead to the development of psycho-social problems in the long run. For example, lack of cognitive reappraisal and overuse of emotion suppression are regularly perceived as risk factors for many mental and physical diseases such as depression, cancer, and heart disease (Consedine et al., 2002; Ehring et al., 2010; Ehring et al., 2008). Emotion suppression is also significantly positively related to mood disturbances (Wegner, Erber, & Zanakos, 1993) and to poor (physical) health in both immigrants and majorities (Consedine et al., 2002; Consedine, Magai, & Horton, 2005). These findings are in line with earlier findings on emotional expression. From

the very beginning of psychological therapeutic practice and based on the Ventilation hypothesis (Kennedy-Moore &Watson, 2001), the expression of emotions was treated as an important part of catharsis within psychoanalytical therapies (emotion-focused therapy); in this view, the expression of emotions will finally lead to fewer psychological symptoms (Greenberg, 2002; Greenberg, Warvar, & Malcolm, 2008). Results from recent studies demonstrated that a higher level of emotional expression is accompanied by better well-being, less psychological and physical complaints, and better relationships with others when compared to a lower level of emotional expression (Gross & Levenson, 1997; Harker & Keltner, 2001; Leventhal & Patrick-Miller, 2000; Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999; Polivy, 1998). To sum up, in the long term, the suppression of emotions is usually perceived as threatening for (mental) health while expression of both positive and negative emotions is assumed to be healthy. There are no studies published, according to my knowledge, on the relationship between social sharing and health with the exception of a study by Rimé et al. (1998) that suggested that social sharing of emotions is also beneficial for individuals because it leads to better emotional recovery and social integration.

Dysfunctional emotion regulation is, in combination with negative emotions, related to low levels of social competence and peer acceptance (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992). Specific regulation strategies such as reappraisal and suppression also influence interpersonal relationships (Butler et al., 2003; Butler, Lee, & Gross, 2007; Gross, 2002; John & Gross, 2004). Particularly, emotion suppression was often related to negative social outcomes such as lower social support and reduced relationship closeness. Butler et al. (2003) suggested that the suppression of emotions leads to a disruption in communication and an increment of stress levels including physiological responses related to stress such as blood pressure. Moreover, Gross and John (2003) found that using reappraisal is related to better interpersonal functioning while the use of suppression is related to more interpersonal malfunctioning, suggesting that both regulation processes, reappraisal and suppression, have social consequences.

EMOTION REGULATION IN IMMIGRANTS

Influence of Sociocultural Norms on Emotion Regulation

Emotional responding is dependent on ethno-cultural background of the individual (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000). Emotions can be socially functional or dysfunctional in terms of their contribution to the maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For example, Mesquita and Karasawa (2002)

found that positive emotions such as happiness or proudness, that are closely related to high self-esteem, were more often reported among American respondents compared to Japanese. This was the case in both Japanese immigrants living temporarily in the United States and Japanese living in Japan. This difference could be explained by cultural differences in the likelihood of the expression of emotions which is in turn related to different cultural norms that prescribe the display of emotions (Matsumoto, 1992; McAndrew, 1986; Mesquita & Walker, 2003). However, even more important is that these authors argue that the cultural groups differ in how two social orientations of independence and interdependence are integrated into the collective definition/construction of the self (Kitayama, Matsumoto, Markus, & Norasakkunkit et al., 1997). More specifically, people from collectivistic (interdependent) cultures will usually express less often emotions that are ego-focused compared to people from individualistic (independent) cultures because these emotions are perceived to be socially disengaging and therefore dysfunctional within collectivistic socio-cultural context (Kitayama et al., 1997; Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006; Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Mesquita & Walker, 2003). In line with this, results from another study also revealed that positive emotions were more expressed in individualistic countries than in collectivistic countries (Van Hemert, Poortinga, & Van de Vijver, 2007). So, social orientation (independence versus interdependence) is an important aspect of the cross-cultural investigation of emotion regulation processes.

Whether the person will express his/her emotion (display rules) depends also on the nature of the social contact. Matsumoto, Hee Yoo, and Fontaine (2008) found differences in expression of emotions in contact with familiar (in-group) and not-familiar (out-group) members: all individuals expressed their emotions more toward their in-group members when compared to out-group members and this was true for all cultures (collectivistic and individualistic). Additionally, negative emotions which are disruptive for social relationships such as contempt, disgust, and fear, were overall less expressed in all cultures regardless of contact with in- or out-group members (Kitayama, Matsumoto, Markus & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Lee, Aaker & Gardner, 2000; Mesquita & Walker, 2003). The same probably applies to anger, as expressing anger can disturb others and thus endanger social relationships. Interestingly, the suppression of anger may be directly related to specific maladaptive behaviors within relationships. Previous research demonstrated that, in the long run, suppressing anger can decrease interpersonal aggression in interpersonal conflict (Sell, 2006; Sell, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2009). In the short term, a stronger tendency to suppress anger in conflict situations is related with less experienced anger and less aggression (Sell, 2006; Sell, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2009). Previous research is not clear as to whether the nature of social contact

somehow is related with suppression-anger-aggression relationship. As non-Western groups usually prefer to accommodate to others, avoid conflict in order to preserve harmonious relationships, these groups are less likely to express anger that sets them apart from others regardless the intimacy of their relationships (Matsumoto et al., 2008).

It is clear that the experience and expression of emotions is related to norms of valuing or discouraging (positive or negative) emotions within a certain culture (Eid & Diener, 2009). Display rules play an important role in the experience and expression of both positive and negative emotions although the exact relationship is still unclear. In studies conducted among immigrant populations, a similar pattern is found regarding emotion regulation. We can distinguish two types of studies among immigrant population: the first deals with mean scores of emotion regulation strategies and the second with the relationships between distinct strategies and other parts of emotion regulation mechanisms or psychological well-being. For example, Butler et al. (2007) found that American women holding European values reported lower levels of emotion suppression compared to American women holding bicultural Asian-European values. Moreover, emotion suppression in the American bicultural group was associated with higher levels of negative emotions and self-protective goals when compared to American women holding bicultural Asian-European values where this relation was found to be reversed. The authors concluded that this is probably due to that Asian Americans hold interdependence and relationship harmony as important values. Therefore, they suppress emotions in order to achieve prosocial goals rather than to achieve self-protection that is more applicable for American holding Western-European values such as independence and self-assertion. Gross and John (2003) also confirmed that ethnicity is related to emotion regulation strategies in immigrants. Immigrants use more often suppression when regulating their emotions but there were no ethnic differences regarding reappraisal. Consedine et al. (2005) found that emotion inhibition in East European women and trait anger in all immigrant women were both positively related to health improvement when controlled for other background variables such as ethnicity. Furthermore, the inhibition of emotion expression was not significantly different across immigrant groups. Results from another study partly confirmed these results; ethnicity moderates the influences of repressive regulatory styles on experience and expression of anger (Consedine, Magai, Horton, & Brown, 2011). Furthermore, the research sample in Consedine et al. (2005) consisted only of females and it is possible that low levels of reported anger could be due to female socialization. Specifically, female socialization could stimulate female immigrants to develop more repressive behavior resulting in frequenter use of suppression as a regulation strategy. Increased suppression will in turn lead to the experience and expression of negative emotions

to a lesser extent when compared to male immigrants. In summary, research in immigrant population suggests interethnic differences in emotion regulation and in the relationship between the regulation strategies and regulation predictors/outcomes.

Acculturation and Emotion Regulation in Immigrants

Acculturative processes are related to person's well-being in immigrants. Considering the bidimensional model of acculturation (Berry, 1997), all four acculturation styles (integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization) have influence on acculturative stress which in turn affects person's well-being. Especially the integration strategy has been related to a higher level of well-being (Suinn, 2010; Ying, 1995). It can be expected that immigrants, who prefer integration, will have better perceived psychological well-being and they will experience less psychological distress, less negative emotions such as depressive feelings. Other studies have addressed the link with the underlying acculturation dimensions (cultural maintenance and cultural adoption). These dimensions may mediate the relationship between demographic variables (such as age, length of stay in the host country, occupation, gender and education) and psychological and sociocultural outcomes (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2005). This is in line with a proposed theoretical model of acculturation processes (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006) that emphasizes the mediating role of acculturative orientations or strategies (adopting the mainstream culture and maintaining culture of origin) on the relationship between acculturation conditions (characteristics of receiving societies and society of origin, personal characteristics) and acculturation outcomes (psychological well-being and sociocultural adjustment).

Acculturation influences immigrant's well-being; acculturative processes influence experience, expression and regulation of emotions which are in turn related to a person's subjective well-being. Beirens and Fontaine (2011) found a strong positive relationship between adaptation to a new culture and positive emotions. This observation is in line with previous research according to which positive emotions are more often expressed in individualistic than in collectivistic societies (Van Hemert et al., 2007). Consequently, immigrants whose adjustment to the new culture is high, will probably use more often a reappraisal strategy when dealing with events and therefore will experience and express more positive and less negative emotions. That acculturative processes are related to emotions has been also suggested by De Maesschalck, Deveugele, and Willems (2011). They found that the poor mastery of mainstream language was related to a low expression of negative emotions. According to these authors, a lack of mastery of the mainstream language could be an obstacle in expressing negative emotions. This

could further lead to the biased impression that immigrants experience less negative emotions and therefore have probably less psychological complaints related to these negative emotions, such as depression.

An interesting question is if emotions in immigrants change during the time they spend in the host culture. Leersnyder, Mesquita, and Kim (2011) suggested that this is indeed the case. They found evidence for the existence of emotional acculturation where immigrants who spend more time in the host country and who engage themselves in relationships with mainstreamers, show higher emotional concordance compared to immigrants that were staying shorter in the host country and engaged less in the host culture. Remarkably, these authors suggest that not acculturation attitudes but the length of stay and engagement in the host culture predict emotional acculturation. Opposite to these findings, Liem, Lim, and Liem (2000) demonstrated that the higher the assimilation level to the mainstream culture, the higher the ego-focused emotions in Asian Americans.

THE NETHERLANDS AS A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Netherlands has witnessed several immigration waves during the previous century and has clearly become a multicultural society. Since the end of the Second World War, there have been five major immigration waves in the Netherlands. The first consisted of migrants from former Dutch colonies, and it started in the mid-1950s with immigrants from Indonesia and around 1965 with immigrants from Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles. The second wave took place during the 1960s when labor immigrants mainly from Southern Europe, Turkey, and Morocco came to the Netherlands in order to conduct low skilled labor. The third wave took place during the 1970s and was a consequence of family reunions of mainly Turkish and Moroccan "guest workers" (as they were called in those days). The fourth wave started in the 1980s and comprised refugees and asylum seekers from different countries such as the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, and Iran. In addition, family formation (with partners from other countries) and reunification continue, mainly involving the largest immigrant groups in the Netherlands. The largest non-Western groups, about 6% of the total population, are Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Antillean immigrants. The fifth and most recent immigration wave is caused by labor migrants from Eastern Europe countries, such as Poland and Bulgaria (Jennissen, 2009). Next to non-Western immigrants, it is important to point out that about half of the immigrant population in the Netherlands consists of immigrants originating from Western countries such as Belgium, Germany, United Kingdom, other West European countries and North America (Statistics Netherlands,

2014). It is often assumed that these groups are very well integrated into the Dutch society as the majority of these Western immigrants originate from neighboring countries such as Belgium and Germany; yet, these groups are not often distinguished from Dutch native group, so the conclusions regarding their good adaptation to host culture are mainly theoretical and not empirical.

Non-Western immigrants from Turkey and Morocco are culturally more distant from Dutch majority members compared to immigrants from Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003). Both Turkish and Moroccan cultures are Islamic, while Dutch majority members and immigrants from Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles often have a Christian background. They also hold different family, marital, and gender-role values, with Turkish and Moroccan immigrants often being more traditional. Surinamese- and Antillean-Dutch are often more educated than Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2005). Additionally, the differences between the ethnic groups could be a result of Dutch integration policy during the labor migration period. In the beginning of the immigration wave, Turkish and Moroccan immigrants were stimulated by the Dutch government to maintain their culture of origin because all parties expected that the laborers would repatriate (Jennissen, 2009). Compared to Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch, Surinamese- and Antillean-Dutch were more familiar with the Dutch language and culture before their immigration as their countries were former colonies of the Netherlands. Therefore, the experienced distance to the Dutch culture is larger in Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch compared to Surinamese- and Antillean-Dutch (Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, 2008; Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998).

In the current dissertation I used standard definitions of first- and second-generation immigrants and of non-Western and Western countries provided by Statistics Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands, 2000). First-generation immigrants are those who are born outside of the Netherlands with at least one parent born in a foreign country. Second-generation immigrants are those who are born in the Netherlands with at least one parent born in a foreign country. Third-generation immigrants are those who are born in the Netherlands (including both parents) with at least one grandparent born abroad. Majority Dutch refers in the current study to ethnic Dutch and as such it is related to the participants of Dutch heritage whose both parents are born in the Netherlands regardless the birthplace of the participants (Statistics Netherlands, 2000). Worth noting is that the heterogeneity of the immigrant population in the Netherlands remains challenging when conducting psychological research as it is not always possible to acquire a large number of participants from one specific ethnic group. Yet,

it is important to continue to include immigrants in emotion research, and to continue with searching for solutions for unrepresentativeness of samples of particular ethnic groups.

To summarize, emotion regulation is an important aspect of health that depends on socio-cultural context. The research area of emotion regulation in immigrants is still not widely explored. Considering that non-Western immigrants are usually one of the most vulnerable groups in the society, and that recent findings suggest that the prevalence of depression and anxiety is higher in immigrants than in majorities (Schrier et al., 2009; De Wit et al., 2008; Wurff et al., 2004), further investigation of emotion regulation processes in immigrants remains an important topic in emotion research.

Overview of the Present Dissertation

In this dissertation I try to gain a better understanding of emotion regulation processes within the Dutch multicultural context. I explore interethnic differences and similarities in the three commonly investigated emotion regulation strategies (reappraisal, suppression, and social sharing), in the predictors and outcomes of these regulation strategies in specific emotional experiences, and their interrelatedness in Dutch majority and non-Western and Western immigrants in the Netherlands. Previous cross-cultural emotion research was mainly focused on interethnic differences and similarities in emotions, emotion expression, and how acculturation was related to experienced emotions while much less research has been conducted on the mechanisms of emotion regulation within multiethnic context (Butler et al., 2007; Consedine et al., 2005; Leersnyder et al., 2011; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Matsumoto et al., 2008). Research on emotion regulation that is mainly conducted in Western populations shows that specific emotion regulation strategies such as reappraisal, suppression, or social sharing all depend on the characteristics of experienced emotions such as emotion intensity and valence (Gross & John, 2003; Gross et al., 2006; Rimé et al., 2011). Moreover, emotional suppression is usually related to lower well-being (Campbell-Sills & Barlow, 2006; Consedine et al., 2002; Ehring et al., 2010; Ehring et al., 2008; Garnefski & Kraaij, 2006; Kring & Werner, 2004). However, the question remains whether these relationships also apply in non-Western cultures. The same is true for earlier studies on motivations underlying emotion regulation. Specifically, people usually suppress their negative emotions and hold specific motives (self- or other-oriented) behind this suppression (Tamir et al., 2012), but whether this also holds for non-Western groups still has to be investigated. The current dissertation will deal with all these questions.

In the following chapters I report studies that were designed to investigate emotion regulation mechanisms within the Dutch multicultural setting. All studies are conducted in the Netherlands among both non-Western and Western immigrants, and the Dutch majority group. The four empirical chapters are based on empirical papers that have been either published or have been prepared for submission. The empirical chapters are arranged chronologically and there is conceptually a distinction between chapters 2 and 3 on the one hand and chapters 4 and 5 on the other hand. In the former two chapters I investigate the generalizability of antecedents and consequences of emotion regulation as they have been reported in the western literature to the immigrant situation. In the latter two chapters I test the cultural theory of independent and interdependent self-construction by looking at motives (chapter 4) and studying suppression of anger (chapter 5).

In Chapter 2, I test whether immigrants differ in emotional suppression and well-being from majority group members (Research Question 1) and whether the relationship between emotional suppression and well-being also differs across these ethnic groups (Research Question 2). In order to answer these questions, I investigate whether non-Western immigrants have higher scores on emotional suppression tendency, suppression of specific emotional experiences, and lower scores on well-being compared to Western immigrants and Dutch majority group members. Additionally, I propose and explore the cross-cultural applicability of a model in which suppression of specific emotional experiences (suppressive behaviors during interactions with others) mediates the relationship between emotional suppression tendency (intention to suppress emotions) and emotion regulation outcome of well-being operationalized as mood disturbance, life dissatisfaction and depressive and physical symptoms. This model is based on two streams in emotion research: research on emotional suppression (Gross, 1999) and on emotional expression (Matsumoto et al., 2008); based on these two streams, I can distinguish two types of emotional suppression, the emotional suppression tendency and the actual emotional suppression of specific emotional experiences.

In Chapter 3, I examine whether the associations of the valence and intensity of the emotional experience with distinct regulation strategies (suppression, reappraisal, and social sharing) are comparable across ethnocultural groups (Research question 3). I also explore whether interethnic differences exist between immigrants and majority in emotion regulation strategies (Research Question 4). Additionally, I investigate whether negative emotions are more suppressed and reappraised than positive emotions and whether intense emotions are more suppressed and reappraised than mild emotions. I also test whether more intense emotions are more socially shared.

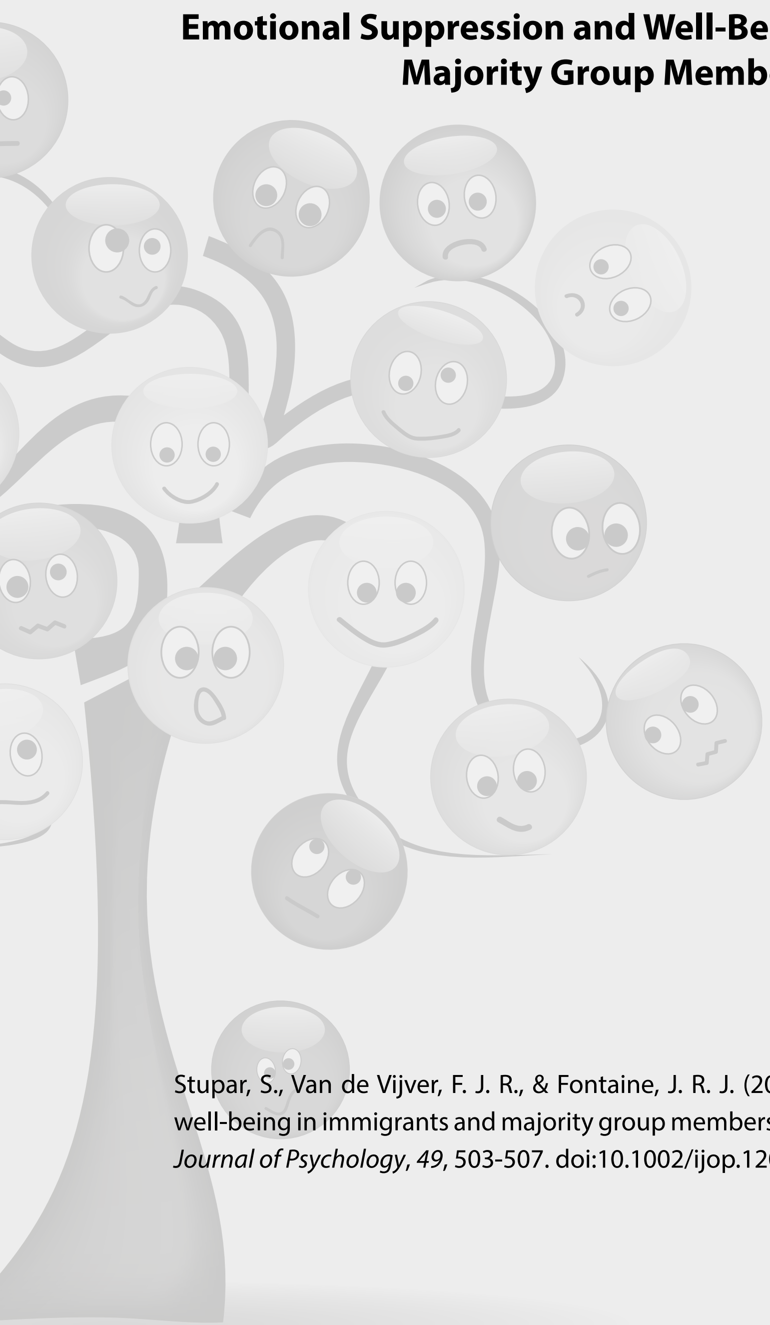
In Chapter 4, I seek to provide evidence for interethnic differences in motivations underlying emotional suppression (Research Question 5). Based on a framework of human values (Schwartz, 1994) and an internalization-externalization clinical model (Krueger & Markon, 2006), I explore whether motivations to suppress negative emotions are either self- or other-oriented. Additionally, I am interested in whether other-oriented motivations are stronger in groups that are culturally more distant from the Dutch majority (non-Western immigrants), while self-oriented motivations are stronger in Western groups. Thereby, I also argue that internalized negative emotions are much more subject to self-oriented suppression motivation, whereas externalized emotions are more subject to other-oriented suppression motivation (Research Question 6).

In Chapter 5, I examine whether immigrants differ from majority group members in how they regulate anger in conflict situations. In particular, I investigate whether non-Western immigrants suppress their anger more and experience anger less, and display less aggression in both intimate and non-intimate conflict situations compared to Western groups (Research Question 7). Additionally, I explore whether a stronger tendency to suppress anger in conflict situations is related with less experienced anger, which is further associated with less aggression; this mediation model is applicable across all ethnic groups in the Netherlands (Research Question 8).

Finally, Chapter 6 provides an integration of all previous chapters, discusses implications and contribution, and outlines several important conclusions, limitations and implications for future research.

Chapter 2

Emotional Suppression and Well-Being in Immigrants and Majority Group Members in the Netherlands



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ABSTRACT

We were interested in interethnic differences in emotional suppression. We propose a model in which suppression of specific emotional experiences (suppressive behaviors during interactions with others) mediates the link between emotional suppression tendency (intention to suppress emotions) and well-being, operationalized as mood disturbance, life-dissatisfaction, and depressive and physical symptoms. The sample consisted of 427 majority group members and 344 non-Western and 465 Western immigrants in the Netherlands. Non-Western immigrants scored higher on emotional suppression tendency and lower on well-being than the other groups. We did not find interethnic differences in suppression of specific emotional experiences. The full mediation model was supported in all groups. Interethnic differences in well-being could not be accounted for by differences in emotional suppression.

Keywords: Emotional suppression, well-being, immigrants, the Netherlands

INTRODUCTION

We are interested in emotional suppression and its link with well-being in different ethnic groups in the Netherlands. Emotional suppression is a mental control strategy in the emotion process (Frijda, 2005). Based on two streams in the emotion research, namely research on emotional suppression (Gross, 1999) and on emotional expression (Matsumoto, Hee Yoo, & Fontaine et al., 2008), we distinguish two aspects of emotional suppression: (1) the emotional suppression tendency (Gross) that refers to a general tendency to suppress the overt expression of emotions and (2) the suppression of specific emotional experiences (Matsumoto et al.) that refers to suppression of the overt expression of emotions within particular social contexts (interaction with familiar or unfamiliar people). High emotional suppression leads to a higher frequency of and sensitivity to depressive and anxious thoughts, which can lead to depression and anxiety (Wegner & Zanakos, 1994). Cross-cultural research confirms this link (Consedine, Magai, Cohen, & Gillespie, 2002; Ehring et al., 2010). Non-Western immigrants usually report higher levels of emotion suppression compared to majorities (Gross & John, 2003). Neuroimaging studies suggest that the emotion suppression tendency dampens emotion processing in non-Western immigrants, probably because they are socialized to down-regulate emotions (Murata, Moser, & Kitayama, 2012). In a study involving 32 cultures, Matsumoto et al. (2008) demonstrated that emotional expressivity was higher toward in-group members than to out-group members in all cultures. In line with state-trait models (e.g., Spielberger, 1988), we assume that the emotional suppression tendency (trait) influences the suppression of feelings elicited in specific situations (state) (Frijda, 2005; Gross, 1999). Although previous research confirms that both aspects of emotional suppression are related to well-being (e.g., Gross & John, 2003), there are no empirical studies, to our knowledge, where both aspects of emotional suppression and well-being are jointly investigated in both immigrant and majority groups.

We tested if non-Western immigrants would have higher scores on emotional suppression tendency (Hypothesis 1), on suppression of specific emotional experiences (Hypothesis 2), and lower scores on well-being (Hypothesis 3) compared to the Western immigrants and Dutch majority group members. We tested the cross-cultural applicability of a model (Figure 1) in which suppression of specific emotional experiences is a mediator of the relation between emotional suppression tendency and well-being (Hypothesis 4).

METHOD

Participants

Participants were recruited via the Tilburg Immigrant Panel, which is composed of a representative sample of immigrants and mainstream group members who participate in monthly internet surveys in the Netherlands. The panel is based on a true probability sample of households drawn from the population register (Scherpenzeel & Das, 2010). The Immigrant Panel is an independent part of the LISS panel of the MESS project (Measurement and Experimentation in the Social Sciences; www.lissdata.nl). Our sample consisted of 1,236 participants, with 344 immigrants originating from non-Western countries, such as Turkey and Morocco (45.3% male), 465 immigrants from Western countries, such as Germany and Belgium (43.4% male), and 427 Dutch majority members (47.1% male). We did not find significant differences in gender composition of the groups. Across all three samples, the age varied from 16 to 86 years. The non-Western group was significantly younger ($F(2, 1236) = 53.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$), had a lower education level ($F(2, 1236) = 8.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$), and had a lower monthly net income ($F(2, 1236) = 14.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$) compared to both the Western and Dutch group (see Table 1). Non-Western immigrants stayed significantly shorter in the Netherlands ($M = 27$ years; $SD = 12.62$) compared to Western immigrants ($M = 36$ years; $SD = 18.21$), $t(334) = 5.79$, $p < .001$.

Measures

Questionnaires were administered in Dutch to the panel members. All items and data can be retrieved (after registration) from http://www.lissdata.nl/dataarchive/study_units/view/ 277.

Emotional suppression tendency was assessed using the suppression subscale (4 items) of the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003). A 7-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). An example of an item is "I keep my emotions to myself."

A modified version of the Display Rule Assessment Inventory (DRAI; Matsumoto et al., 2008) was used to assess suppression of specific emotional experiences. We focused on eight basic positive and negative emotions (joy, contempt, guilt, anger, happiness, warmth, fear, and sadness) within two contexts: in interaction with familiar people and in interaction with unfamiliar people the participant does not know very well or not at

all. There were a total of 16 items across four subscales: positive emotions during the contact with familiar/unfamiliar people, and negative emotions during the contact with familiar/unfamiliar people. An example of an item is "Think about a conversation with someone that you know very well where you felt joy. What did you do with this feeling?" Response categories ranged from 1 (*I expressed my feelings, but with more intensity than my true feelings*) to 5 (*I smiled only, with no trace of anything else, and hide my true feelings*). Due to a skewed distribution of the scale scores and due to very low frequency of response category 1 (4%), we merged the first and second response category into one.

Perceived dissatisfaction with life was assessed with the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). A 7-point, Likert response scale with anchors ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*) was used. An example of an item is "In most ways my life is close to my ideal."

In order to assess mood disturbance in groups, we used the Profile of Mood States (POMS; Dutch Short Version; Wald & Mellenbergh, 1990). The POMS consists of 5 subscales (anxiety, depression, anger, vigor, and fatigue) and the score of mood disturbance (27 items) is obtained by calculating the total score excluding items of the vigor subscale. A five-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*).

Two subscales of the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis, 1975) were used (17 items) to assess depressive and physical symptoms. Respondents were asked how much certain problems had distressed them during the past seven days. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*).

All scales used in the current study were unifactorial with exception of DRAI where the four-factor structure was confirmed; scalar invariance of all scales was supported across all groups (Confirmatory Factor Analysis, CFA). Internal consistencies of all scales were satisfactory (range: .73-.96). We used in all analyses the mean scores for each scale.

RESULTS

Interethnic Differences in Emotional Suppression and Well-Being

We conducted a multivariate analysis of covariance to explore interethnic differences (three levels: non-Western and Western Dutch, and Dutch majority group members) in all psychological variables (see Table 1). We included age, education level, and net monthly income as covariates. Post-hoc tests revealed that the Dutch group scored

significantly lower on emotional suppression tendency than both the non-Western and Western group, $F(2, 1236) = 8.559$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$ (Table 1).

Table 1 *Means, Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) per Ethnic Group, and Effect Sizes of the Group Differences (Results from multivariate analysis of covariance)*

Scale	Non-Western Dutch	Western Dutch	Dutch Majority	Partial Eta Square
Age	40.67 (14.23)$_a$	51.03 (15.39)$_b$	49.31 (14.98)$_c$	.08***
Education level	3.48 (1.69)$_a$	3.93 (1.53)$_b$	3.82 (1.51)$_c$	.01***
Monthly income (euro)	1,252 (0-7,500)$_a$	2,395 (0-9,000)$_b$	1,574 (0-6,463)$_c$	.02***
Emotional Suppression Tendency	3.86 (1.16)$_a$	3.72 (1.26)$_{a, b}$	3.52 (1.16)$_b$	.01***
Suppression of Specific Experiences				
Unfamiliar positive	2.90 (.83)	2.91 (.80)	2.94 (.74)	.00
Unfamiliar negative	2.67 (.75)	2.51 (.67)	2.55 (.69)	.00
Familiar positive	3.52 (.64)	3.50 (.64)	3.59 (.52)	.00
Familiar negative	3.13 (.67)	3.10 (.65)	3.20 (.62)	.00
Dissatisfaction With Life	3.38 (1.28)$_a$	3.07 (1.21)$_b$	2.88(1.08)$_c$	.02***
Mood Disturbance	1.86 (.73)$_a$	1.63 (.64)$_b$	1.53 (.53)$_c$	.03***
Depressive and Physical Symptoms	1.58 (.62)$_a$	1.41 (.47)$_b$	1.34 (.38)$_c$	.02***

Note. Education level varied from not having education at all (0) to university degree (6).
Means with different subscripts are significantly different (Bonferroni post hoc test). $^{***}p < .001$.

As expected, all ethnic groups significantly differed from each other on dissatisfaction with life, $F(2, 1236) = 12.202$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Additional post hoc tests revealed that the highest score was obtained in the non-Western group, followed by the Western group, while the Dutch group showed the lowest mean. For both mood disturbance ($F(2, 1236) = 29.506$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$) and amount of depressive and physical symptoms ($F(2, 1236) = 19.908$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$), the non-Western group scored significantly higher than the Western group, which scored significantly higher than the Dutch majority group (Table 1).

Outcome variables were all moderately to strongly correlated in all ethnic groups with mean Pearson's $r = .43$ (range: .41 to .45) for the dissatisfaction with life, and depressive and physical symptoms relationship, $r = .37$ (range: .31 to .43) for the mood disturbance and dissatisfaction with life relationship, and $r = .55$ (range: .50 to .59) for the mood disturbance, and bodily and physical symptoms relationship.

Emotional Suppression and Well-Being: The Mediation Model

First, we tested the hypothesized model without mediator (the model of Figure 1 with suppression of specific experiences omitted) in a multigroup analysis using AMOS (Arbuckle, 2006). The structural weights model was the most restrictive model with a good fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004), $\chi^2(51, N = 1236) = 72.077, p < .05$; $\chi^2/df = 1.413$ (recommended: < 5.00), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .989 (recommended: > .90), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was .018 (recommended: < .08). Higher scores on emotional suppression tendency were significantly associated with lower well-being in all groups.

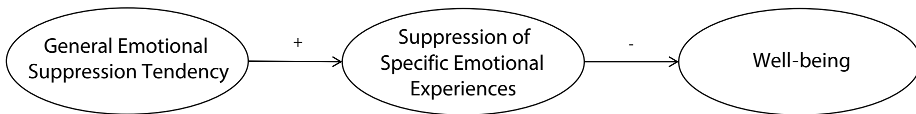


Figure 1. Hypothesized model in the present study

Second, we tested the hypothesized mediation model of Figure 1 (we started with a full mediation model as the most parsimonious). We treated both suppression constructs and well-being as latent variables. Indicators of emotional suppression tendency were the four scale items; indicators of suppression of specific emotional experiences were the four subscales of the DRAI. Well-being was constructed based on three observed variables: mood disturbance, perceived life dissatisfaction, and depressive and physical symptoms. The structural weights model was the most restrictive model with a fair fit, $\chi^2(146, N = 1236) = 558.782, p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 3.827$, CFI = .886, and RMSEA = .048 (see Table 2).

Table 2 *Results of the Multigroup Analysis*

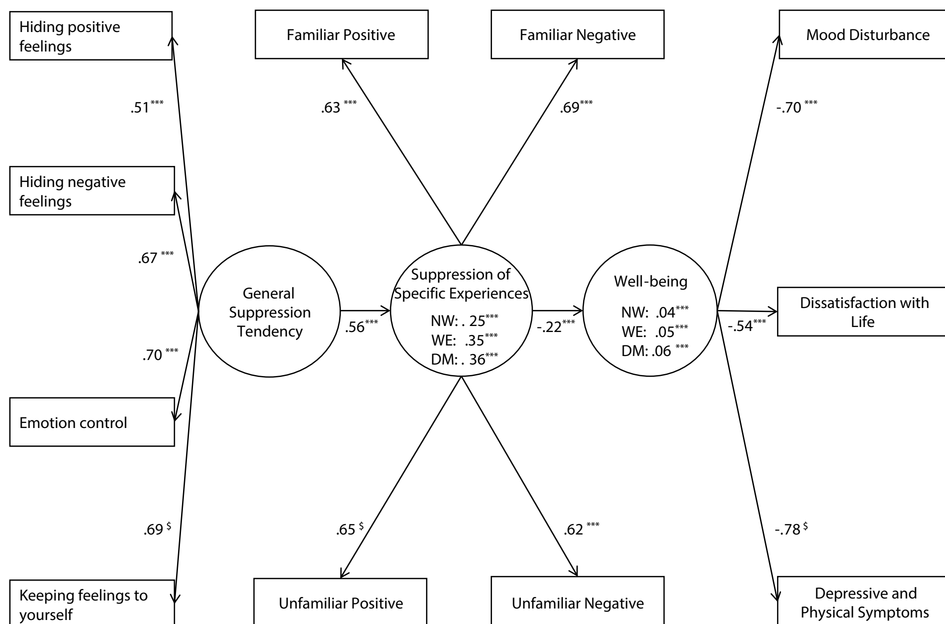
	χ^2 (*df*)	CFI	RMSEA [CI]	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
Unconstrained	519.294 (126)***	.891	.050 [.046-.055]	-	-
Measurement weights	550.278 (142)***	.887	.048 [.044-.053]	30.984*	16
Structural weights	*558.782 (146)****	*.886*	*.048 [.044-.052]*	*8.503*	*4*
Structural residuals	597.259 (152)***	.877	.049 [.045-.053]	38.477***	6
Measurement Residuals	729.732 (174)***	.847	.051 [.047-.055]	132.473***	22

Note. Most restrictive model with a good fit is printed in italics. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .001$.

We found support for a model in which suppression of specific emotional experiences fully mediates the relations between emotional suppression tendency as predictor

and well-being as outcome (see Figure 2). More emotional suppression tendency was associated with more suppression of specific emotional experiences in all groups. A negative, significant relation was found between suppression of specific emotional experiences and well-being.

Figure 2. A model of general emotional suppression tendency, suppression of specific emotional experiences, and well-being



Note. Standardized regression coefficients are given next to the arrows. Factor loadings are printed in italics, next to the arrows. Numbers in circles of latent variables (suppression of specific experiences and well-being) represent proportions of variance explained.
NW = Non-Western Dutch, WE = Western Dutch, DM = Dutch majority group.
$^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$. $ Loading fixed at a value of 1 (or -1 in the case of well-being) in the non-standardized solution.

We also computed the significance of the indirect effect of emotional suppression tendency on well-being related scales using bootstrapping. Although significant, the effect was small (-.13; 95% CI: .18, -.08), leading to the conclusion that emotional suppression tendency is only weakly related to well-being if suppression of specific emotional experiences is taken into account. Note that this pattern holds in all groups; the regression coefficients and the relationships between the variables are found to be identical in all ethnic groups. The weak indirect effect of emotional suppression tendency on well-being implies that our model is fully mediated and that suppression tendency plays a major role in specific suppression, but is only weakly related to well-being when mediator is included.

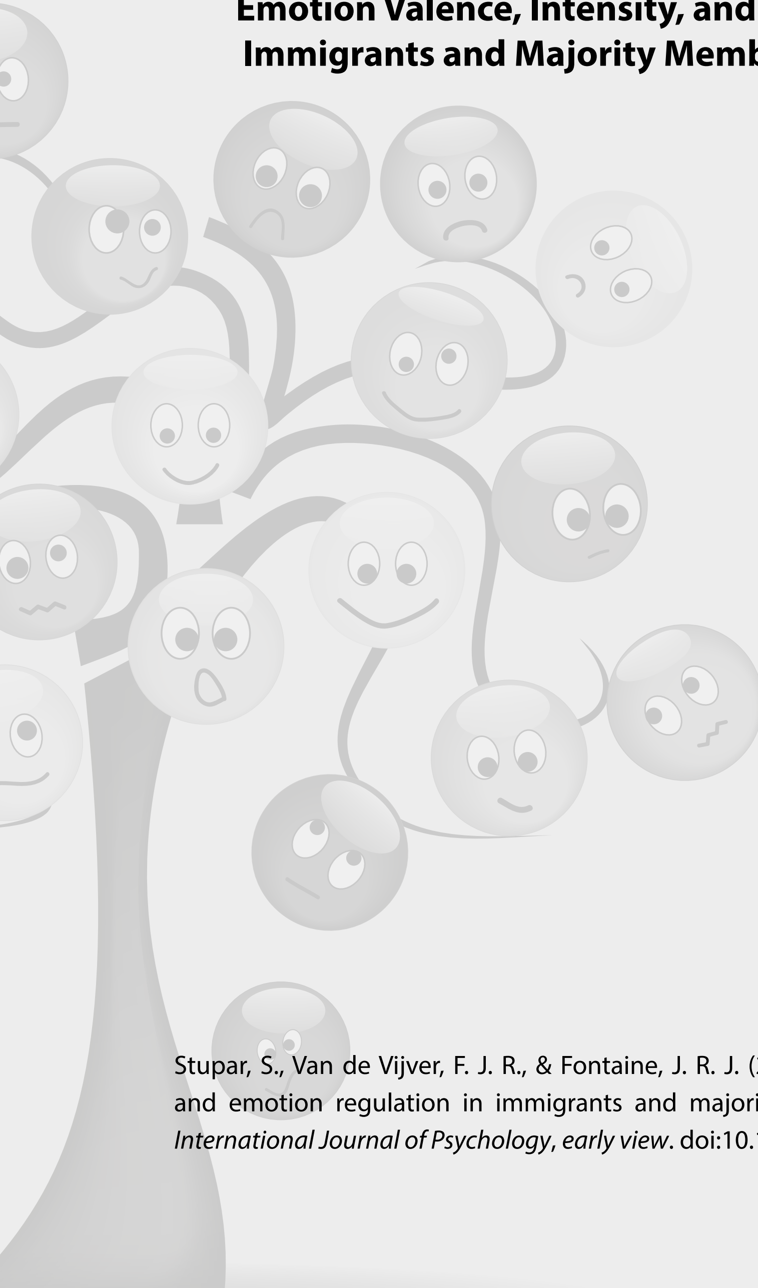
DISCUSSION

We investigated interethnic differences in means and associations of emotional suppression tendency, suppression of specific emotional experiences, and well-being in immigrants and mainstreamers in the Netherlands. We found that the non-Western groups scored higher on emotional suppression tendency (Hypothesis 1) compared to all other groups. This confirms the view that members of non-Western cultures have a stronger tendency to suppress emotions, presumably because such emotions could disturb social relationships. This tendency may have been acquired early in life (Gross & John, 2003). However, ethnic groups did not significantly differ on suppression of specific emotional experiences. Hypothesis 2 was thus not confirmed. We have observed before that differences between Dutch immigrant groups and majority group members tend to be smaller in measures that are closer to actual behavior; for example, feelings of solidarity showed larger differences than actual sharing (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007). Additionally, non-Western groups scored the lowest on well-being compared to all other groups (Hypothesis 3).

We found support for the model in which suppression of specific emotional experiences is a mediator of the relation between emotional suppression tendency and well-being (Hypothesis 4). The invariance of the model across ethnic groups makes it likely that the same underlying psychological mechanisms are involved. Suppression tendency could explain about 30% of the individual differences in suppression of specific emotional experiences, which implies that this aspect of emotional suppression is likely to be influenced by additional factors, such as personality traits. Our findings also imply that both aspects of emotional suppression explain some individual differences in well-being. However, cross-cultural differences in well-being do not seem to be related to either aspect of emotional suppression. The current study suggests that both aspects of emotional suppression are unlikely candidates to explain cross-cultural differences in well-being and that other factors not assessed here, such as discrimination, might be responsible for the interethnic differences in well-being. It can be concluded that our study found some support for the view that suppression of emotions has a negative impact on well-being. However, our study also showed that this relationship does not hold at ethnic group level. Differences in well-being across ethnic groups could not be accounted for by differences in suppression. A limitation of this study is the use of self-reports of emotional suppression. This implies that we can only assess emotional suppression when people are aware of it and only if it can be verbalized. Therefore, longitudinal or experimental studies where emotional suppression is directly manipulated are recommended.

Chapter 3

Emotion Valence, Intensity, and Emotion Regulation in Immigrants and Majority Members in the Netherlands



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ABSTRACT

We were interested in interethnic differences and similarities in how emotion regulation strategies (reappraisal, suppression, and social sharing) can be predicted by emotion valence and intensity. The sample consisted of 389 Dutch majority members and members of five immigrant groups: 136 Turkish and Moroccan, 105 Antillean and Surinamese, 102 Indonesian, 313 Western, and 150 other non-Western immigrants. In a path model with latent variables we confirmed that emotion regulation strategies were significantly and similarly related to emotion valence and intensity across the groups. Negative emotions were more reappraised and suppressed than positive emotions. Intensity was positively related to social sharing and negatively related to reappraisal and suppression. The Dutch majority group scored higher on emotion valence than Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. Also, the Dutch majority group scored lower on reappraisal than all non-Western groups, and lower on suppression than Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. We conclude that group differences reside more in mean scores on some components than in how antecedents are linked to regulation strategies.

Keywords: emotion regulation, emotion valence and intensity, immigrants, the Netherlands

INTRODUCTION

We examined interethnic similarities and differences in emotion regulation strategies and how these strategies are related to valence and intensity (two key affective dimensions that account for emotional experience; Bradley & Lang, 2000) in self-reports of emotional episodes among immigrants and majority group members in the Netherlands. These relationships are investigated for the three most common and studied emotion regulation strategies: suppression (cognitive tendency to suppress emotion experience and expression), reappraisal (cognitive reevaluation of an emotional event), and social sharing (behavioral sharing of emotions with others) (e.g., Frijda, 2005).

Western studies have demonstrated that emotion regulation depends on the valence (experiencing negative or positive emotions as a response to an emotion-evoking event; Watson & Tellegen, 1985) and intensity of experienced emotions (the strength of the experienced emotions; Larsen, Diener, & Cropanzano, 1987). Specifically, it is assumed that people tend to suppress and reappraise negative emotions more than positive emotions (Gross & John, 2003; Gross, Richards, & John, 2006), and that emotion valence is not related to social sharing of emotions (a behavior-oriented regulation), as both positive and negative emotions elicit a process of emotional sharing (Rimé, Finkenauer, Luminet, Zech, & Philippot, 2011). Previous research also suggests that high-intensity emotions induce more social sharing than low-intensity emotions, because emotions need to achieve a certain threshold in order to become regulated and thus to be socially shared (Luminet et al., 2000; Rimé et al., 2011). Furthermore, more intense emotions are more regulated and thus might be more reappraised and suppressed (Decker, Turk, Hess, & Murray, 2008; Westen, 1994).

Questions remain whether these relationships also apply in other than Western cultures. Some authors suggest that sociocultural norms influence emotional expression (Izard, 1993; Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006). In non-Western (collectivistic) cultures negative emotions are not always considered as undesirable as they can sometimes cause empathy in others (engaged emotions such as sadness; Izard, 1993); positive emotions are not always desirable as they can set oneself apart from the group (disengaged emotions such as pride; Kitayama et al., 2006). Moreover, sociocultural norms may also be responsible for the interethnic mean differences as recent research suggests that non-Western individuals report more suppression, less reappraisal, and less social sharing of their emotions than Western individuals (Matsumoto, 2006; Stupar, Van de Vijver, & Fontaine, 2014).

We tested the relationships between emotion valence and intensity (as predictors) and emotion regulation strategies (as outcomes) within a multicultural context in the Netherlands. The data were based on self-reported emotional events. We expected that more negative emotions are more likely to be suppressed and reappraised than more positive emotions (Hypothesis 1a). We also expected that more intense emotions are more likely to be suppressed and reappraised than less intense emotions (Hypothesis 1b). In addition, it was expected that more intense emotions are more socially shared than less intense emotions (Hypothesis 1c); we did not expect to find a relationship between emotion valence and social sharing (Hypothesis 1d). Moreover, we expected that the associations would be less salient in non-Western immigrants (Hypothesis 2). We also expected that non-Western immigrants would have higher mean scores on suppression (Hypothesis 3a) and lower mean scores on social sharing (Hypothesis 3b) and reappraisal (Hypothesis 3c) compared to majority and Western immigrants, as the strong expression of emotions could disturb social relationships in these groups. It was found in previous research (Schalk-Soekar, Van de Vijver, & Hoogsteder, 2004) that the experienced distance to the Dutch culture was largest in Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch, followed by Surinamese- and Antillean-Dutch, Indonesian-Dutch, and finally other Western immigrants. We expect that regulation would be stronger in groups that are culturally more distant from the Dutch majority (Hypothesis 4).

METHOD

Participants

The data were collected in April 2013 using the Tilburg immigrant panel of Centerdata in the Netherlands (independent part of the LISS panel of the MESS project, Measurement and Experimentation in the Social Sciences; www.lissdata.nl), which is a representative sample of immigrants and majority group members who participate in monthly internet surveys (Scherpenzeel & Das, 2010). The current sample comprised 1,195 participants: 389 Dutch majority members, in addition to members of five immigrant groups: 136 Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch, 105 Antillean- and Surinamese-Dutch, 102 Indonesian-Dutch, 313 Western immigrants from countries such as Germany and Belgium, and 150 non-Western immigrant group from other countries (e.g., Asian countries). Ethnic groups had to be merged to obtain adequate sample sizes for the statistical analyses; merging was done in line with perceived cultural distance (Schalk-Soekar, Van de Vijver, & Hoogsteder, 2004). We did not find significant differences in gender compositions of the groups. Across the samples, the age varied from 16 to 88 years. Three non-Western groups (Turkish and Moroccan, Antillean and Surinamese, and non-Western immigrant

group) were significantly younger than Dutch, Indonesian, and Western immigrant group (F(5, 1195) = 28.73, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$). Turkish and Moroccan immigrants had a significantly lower education level than all other groups (F(5, 1195) = 6.87, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$). Turkish, Moroccan, and non-Western immigrants had on average a lower monthly income than the other groups, F(5, 1195) = 10.21, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$ (see Table 1 for more details on all demographic variables). Immigrant groups differed significantly in generational status; most Turkish, Moroccan, Antillean, Surinamese, and non-Western immigrants belong to the first generation compared to migrants from Indonesia and other Western immigrants that belong mainly to the second-generation, F(4, 1195) = 9.22, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$.

Measures

Dutch proficiency is high among the panel members; questionnaires are always administered (only) in Dutch. Instruments and data can be retrieved from http://www.lissdata.nl/dataarchive/study_units/view/. All scales had satisfactory internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha varied from .72 to .95). In all analyses we used the mean scores for each scale.

The emotion eliciting event was assessed using an open-end item, asking the respondents to describe their most important emotional episode from last week. We coded three facets of the emotional event: target (whether the emotional occurrence was related to self, partner, family members, friends, or others), type (whether emotional experience is perceived as beneficial/positive or detrimental/negative to a person's well-being or important other), and nature (whether the emotional event was related to well-being, social situations, work, education, or relationships). No significant group differences were found in target (χ^2(25, N = 1195) = .03, *ns*), type (χ^2(5, N = 1195) = 4.83, *ns*), or nature (χ^2(40, N = 1195) = .19, *ns*) of the self-reported emotional event.

We asked participants to report how much they experienced certain emotions during the event (in total five positive and nine negative emotion terms, such as joy, sadness, and fear). The response categories varied from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*), where negative emotion items were recoded from negative to positive so that higher scores on negative emotions refer to a more positive experience. We also asked for the general feelings, using 12 items adapted from the GRID (Fontaine et al., 2013). A sample item is "How did you feel during this emotional event?" Response categories ranged for from 1 (*very negative*) to 7 (*very positive*) and for another item from 1 (*very stressed*) to 7 (*very relaxed*); negative emotion items were recoded so that higher scores

on negative emotions refer to lower experience of them. The emotion scale (involving both emotion and feeling items) was found to be unifactorial in all groups (Principal Component Analysis; between 37.0% and 45.0% of the variance explained). It showed high structural equivalence across the cultures (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997), with an average value of Tucker's phi = .99 (range: .98 to 1.00). Valence was operationalized as the mean on the emotion and general feelings items (higher scores refer to the experience of more positive emotions). In order to calculate the intensity and at the same time to avoid multicollinearity with the emotion regulation scales, we centered all scores around the midpoint of the scale; we then squared these centered scores and calculated means of the squared scores for each respondent. Higher scores on emotion intensity scale indicate that the respondent experienced more intense (positive and negative) emotions.

Emotion regulation was assessed using three scales. Suppression and reappraisal were assessed using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003). The items were adjusted to increase their applicability to both positively and negatively valenced emotional episodes. The final version of the ERQ consisted of eight items (four for suppression and four for reappraisal). For example, an original ERQ-item for reappraisal was "When I want to feel more positive emotions, I think about other things" and the adjusted version of the same item was then "During this situation…I thought about other things in order to experience other emotions". An example of an adjusted suppression item was "During this situation…I kept my emotions to myself". The response categories varied from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). Social sharing of emotions was assessed using three items adapted from the literature (Luminet et al., 2000). Example items are "After the emotional event ended, I talked to other people about my emotions that occurred during the event" and "… I wanted to talk to other people about my emotions that occurred during the event". The items were scored on a 7-point response scale (from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*). A CFA confirmed the three-factor solution (reappraisal, suppression, and social sharing) for emotion regulation items and scalar invariance was supported across all groups.

Table 1 *Means, Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) per Ethnic Group and Effect Sizes of their Differences (Results from MANCOVA)*

	Dutch Majority	Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch	Antillean- and Surinamese-Dutch	Indonesian Dutch	Other Western immigrants	Other non-Western immigrants	Partial Eta Square (η_p^2)
Migrant generation[1]							
First		78 (57%)$_a$	66 (63%)$_a$	33 (32%)$_b$	140 (48%)$_b$	92 (61%)$_a$	.05***
Second		57 (42%)$_a$	35 (33%)$_a$	68 (67%)$_b$	163 (52%)$_b$	55 (37%)$_a$	
Gender (frequency)							
Male	192 (49%)	65 (48%)	42 (40%)	56 (55%)	125 (40%)	62 (41%)	.01
Female	197 (51%)	71 (52%)	63 (60%)	46 (45%)	188 (60%)	88 (59%)	
Age	49 (1.52)$_a$	37 (1.22)$_b$	43 (1.44)$_c$	53 (1.32)$_a$	51 (1.57)$_a$	40 (1.56)$_{b,c}$	.11***
Education level	3.77 (1.52)$_a$	3.07 (1.54)$_b$	3.79 (1.47)$_a$	4.04 (1.46)$_a$	3.87 (1.61)$_a$	3.93 (1.54)$_a$	.03***
Month income in Euro (range)	1,544 (0-6,250)$_d$	895 (0-4,000)$_b$	1,314 (0-2,900)$_c$	1,943 (0-24,785)$_a$	1,593 (0-33,274)$_a$	1,242 (0-6,000)$_b$	.04***
Emotion valence	4.29 (1.11)$_a$	3.87 (1.18)$_b$	4.12 (1.24)$_{a,b}$	4.25 (1.18)$_{a,b}$	4.08 (1.10)$_{a,b}$	4.02 (1.30)$_{a,b}$	.01**
Emotion intensity	4.19 (1.21)	3.94 (1.21)	4.17 (1.08)	4.24 (1.11)	4.25 (1.20)	4.30 (1.14)	.01
Reappraisal	2.49 (1.28)$_a$	3.52 (1.40)$_b$	3.00 (1.54)$_c$	2.67 (1.49)$_a$	2.80 (1.40)$_a$	3.07 (1.54)$_d$	.04***
Suppression	3.02 (1.41)$_a$	3.61 (1.30)$_b$	3.16 (1.59)$_{a,b}$	3.24 (1.55)$_{a,b}$	3.18 (1.43)$_{a,b}$	3.28 (1.51)$_{a,b}$	.01**
Social sharing	4.18 (1.62)	3.87 (1.66)	4.21 (1.81)	3.71 (1.69)	4.19 (1.56)	3.97 (1.68)	.01

Note. Education level varied from not having education at all (0) to university degree (6). Monthly net income is given in Euros.
Means with different subscripts are significantly different (Bonferroni post hoc test).
[1]The percentages of missing data on the (frequency) of immigrants 'generation varies from 1 to 4% in different ethnic groups.
$^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$

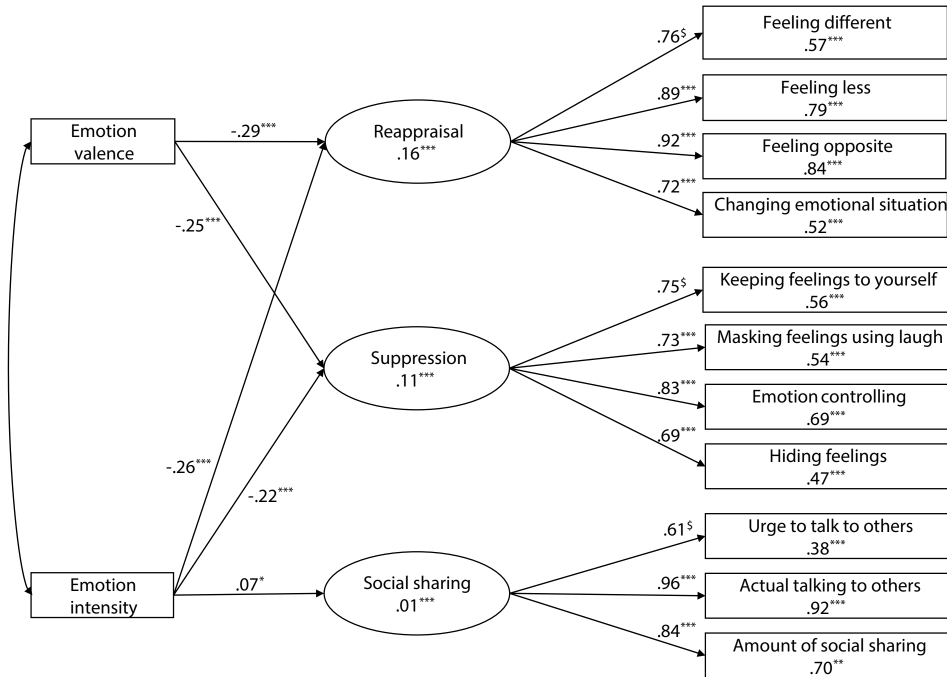
RESULTS

Multigroup Model

To investigate the predicted relationships of valence and intensity with the three regulation strategies, we tested a multigroup path model (AMOS). We treated the emotion regulation strategies (reappraisal, suppression, and social sharing of emotions) as latent variables with their items as indicators. The regulation factors were predicted by valence and intensity. We found support for a model where both emotion valence and intensity were negatively related to reappraisal and suppression and only intensity was positively related to social sharing (see Figure 1). The structural residuals model was the most restrictive model with a satisfactory fit. Stepwise imposing restrictions on the unconstrained model did not lead to a statistically significant increase of the Chi-square statistic up to the structural residuals model. Thus, the measurement weights, the structural weights, the structural covariances, and the structural residuals are the same across the groups. It can be concluded that all parameters of the regression model, with the exception of measurement residuals (error terms of the scales on the right hand side of Figure 1), were identical, implying that the most important parameters (factor loadings and regression coefficients) were identical across the groups.

As the multigroup path model did not only fail to confirm Hypothesis 1b (that more intense emotions would be more likely to be suppressed and reappraised than less intense emotions), but revealed opposite relationships (it is observed that more intense emotions are less suppressed and reappraised than less intense emotions), we further explored the relationships of valence and intensity with suppression and reappraisal. We first investigated whether a valence-intensity interaction might be responsible for the unexpected observation. We conducted additional analyses in which we added an interaction term between valence and intensity as a predictor. However, the interaction effect did not lead to more explained variance in the dependent variables. We then visually inspected the regression plots of valence by reappraisal and valence by suppression. These two plots clearly revealed heteroscedasticity: The standard deviation of reappraisal and suppression increased as the reported experience became more negative. In line with the heteroscedasticity, we also observed that the most reappraised and the most suppressed experiences were on average the most negatively valenced experiences.

Figure 1. A path model of emotion valence and intensity, and emotion regulation strategies



Note. Standardized regression coefficients are given next to the arrows. Factor loadings are printed in italics, next to the arrows. Numbers below construct names represent proportions of variance explained.
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .001$. $ Loading fixed at a value of 1 in the non-standardized solution.

Interethnic Mean Differences

We found relevant interethnic differences in age, education level, and net month income. Including these in the SEM would have made the model complex and we would no longer have adequate sample sizes to test the model. Therefore, we used a different analysis to test their influence; we conducted a multivariate analysis of covariance to test interethnic mean score differences (six levels: Dutch majority, Turkish-Moroccan, Antillean-Surinamese, Indonesian, Western immigrant, and non-Western immigrant group) in valence, intensity, and regulation strategies (reappraisal, suppression, and social sharing), with age, education level, net month income, and gender as covariates (previously found to differ across groups). The results showed that the multivariate effect of ethnic group was significant (Wilks' Lambda = .94, $F(35, 1195) = 2.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$). Differences were found in emotion valence, $F(5, 1195) = 3.30$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. The Dutch majority group reported significantly more positively valenced episodes compared to Turkish and Moroccan Dutch immigrants. No significant group differences

were found in emotion intensity, $F(5, 1195) = 1.51$, *ns*, $\eta_p^2 = .01$ (see Table 1). Contrary to our expectations, the largest interethnic differences on emotion regulation were found on reappraisal, $F(5, 1195) = 10.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, with the Dutch majority group scoring lowest. Turkish and Moroccan members scored significantly higher on reappraisal than Dutch, Indonesians, and Western immigrants. In addition, Dutch majority also scored significantly lower on suppression compared to Turkish and Moroccan immigrants, $F(5, 1195) = 3.10$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$ (Table 1). We did not find interethnic differences in social sharing, $F(5, 1195) = 1.81$, *ns*, $\eta_p^2 = .01$.

We conducted an additional MANCOVA with valence and intensity (together with age, education level, and net month income, and gender) as covariates to test whether interethnic differences in emotion regulation could result from the observed differences in emotion valence and intensity. Remaining differences were found only in reappraisal, $F(5, 1195) = 7.97$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, where Turkish and Moroccan members still scored significantly higher than Dutch, Indonesians, and Western immigrants. We did not find remaining interethnic differences in suppression, $F(5, 1195) = 1.70$, *ns*, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, and social sharing, $F(5, 1195) = 1.76$, *ns*, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. So, interethnic differences in emotion regulation can only be partially explained by interethnic differences in reported valence and intensity.

DISCUSSION

We investigated associations of emotion valence and intensity during self-reported emotional events with emotion regulation in immigrants and Dutch majority in the Netherlands. As expected, we found that more negative emotions are more regulated in terms of reappraisal and suppression than more positive emotions (see Figure 1; Hypothesis 1a); more intense emotions are more socially shared (Hypothesis 1c) and there is no significant relationship between emotion valence and social sharing (Hypothesis 1d). Contrary to our expectations (Hypothesis 1b), we observed that more intense emotions were *on average* reappraised and suppressed less than less intense emotions in each ethnic group. At first sight, these results are counterintuitive and conflicting with previous studies (e.g., Decker et al., 2008; Westen, 1994). However, close inspection of the relationships between the valence of the emotional experience on the one hand and their reappraisal and suppression on the other hand revealed a more nuanced result. An increasing variability in reappraisal and suppression was observed as emotional experiences become more negatively valenced (heteroscedasticity). Thus, some of the highly negatively valenced experiences were strongly reappraised and/ suppressed, in line with the original hypothesis. A possible post hoc interpretation of

these findings is that there exist unmeasured situational constraints and/or personality characteristics that interact with the intensity of especially negative emotions. On average, people are less willing to regulate intense negatively valenced experiences, but the expression of these experiences could be constrained or socially sanctioned in specific situations (e.g., it is less accepted to express anger towards one's boss than towards a subordinate) or there could be interindividual differences in how threatening intense, negatively valenced experiences are for an individual, causing some situations to elicit or some individuals to engage in strong regulation efforts when having intense negatively valenced emotional experiences.

We could not find the expected interethnic differences in the strengths of the relationships between emotion valence and emotion regulations, and between emotion intensity and emotion regulations (Hypothesis 2), suggesting the identity of underlying psychological mechanisms behind emotion regulation across different ethnic groups.

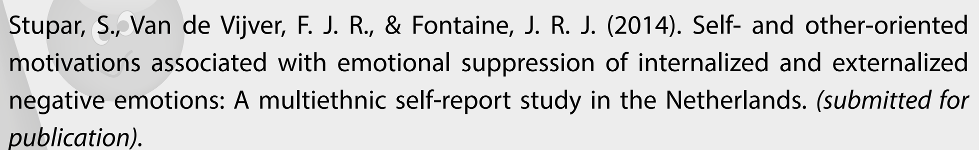
As expected, we found interethnic differences in suppression only between the culturally most distant groups (Dutch majority and Turkish and Moroccan immigrants; see Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 4). However, we could not confirm the expected differences with respect to social sharing (Hypothesis 3b), and we found the opposite relationship for reappraisal where the more distant ethnic groups reported more reappraisal than the Dutch native group (Hypothesis 3c). Interestingly, interethnic differences in suppression disappeared when emotion intensity and valence were taken into account, and only differences in reappraisal remained. In other words, it might well be that differences in reappraisal resulted from the difference in emotion valence where the Dutch mainstream group reported more positive emotions, and accordingly also lower levels of reappraisal. Additionally, as we did not include other background variables that might mediate the valence/intensity-regulation relationship, we could not control for possible strong influence of for example personality traits on use of emotion regulation strategies; this would be interesting as previous research already showed that individuals higher on extraversion use reappraisal more as a regulation strategy (Matsumoto, 2006). Nevertheless, these findings suggest that the hypothesized effect is rather weak as it could only be found between the most distant groups. Therefore, the current study indicates that we have to be careful with generalizing interethnic differences in regulation strategies.

The strength of the current study is that the participants reported emotional experiences from their daily life and therefore we could draw conclusions based on personal experiences and not on general emotional tendencies as often the case in the

previous research. Moreover, the results of the current study are probably robust as they are based on a large database in this cultural comparative domain with a wide variety of respondents from very different cultural groups. A limitation though is that our samples might be non-representative as the immigrant panel only includes immigrants with sufficient Dutch proficiency. Also memory effects might have had an influence on our results as the reported emotional situations occurred in the recent past and we could not control for the authenticity of the respondents' emotional reactions. A main limitation of this study is the use of the description of one emotional episode per respondent. Future research will benefit from interethnic studies where the respondents are asked to report several episodes during a longer period of time in order to disentangle episode variations from inter-individual differences. Additionally, we suggest replication study in immigrants' countries of origins in order to disentangle acculturation from cultural effects. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, we cannot establish the causal order between emotions and regulation (e.g., reporting less intense emotions might have resulted from regulation attempts). Finally, it would be interesting to extend the study to specific emotions based on discrete theories of emotions (Ekman, 1999) in order to generalize our study to specific emotions.

Chapter 4

Self- and Other-Oriented Motivations Associated with Emotional Suppression of Internalized and Externalized Negative Emotions: A Multiethnic Self-Report Study in the Netherlands



Stupar, S., Van de Vijver, F. J. R., & Fontaine, J. R. J. (2014). Self- and other-oriented motivations associated with emotional suppression of internalized and externalized negative emotions: A multiethnic self-report study in the Netherlands. *(submitted for publication).*

ABSTRACT

We were interested in the motivations associated with emotional suppression, their relationship with negative emotions in self-reported emotional events, and their cross-cultural similarities and differences. Based on a framework of human values (Schwartz, 1994) and internalization-externalization (Krueger & Markon, 2006), we expected in the current study that self-reported motivations to suppress negative emotions are either self- or other-oriented. The sample consisted of 354 Dutch majority members, 319 immigrants from non-Western, and 368 from Western countries. The two-dimensional solution distinguishing self- and other-oriented motivations was confirmed. Non-Western immigrants scored higher on other-oriented motivation than Western immigrants, but no interethnic differences were found in self-oriented motivation. Non-Western immigrants scored higher on anxiety, compassion, guilt, and hate compared to Dutch group. Associations of negative emotions with self- and other-oriented motivation were the same in all groups. Sadness was positively related to self-oriented motivation, whereas anger was positively related to other-oriented motivation. To our knowledge, this is the first study where the internalization-externalization framework was applied to explain the motivations associated with emotional suppression. We concluded that emotional suppression depends not only on self- or other-orientation but also on the type of emotions (internalized versus externalized) and the relationships are not influenced by ethnicity.

Keywords: self- and other-oriented motivation, suppression, internalized and externalized emotions, ethnicity, the Netherlands

INTRODUCTION

We examined motivations underlying emotional suppression of negative emotions, such as anger, sadness, and fear, in different ethnic groups in the Netherlands. Although much research is conducted on emotional suppression and the negative impact of emotional suppression on health (Egloff et al., 2006; Ehring et al., 2010; Gruber et al., 2012; Volokhov & Demaree, 2010), much less research is conducted on why people want to suppress their emotions. There is a clear indication that people are much more motivated to suppress their negative emotions than their positive emotions (Gross & John, 2003; Larsen, 2000). Larsen (2000) suggested that the choice of (not) suppressing negative emotions depends on individual motives. When motivated, individuals can even delay suppression of negative emotions in order to obtain long-term goals (Parrot, 2001). Previous research proposed several reasons for suppressing negative emotions. For example, Tamir, Ford, and Giliam (2012) showed that the preferred emotion regulation strategy is related to the balance between two benefits of an emotion: hedonic (urge to feel good) and instrumental (usefulness of emotions) benefits of the emotion. In other words, negative emotions are more likely suppressed because most of the times these negative emotions make us feel bad or vulnerable. Therefore, we focused not only on the distinction between self-oriented motivation (that refers to self-protectiveness and the urge to feel good) and other-oriented motivation (that refers to other-protectiveness and the urge to make others feel good), but we also addressed interethnic differences and similarities in these motivations, experienced negative emotions, and their relationships within immigrants and majority group members in the Netherlands.

Whether a negative emotion will be suppressed or not depends on individual motivations and also on the sociocultural context, particularly on display rules of emotions that refer to culturally defined rules that specify which emotion should (not) be suppressed in certain situations (Matsumoto, Hee Yoo, & Fontaine, 2008). For example, one of the most important reasons for the observed lower levels of emotional suppression of negative emotions in non-Western, interdependent cultures is that the negative emotions are not always experienced as threatening to social harmony. They often stimulate the interconnectedness and therefore such emotions may be not suppressed in these cultures (e.g., Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006). In Western independent cultures negative emotions will be more suppressed, as these can be perceived as negative evaluations of self and own self-esteem. Therefore, people from non-Western cultures presumably predominantly suppress negative emotions that form a potential threat to perceived social harmony (other-oriented motivation) whereas people from Western cultures

would suppress predominantly negative emotions that form a potential threat to own self-esteem (self-oriented motivation).

The question can be raised whether different negative emotions would be more associated with different types of suppression motivation, self-or other-oriented motivation. Based on the internalization-externalization dimensional model of emotional disorders (Krueger & Markon, 2006), we can distinguish two types of emotions: internalized (intrapersonal) and externalized (interpersonal). Sadness is an example of an internalized emotion that is commonly bottled up inside of a person and is thus expressed inwards. Sadness is typical for internalized mental health disorders such as depression or dysthymia. People who experience a negative internalized emotion, such as sadness, may be more self-oriented in their motivation to suppress this emotion because experiencing and/or expressing sadness might be opposite to one's self-protective goals. In contrast, anger is an example of an externalized negative emotion that is commonly associated with behavioral disinhibition that is a core characteristic of externalizing disorders such as conduct, attention-deficit/hyperactivity, and antisocial personality disorders (Krueger & Markon, 2006). Additionally, people who experience an externalized negative emotion, such as anger, may be more other-oriented in their motivation to suppress this emotion because expressing such an emotion may challenge the nature of the relationship with the target person. The distinction between self- and other-oriented motivation is rooted in the basic and cross-culturally stable distinction between self- and other-oriented values (Fontaine, Poortinga, Delbeke, & Schwartz, 2008) according to motivation is based on either self-interests or the interests of other people (altruism). However, the novelty of the current study lies in that we are the first, to our knowledge, to investigate differential emotion-motivation relationships within an interethnic context and to employ internalization-externalization as a possible explanation of differential relationships.

The Present Study

We asked members of several ethnic groups in the Netherlands to report a recent negative emotional event where they suppressed their emotion and to provide their motivation for the suppressing. Previous studies show that emotional suppression of negative emotions occurs more often in non-Western than in Western societies (Gross & John, 2003; Murata, Moser, & Kitayama, 2012) and also more often in non-Western immigrants than in majority group members (Stupar, Van de Vijver, & Fontaine, 2014a, b). Emotional suppression is found to be related to negative mental health outcomes for both immigrants and majority group members (Consedine, Magai, Cohen, & Gillespie,

2002; Stupar et al., 2014a). In order to understand better why suppression of emotions occurs, we focus on the motivations for suppression and in particular on self- and other-oriented motivation. We hypothesize that motivations associated with emotional suppression can be structured in all ethnic groups along two dimensions, namely motivations oriented toward the self or towards others (Hypothesis 1).

Schalk-Soekar, Van de Vijver, and Hoogsteder (2004) showed that the experienced distance immigrants perceive to the Dutch culture was largest in non-Western groups (e.g., Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch) followed by other Western groups (e.g., Belgians and Germans). Non-Western cultures are usually described as interdependent cultures where people value others and their relationships with others relatively high compared to their own interests, whereas in Western cultures such as the Netherlands an opposite pattern is usually found. Therefore, we expect that other-oriented motivations would be stronger in groups that are culturally more distant from the Dutch majority whereas self-oriented motivations would be stronger in Western immigrants and Dutch majority (Hypothesis 2).

Our emotion assessment is based on the hierarchical organization of the cognitive structure of emotions (Fontaine, Scherer, & Soriano, 2013; Fontaine, Poortinga, Setiadi, & Markam, 2010; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987) where hierarchical cluster analyses confirmed several negative basic emotions categories such as anger, sadness, and fear. Each of these negative basic emotions consists of several subordinate-level categories. For example, sadness consists of subcategories such as gloominess and sadness while anger consists of aggravation and anger. In line with this framework, we asked participants to rate each self-reported emotional episode on several negative emotions (at subordinate level) such as sadness, gloominess, anger, aggravation, anxiety, and terror. We expected that the emotions on subordinate level would structure themselves in distinct factors that represent basic emotions, for example, sadness (sadness/gloominess), anxiety (anxiety/terror), and anger (anger/aggravation). Additionally, non-Western immigrants usually report more depression, anxiety, and mood-related complaints compared to Western immigrants and majority group members (De Wit et al., 2008; Levecque, Lodewyckx, & Vranken, 2007; Stupar et al., 2014a). Therefore, we hypothesize that non-Western immigrants would experience more negative emotions compared to other Western ethnic groups (Hypothesis 3).

Considering that negative emotions may be structured along the internalization-externalization dimension (where internalization and externalization are seen as opposite ends of the same dimension), we argue that internalized negative emotions

are much more subject to self-oriented suppression motivation whereas externalized emotions are more subject to other-oriented suppression motivation (Hypothesis 4). Finally, we also explored whether the emotions-motivations relationships differ across ethnic groups.

METHOD

Participants

The data were collected in August 2013 using the Tilburg immigrant panel of Centerdata in the Netherlands. The immigrant panel is an independent part of the LISS panel of the MESS project (Measurement and Experimentation in the Social Sciences; www.lissdata.nl); it is a representative sample of immigrants and majority group members who participate in monthly internet surveys (Scherpenzeel & Das, 2010). Ethnic groups were merged to obtain adequate sample sizes for the statistical analyses and merging was conducted in line with perceived cultural distance (Schalk-Soekar et al., 2004). The sample consisted of 1,041 participants: 354 Dutch majority members, 319 immigrants from non-Western (e.g., Turkish and Moroccan Dutch), and 368 from Western (e.g., Germans and Belgians) countries. Ethnic groups did not significantly differ in their gender compositions. The age varied from 16 to 88 years. Non-Western immigrants were significantly younger ($F(2, 1041) = 43.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$) and had on average a lower net monthly income ($F(2, 1041) = 20.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$) than Dutch majority and Western immigrants. Non-Western immigrants were also less educated than both other ethnic groups, ($F(2, 1041) = 10.59$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$). Generation status tends to be associated with ethnic background in Dutch samples, as most of non-Western immigrants belong to first-generation migrants (migrants that are born outside of the Netherlands) compared to Western immigrants that belong mainly to the second-generation, $\chi^2(1, N = 687) = 22.68$, $p < .001$ (results from Chi-squared test with only immigrants groups). See Table 1 for more details on all demographic variables.

Measures

The questionnaires were administered in Dutch as the Dutch proficiency is high among the panel members. Instruments and data can be retrieved from http://www.lissdata.nl/dataarchive/study_units/view/. In all analyses we used the mean scores for each (sub) scale. The internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha values) ranged from low to high, ranging from .57 to .86).

Table 1 *Means, Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) per Ethnic Group and Effect Sizes of Their Differences (Results from MANCOVA)*

	Dutch Majority	Non-Western Dutch	Western Dutch	Partial Eta Square (η_p^2)
Migrant generation[1]				
First	-	189 (18%)	151 (15%)	-
Second	-	130 (12%)	217 (21%)	-
Gender (frequency)				
Male	165 (47%)	146 (46%)	150 (41%)	-
Female	189 (53%)	173 (54%)	218 (59%)	-
Age	$49 (1.51)_{a, b}$	$40 (1.45)_{a}$	$52 (1.52)_{a, b}$	$.08^{***}$
Education level	$3.83 (1.47)_{a, b}$	$3.67 (1.55)_{a}$	$4.03 (1.55)_{a, b}$	$.01^{*}$
Monthly income[2]	$1,618 (0-10,007)_{a, b}$	$1,165 (0-4,600)_{a}$	$2,554 (0-26,863)_{a, b}$	$.04^{***}$
Anxiety/terror	$1.52 (.88)_{a, b}$	$1.74 (.85)_{a}$	$1.56 (.87)_{b}$	$.01^{*}$
Compassion/sympathy	$1.50 (.91)_{a, b}$	$1.63 (.82)_{a}$	$1.45 (.82)_{a, b}$	$.01^{**}$
Guilt/shame	$1.24 (.74)_{a, b}$	$1.52 (.79)_{a}$	$1.34 (.76)_{b}$	$.02^{**}$
Hate/humiliation	$1.29 (.82)_{a, b}$	$1.60 (.86)_{a}$	$1.31 (.79)_{a, b}$	$.02^{***}$
Sadness/gloominess	2.07 (.88)	2.23 (.83)	2.05 (.83)	.01
Anger/aggravation	2.44 (.85)	2.51 (.83)	2.39 (.88)	.00
Other-oriented motivation	$1.84 (.71)_{a, b}$	$1.95 (.70)_{a}$	$1.79 (.73)_{b}$	$.01^{*}$
Self-oriented motivation	1.84 (.72)	1.97 (.72)	1.86 (.68)	.00

Note. Education level varied from not having education at all (0) to university degree (6).
[1]Migrant generation and gender are given in frequencies (percentages of total sample).
[2]Monthly net income is given in Euros (range).
Means with different subscripts are significantly different (Bonferroni post hoc test).
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

The questionnaire was presented online to the panel members and it started with an open-end item regarding the negative emotion eliciting event, where the respondents were asked to describe a recent emotional episode where they suppressed their negative emotions. Two independent research assistants coded each emotional event into two new variables (Stupar et al., 2014b): target (whether the emotional occurrence was related to self, partner, family members, friends, or others) and nature (whether the emotional event was related to well-being, social situations, work, education, or relationships). No significant group differences were found in target ($\chi^2(18, N = 1041) = 27.62$, *ns*) or nature ($\chi^2(26, N = 1041) = 30.24$, *ns*). This open-end item regarding the emotional event is followed by the closed-ended questions on experienced negative emotions during reported event and motivations underlying the suppression of these emotions.

Experienced negative emotions were assessed by asking the participants to report the extent to which they experienced 16 negative emotions during the event such as anger, sadness, anxiety, and hate (items adapted from the GRID; Fontaine, Scherer, Roesch, & Ellsworth, 2007; Fontaine et al., 2013). The response categories varied from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). A Confirmatory Factor Analysis confirmed the six-factor solution (hate/humiliation, sadness/gloominess, guilt/shame, anxiety/terror, anger/aggravation, and compassion/sympathy), where scalar invariance was supported across all ethnic groups. Note that we included compassion/sympathy that represents positive emotions as these emotions are important in other-oriented motivation (they are closely related to altruistic feelings). The measurement residuals model was the most restrictive model with a satisfactory fit, $\chi^2(193, N = 1041) = 465.306$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.411$, CFI = .926. However, four emotions (nervous, restless, hurt, and worried) showed cross-loadings (they loaded similarly on several emotions factors) and therefore we excluded them from further analyses.

Motivation underlying emotional suppression was assessed by asking participants to rate 12 self-developed items based on frameworks of human values (Schwartz, 1994) and internalization-externalization (Krueger & Markon, 2006)[1]. The items referred to the reasons for emotional suppression during the described emotional event and they were scored on a 7-point response scale (from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*). We confirmed the two-factor solution using Confirmatory Factor Analysis with seven items related to self-oriented motivation and five items related to other-oriented motivation (see Table 2 for exact CFA-loadings of all items). The measurement residuals model had a satisfactory fit, $\chi^2(209, N = 1041) = 593.392$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.839$; CFI = .907; scalar invariance was supported across all groups. Both scales had satisfactory internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha values varied from .76 to .86).

[1] The first version of Motivation underlying emotional suppression scale consisted of 38 items. A Principal Component Analysis confirmed the two-factor solution (self- and other-oriented motivation) in all ethnic groups (between 42% and 45% of the variance explained). Both scales had satisfactory internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha values varied from .82 to .90). However, 16 items did not differentiate well as they had very low loadings on these two factors (below .3) and had strong cross-loadings. Therefore, we chose the12 best differentiating items and we confirmed the two-factor solution using CFA with seven items related to self-oriented motivation and five items related to other-oriented motivation, as we presented in the manuscript.

Table 2 *Confirmatory (CFA) Factor Analyses Loadings of the Self-and Other-Oriented Motivation Scale*

During this situation I suppressed my negative emotions because…	Factor loadings
Self-Oriented Motivation	
I did not want to allow others to enter *my personal life*.	.79
I wanted to protect *my privacy*.	.77
I did not want that others would get to know me better.	.71
I did not want to leave an impression that I *am a weak person*.	.63
I found that others had nothing to do with *how I felt*.	.61
I did not want that the others would *laugh at me*.	.57
I wanted to *protect myself*.	.56
Other-Oriented Motivation	
I wanted to make *somebody else feel better*.	.80
I wanted to *protect somebody else*.	.69
I did not want to make *somebody else feels even worse*.	.67
I wanted to *please somebody else*.	.59
I was afraid that the *situation would become worse*.	.43

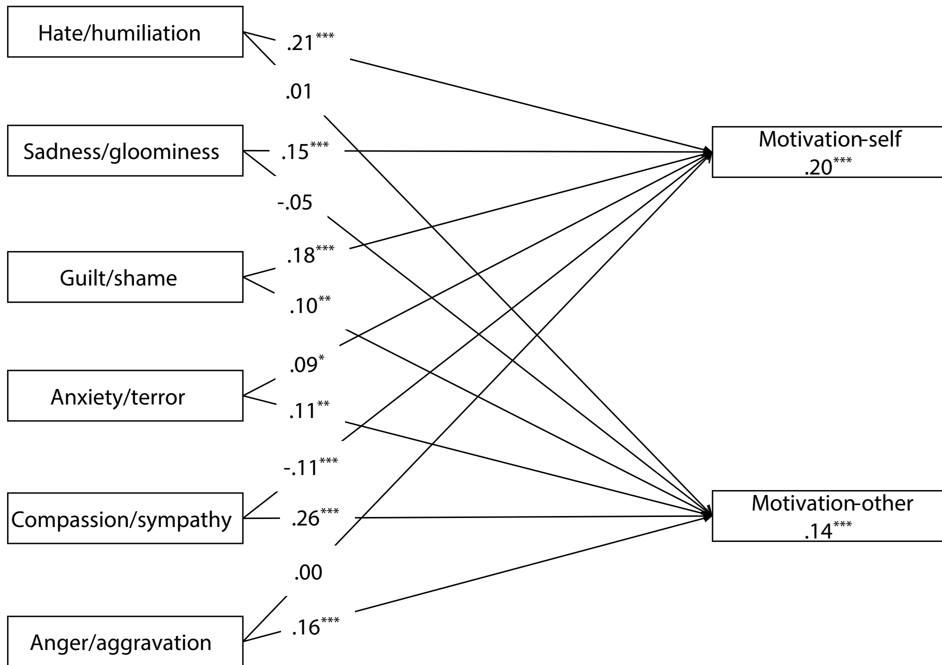
Note. Factor loadings are identical across all ethnic groups

RESULTS

Multigroup path model

We tested whether the six emotion factors are differentially related to suppression (two factors, self-and other-oriented motivation) in a multigroup analysis (AMOS); results are presented in Figure 1. As expected, hate/humiliation and sadness/gloominess (both internalized emotions) were not significantly related to other-oriented motivation, and anger/aggravation (externalized emotion) was not related to self-oriented motivation. Compassion/sympathy was the only emotion factor related negatively to self-oriented motivation. The structural weights model was the most restrictive model with a satisfactory fit, $\chi^2(27, N = 1041) = 58.471$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.166$. In this model both the regression coefficients and the correlations between the predictors are the same across groups. In summary, we found support for a model where hate/humiliation, sadness/gloominess, guilt/shame, and anxiety/terror were positively related to self-oriented motivation, guilt/shame, anxiety/terror, anger/aggravation, and compassion/sympathy were all positively related to other-oriented motivation, and compassion/sympathy was negatively related to self-oriented motivation.

Figure 1. A path model of emotions and motivation underlying emotional suppression



Note. Standardized regression coefficients are given next to the arrows. Numbers below motivation names represent proportions of variance explained.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Interethnic differences in means

We conducted a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to test interethnic differences (three levels: Dutch majority, non-Western, and Western immigrants) in emotions (six dependent variables: hate/humiliation, sadness/gloominess, guilt/shame, anxiety/terror, anger/aggravation, compassion/sympathy) and motivations underlying emotional suppression (two additional dependent variables: self-and other-oriented motivation), with age, education level, and net month income as covariates. The results showed that the multivariate effect of ethnic group was significant (Wilks' Lambda = .96, $F(16, 1041) = 2.32$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$). We found significant interethnic differences with small effect sizes in in anxiety/terror ($F(2, 1041) = 4.07$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$), guilt/shame ($F(2, 1041) = 7.41$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$), compassion/sympathy ($F(2, 1041) = 6.06$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$), hate/humiliation ($F(2, 1041) = 8.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$), and other-oriented motivation ($F(2, 1041) = 4.58$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$). More specifically, non-Western immigrants scored higher on anxiety/terror, guilt/shame, compassion/sympathy, and

hate/humiliation than the Dutch majority (non-Western immigrants scored also higher on compassion/sympathy and hate/humiliation than Western immigrants). Finally, non-Western immigrants scored higher than Western immigrants in other-oriented motivation.

DISCUSSION

We investigated whether motivations underlying emotional suppression can be structured along two dimensions, motivation oriented toward self and motivation oriented toward others within an interethnic context (Dutch majority, non-Western and Western immigrants) in the Netherlands. We found support for a two-dimensional structure of motivation underlying emotional suppression, which was in line with previous literature (Hypothesis 1). However, we found only support for the expected interethnic differences regarding other-oriented motivations (Hypothesis 2) where we found the expected differences between non-Western and Western immigrants. This difference was very small, yet significant. We found that suppression of emotions that are self-oriented is not directly influenced by differential sociocultural norms, possibly because the self-orientation has no direct implications for the relationships with others.

Although the effects of ethnicity were small, we found support for interethnic differences on experienced negative emotions in line with previous literature (Hypothesis 3); non-Western immigrants experienced more negative emotions, such as anxiety/terror, compassion/sympathy, guilt/shame, and hate/humiliation compared to Dutch majority members. Non-Western immigrants scored also high on compassion/sympathy and hate/terror followed by Western-immigrants and Dutch majority. However, groups did not differ on sadness/gloominess and anger/aggravation, which are associated with internalized and externalized emotions, respectively. We speculate that reporting certain emotions is related to their importance within a particular ethnic group. Specifically, sadness/gloominess and anger/aggravation may be important in all cultures as the norms for in particular anger suppression are widely shared (expressing anger is usually perceived as dangerous for the other; Fischer, Manstead, & Rodriguez Mosquera, 1999). Moreover, in most cultures a common reason to suppress anger is legal redress. Emotions such as guilt/shame and compassion/sympathy are more socially engaged emotions (Matsumoto et al., 2008), which may be influenced more by cultural values such as interdependence (interdependency is less valued in Western societies). Therefore, such emotions are less likely to be suppressed in non-Western cultures.

As expected, we found that negative emotions are differentially related with self- and other-oriented motivation (Hypothesis 4). We found strong support for the internalization-externalization framework as some of the negative emotions structured themselves on the very ends of internalization-externalization continuum (these emotions were strongly related either to self-or other oriented motivations), whereas other emotions remained in the middle of this continuum (emotions that were equally strong related to both self-and other motivations). Specifically, we found that the hate and sadness clusters were only positively related to self-oriented motivation, followed by guilt and anxiety clusters that were positively related to both self-and other-oriented motivations, and compassion and anger clusters that were strongly related to other-oriented motivation. That sadness is positively related to self-oriented motivation fits the a priori prediction, as sadness is typically described as an internalized emotion (e.g., Krueger & Markon, 2006). The relationship of the hate/humiliation cluster might at first sight look counterintuitive, as in both the other is held responsible for negative experiences. However, in both hate and especially humiliation the center of the experience is the self that is being hurt by others, and thus the self needs to be protected. The positive relationship of the guilt/shame cluster with both self- and other-oriented suppression motivations can be accounted for by the fact that these emotions are at the same time social- and self-oriented emotions (Fontaine et al., 2006). They make a person conscious about the social appropriateness and consequences of his behavior, but they also make the person self-conscious. Findings regarding the anxiety cluster relate to previous findings that anxiety is an internalized emotion (e.g., Krueger & Markon, 2006). However, the object of one's anxiety is often a threat to the well-being of others; therefore, the positive relationship between anxiety and other-oriented motivation is not surprising. Finally, both the compassion and anger clusters relate to other-oriented suppression motivation, albeit for different reasons. Anger is an externalizing emotion where blaming others for what happens is characteristic. Additionally, anger leads to harming others if not properly regulated. In compassion one is intrinsically concerned by the suffering of someone else, and one does not want to make this suffering worse by expressing one's own emotions. This applies to both immigrants and majority groups in the Netherlands as we found that the differentiation in emotion-motivation relationships was similar across all ethnic groups.

The current study has some limitations. First, we asked participants to report their personal negative experiences and therefore, our findings that non-Western group experienced more certain types of emotions could be also attributed to a memory effect. It is possible that the participants have more easily recalled certain emotional situations at the moment of data collection. Therefore, we could not draw firm

conclusions regarding the interethnic differences in actually experienced emotions. Second, we had to remove a large number of motivation items from analyses. Use of symmetrical items (e.g., "I wanted to make myself/others feel better") may contribute to stronger distinction between self-and other-oriented motivations where all items could have been included. Finally, our study has a cross-sectional design and therefore no causal inferences about emotion-motivation relationships can be drawn.

The novelty of the current study is that we argue that emotional suppression always occurs in a social context where the relationships between emotions and motivations are identical in all ethnic groups (the underlying mechanisms of emotion-motivations is probably also identical) and that the motivations associated with emotional suppression might be structured along two dimensions, namely self- and other-oriented motivations. Based on insights in clinical psychology (Krueger & Markon, 2006), we argue that internalizing and externalizing emotions are suppressed for different reasons. In other words, suppression of negative emotionality cannot be seen as a single phenomenon affecting all negative emotions in the same way. Emotional suppression (usually assessed as a general tendency to suppress emotions) is known to lead to more psychopathology (Egloff et al., 2006; Ehring et al., 2010; Gruber et al., 2012; Volokhov & Demaree, 2010). We propose that not only general emotional suppression tendency is important in the development of psychopathology, but that motivation underlying the emotional suppression should be taken into account. Considering that the emotions that we explored in the current study are typical for internalized and externalized emotional disorders (sadness for internalized and anger for externalized emotions), we assume that self- and other-oriented motivations might be also in a specific relationship to these disorders. More research on how distinct ethnic groups perceive and regulate the emotions is necessary in order to establish the relationships between differential forms of emotional suppression such as reappraisal, suppression, and social sharing in relation to differential motivations (e.g., self or other) and emotion types (e.g., sadness, anger, and fear).

Chapter 5

Interethnic Similarity of Anger Suppression-Aggression Association in Conflicts in Intimate and Non-Intimate Relationships Across Ethnic Groups in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

This study examined associations between emotional suppression, anger, and aggression in intimate (parent and friend) and non-intimate (boss and shop assistant) conflicts in a vignette study conducted among immigrants and majority group members in the Netherlands. The sample consisted of 456 Dutch majority group members, 445 immigrants from non-Western, and 477 immigrants from Western countries. Path analyses showed that anger fully mediated the emotion suppression-aggression relationship in a similar way across groups and conflicts with a parent, boss, and shop assistant (only in a conflict situation with a boss, emotional suppression and anger were both directly related to aggression). As expected, non-Western immigrants experienced less anger in these conflicts. However, no interethnic differences were found in the tendency to suppress anger and aggression in any conflict situation. We could not replicate earlier observed cross-cultural differences in obedience, hierarchy, and restriction of emotional expression among the samples. We concluded that non-Western immigrants do not seem to differ in management of anger in interpersonal conflict situations from Western groups.

Keywords: aggression, emotional suppression, intimate and non-intimate relationships, immigrants, majority group members, the Netherlands

INTRODUCTION

We examined interethnic differences and similarities in emotion suppression-aggression relationships during conflicts with intimate and non-intimate others in a vignette study among majority group members and immigrants in the Netherlands. When investigating emotions in a cross-cultural setting, it is important to include the engaged-disengaged model of emotions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Matsumoto, Hee Yoo, & Fontaine, 2008) in research because cross-cultural differences in emotional suppression may be related to differences in (independent-interdependent) self-construct. Emotions are called engaged when their experience and expression promotes effective interpersonal relationships and as disengaged when their experience and expression is disruptive for these relationships. Whether an emotion will be suppressed or not, depends on the perception of emotion as engaged or disengaged, which is related to independence-interdependence. For example, as interdependent, non-Western cultures place more emphasis on benefits for the group, expressing anger in conflicts can disturb others and thus endanger social relationships leading to more suppression of anger. Anger is therefore a typical example of a disengaged emotion that is more suppressed in non-Western cultures than in Western cultures. In contrast, Western groups value independence and therefore, expressing anger may be associated with reparation of own self-esteem; therefore anger is less suppressed than in non-Western cultures. Based on this engaged-disengaged emotion framework, non-Western cultures are thought to be more prone to suppress anger and experience anger less, and display less aggression compared to Western cultures.

In the current study, we focus mainly on aggression that occurs in interpersonal conflicts as previous research demonstrated that suppressing anger can decrease aggression during conflicts (Sell, 2006; Sell, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2009). We are interested in differences in closeness between people involved in a conflict because closeness can influence how a conflict will be handled and thus whether a person will show aggression. Cooperation and coping attempts to preserve the relationship are more commonly found in intimate relationships (family and friends) than in non-intimate relationships (Whitesell & Harter, 1996). Furthermore, cross-cultural differences in rules governing intimate and non-intimate social relationships may influence how a conflict situation will be dealt with (Argyle, Henderson, Bond, Lizuka, & Contarello, 1986; Fry et al., 1998). Argyle et al. (1986) demonstrated that non-Western cultures hold more rules about obedience, maintaining harmonious relationships, and restraining emotional expression than Western cultures. This implies that non-Western groups are more likely to avoid interpersonal conflicts and therefore suppress their anger more during a conflict

situation compared to Western groups. The current study set out to explore interethnic differences and similarities in regulation of anger and aggression in intimate versus non-intimate conflicts situations in (non-Western and Western) immigrants and Dutch majority group members and thus to test previously proposed engaged-disengaged emotion framework (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Matsumoto et al., 2008) within a single cultural context.

Cross-Cultural Similarities and Differences in Aggression

Aggression mechanisms are usually considered to be universal in their nature. We focus on the three commonly investigated types of aggression, namely behavioral, verbal, and relational aggression. Behavioral aggression refers to behaviors directed toward others with a purpose of harming the other such as hitting someone or taking revenge, whereas verbal aggression refers to verbal behaviors such as cursing or shouting (Eisenberg et al., 2000; Roberton et al., 2012). Relational aggression can be defined as social exclusion or harming the social status of the other (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Severance et al. (2013) demonstrated cross-cultural universality of aggression mechanism related to damaging one's self-worth (e.g., making someone feel powerless, humiliated, and worthless) and of several dimensions of aggression related to the form of the aggressive behaviors (e.g., the distinction between physical and verbal aggression). However, these authors also provided support for cultural differences in the global meanings of the dimensions/mechanisms. Being ignored and social exclusion were viewed as relatively minor in terms of damage to self-esteem in the US (independent self-construct is prominent), but as a major source of damage in the samples originating from the Middle East and East Asia (interdependent construct is prominent). Additionally, groups from the Middle East perceived verbal behaviors such as using an aggressive tone or yelling to be more threatening compared to groups from United States and East Asia. In other words, interethnic differences are easier to find in the antecedents of aggression (e.g., meaning of aggressive behaviors in terms of damage to self-esteem) than in the existence of specific aggressive behaviors (e.g., distinction between physical versus verbal aggression).

How Culture Influences Aggression in Interpersonal Conflicts

Showing anger can be adaptive in interpersonal conflict situations as anger can protect an individual (Sell et al., 2009). Anger can serve as a negotiation tool for an individual as showing the anger can make others feel threatened and therefore not willing to impose costs on the angry person. However, strong anger drives aggression (Campbell,

1993). Previous emotion research showed that a stronger tendency to suppress anger is usually related to lower anger experience and thus less aggressive behavior in the short run (Eisenberg et al., 2000). Roberton, Daffern, and Bucks (2012) suggested that more anger suppression would immediately lead to less aggression because individuals who experience anger want to avoid, repair, or terminate this unpleasant emotion; in other words, the lower the anger, the lower the tendency to act upon it, and thus the lower the aggression.

Within interpersonal relationships, whether individuals will show more emotional suppression tendency and less aggressive behaviors depends on the social rules related to intimacy of the relationships that may differ cross-culturally. Argyle, Hendersen, and Furnham (1985) demonstrated the existence of universal rules in two types of relationships, highly intimate relationships (family, friends, and love relationships) where the relationship is primary and non-intimate relationships (work, professional, and service relationships) that are often characterized as task oriented. People usually respect the rules in their social relationships and if a person breaks these rules, their relationship will be endangered (Argyle et al., 1986). The authors demonstrated that there are rules for intimate and non-intimate relationships in non-Western and Western cultures and that the content and the number of these rules might differ cross-culturally. Non-Western individuals scored lower on expressing anger, distress, and public affection across all relationships when compared to Western participants. This is in line with the engaged-disengaged emotion framework. Expressing anger in conflicts can disturb others and thus endanger social relationships leading to more suppression of anger. In contrast, Western groups value independence more and therefore, expressing anger may be more associated with reparation of own self-esteem. Argyle et al. (1986) found that interethnic differences in anger expression were largest in intimate relationships, with non-Western groups scoring lower than Western groups. The difference is in line with previous research findings that found a strong family orientation in non-Western immigrants, which is typically characterized by strong loyalty, connectedness, and solidarity among family members (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2008). This implies that non-Western immigrants would show higher respect for family members (and probably other intimate relationships such as friends) and express anger and aggression less toward intimate others compared to Western groups that would express more anger and aggression in intimate relationships.

The Present Study

As far as we know, the current study is the first to assess interethnic differences and similarities in the suppression of aggression in conflicts with intimate versus non-intimate others. We investigated the relationships between emotional suppression, experienced anger, and aggression. In line with previous research (Sell, 2006; Sell, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2009), we expected that a stronger tendency to suppress anger in conflict situations would be related with less experienced anger, which would further be associated with less aggression (*Hypothesis 1a*). Additionally, we hypothesized that the ethnic groups do not differ in the relationships between the variables as previous research (e.g., Severance et al., 2013) demonstrated the cross-cultural universality of dimensions/mechanisms of aggression (*Hypothesis 1b*).

Based on the engaged-disengaged emotion framework of non-Western and Western cultures (Matsumoto et al., 2008), we expected that non-Western immigrants would overall suppress anger more and experience anger less, and display less aggression in both intimate and non-intimate conflict situations compared to Western groups (*Hypothesis 2a*). Finally, previous research suggested that non-Western individuals suppress anger more in intimate relationships when compared to Western individuals (Argyle et al., 1986). Therefore, we expected that the interethnic differences in suppression, anger, and aggression would be larger between non-Western and Western groups in interpersonal conflicts with intimate others than in conflicts with non-intimate others (*Hypothesis 2b*).

METHOD

Participants

The data were collected in January 2014 using the Immigrant panel of Centerdata in the Netherlands. The immigrant panel consists of a representative sample of immigrants and majority group members who participate in monthly internet surveys (Scherpenzeel & Das, 2010) and is an independent part of the LISS panel of the MESS project (Measurement and Experimentation in the Social Sciences; www.lissdata.nl). The current sample consisted of 1,378 participants: 456 Dutch majority group members, 445 immigrants from non-Western (e.g., Turkish and Moroccan Dutch), and 477 from Western countries (e.g., German and Belgian immigrants). We merged ethnic groups based on perceived cultural distance (Schalk-Soekar, Van de Vijver, & Hoogsteder, 2004) in order to obtain an adequate sample size for the statistical analyses. Ethnic groups

did not significantly differ in gender composition (see Table 1 for more details on all demographic variables). The age varied from 16 to 88 years; non-Western immigrants were significantly younger ($F(2, 1378) = 58.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$) and had on average a lower monthly net income ($F(2, 1378) = 21.32$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$) than Dutch majority and Western immigrants. Non-Western immigrants were also less educated than Western immigrants, $F(2, 1378) = 3.73$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Immigrant groups differed significantly in generational status; most non-Western immigrants belonged to the first generation (i.e., foreign born) compared to Western immigrants who were mainly second generation, $\chi^2(1, N = 922) = 26.16$, $p < .001$.

Measures

The questionnaires are administered only in Dutch in the immigrant panel as the Dutch proficiency is high among the panel members. Instruments and data can be retrieved from http://www.lissdata.nl/dataarchive/study_units/view/.

Interpersonal Conflict Vignettes. Vignettes depicting conflicts with intimate and non-intimate others were used. Participants were asked to read the descriptions of four hypothetical interpersonal conflict scenarios (vignettes) and to answer the closed-ended questions regarding their expected anger experience, emotional suppression, and aggressive behaviors during these scenarios. All stimuli were presented in a fixed order. There were four types of conflicts presented in these vignettes, one type of conflict per vignette: conflict with parents (situation 1), a good friend (situation 2), a boss (situation 3), and an (unknown) shop assistant (situation 4). In this way we were able to capture the conflicts with intimate (1 & 2) and non-intimate others (3 & 4). The conflict scenarios described in the vignettes were selected from our previous study on motivations associated with emotional suppression conducted among members of the same Immigrant Panel (Stupar, Van de Vijver, & Fontaine, 2014c). The vignettes were tested in a pilot study among a convenience sample of 242 participants with diverse ethnic background, not members of the Internet Panel. We found there that the vignettes were easily recognized and understood by participants from different ethnic backgrounds.

Table 1 *Means, Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) per Ethnic Group and Significant Effect Sizes of their Differences (Results from MANCOVA)*

	Dutch Majority	Western Dutch	Non-Western Dutch	Partial Eta Square (η_p^2)
Migrant generation				
First	-	208 (44%)	269 (60%)	-
Second	-	268 (56%)	176 (40%)	-
Gender (frequency)				
Male	224 (49%)	215 (45%)	207 (46%)	-
Female	232 (51%)	262 (55%)	238 (54%)	-
Age	49.00 (16.29)$_a$	52.00 (16.52)$_c$	40.00 (14.63)$_b$	.09***
Education level	3.73 (1.55)$_{a,b}$	3.91 (1.58)$_{a,b}$	3.62 (1.56)$_a$	.01*
Gross monthly income (in Euro)	1,571 (0-10,007)$_a$	1,665 (0-33,274)$_a$	1,141 (0-4,600)$_b$	.03***
Anger parent	15.87 (4.58)$_b$	15.49 (4.42)$_b$	14.48 (5.09)$_a$	.02***
Anger friend	14.72 (4.13)	14.89 (3.94)	14.32 (4.80)	.00
Anger boss	16.91 (3.64)$_b$	16.77 (3.91)$_b$	15.90 (5.04)$_a$	.01**
Anger shop assistant	17.26 (3.33)$_b$	17.31 (3.86)$_b$	16.33 (4.88)$_a$	.01*
Suppression parent	9.94 (4.82)	10.46 (5.12)	10.62 (5.40)	.00
Suppression friend	8.62 (4.45)$_b$	9.12 (4.23)$_b$	9.70 (5.05)$_a$	.01**
Suppression boss	10.46 (4.60)	10.96 (4.66)	10.61 (5.05)	.00
Suppression shop assistant	7.72 (4.26)	7.99 (4.28)	7.80 (4.65)	.00
Verbal aggression parent	5.78 (3.21)$_b$	5.74 (3.28)$_b$	5.42 (3.44)$_a$	.01*
Verbal aggression friend	5.75 (3.01)	5.76 (2.90)	5.98 (3.37)	.00
Verbal aggression boss	6.27 (3.41)	6.40 (3.48)	6.34 (3.76)	.00
Verbal aggression shop assistant	6.71 (3.25)	6.97 (3.44)	7.15 (3.83)	.00
Behavioral aggression parent	3.16 (1.75)	3.17 (1.90)	3.18 (2.04)	.00
Behavioral aggression friend	3.25 (1.91)	3.39 (2.14)	3.39 (2.16)	.00
Behavioral aggression boss	4.43 (2.84)	4.37 (2.88)	4.56 (3.03)	.00
Behavioral aggression shop assistant	3.82 (2.47)	3.84 (2.52)	4.11 (3.01)	.00
Relational aggression parent	5.09 (2.79)	5.05 (3.01)	4.54 (2.93)	.00
Relational aggression friend	7.56 (3.32)	8.04 (3.17)	7.38 (3.68)	.00
Relational aggression boss	7.69 (3.13)	7.88 (3.29)	7.48 (3.44)	.00
Relational aggression shop assistant	9.98 (3.04)	10.26 (2.81)	9.45 (3.04)	.00
Aggression total parent	14.03 (6.16)	13.97 (6.47)	13.13 (6.57)	.00
Aggression total friend	16.55 (6.40)	17.18 (6.20)	16.75 (7.08)	.00
Aggression total boss	18.38 (7.44)	18.62 (7.55)	18.38 (8.29)	.00
Aggression total shop assistant	20.33 (6.72)	21.04 (7.08)	20.40 (8.23)	.00

Note. Education level varied from not having education at all (0) to university degree (6). Monthly net income is given in Euros (range). Means with different subscripts are significantly different (Bonferroni post hoc test).
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

Chapter 5

Anger. We asked participants to report how likely it was that they would experience anger, irritation, and rage in the situations described in four vignettes. Items were adapted from the GRID (Fontaine, Scherer, & Soriano, 2013). Response categories varied from 1 (*highly unlikely*) to 7 (*highly likely*). Our emotion assessment is based on the hierarchical organization of the cognitive structure of emotions (Fontaine et al., 2013; Fontaine, Poortinga, Setiadi, & Markam, 2010; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987) where anger is categorized as a basic emotion category that consists of several subordinate-level categories, such as irritation, rage, and anger.

Emotional suppression. We adjusted three items on emotional suppression from the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003) in order to make the items applicable to the vignettes. An example of an adjusted suppression item was "During this situation…I would keep my emotions to myself". The response categories varied from 1 (*highly unlikely*) to 7 (*highly likely*).

Aggression. As we could not find a single aggression questionnaire that includes verbal, behavioral, and relational aspects of aggression, we adapted the items from the Reactive-Proactive Aggression Questionnaire (Raine et al., 2006), Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Warren, 2000), and BDHI-D (Lange, Dehghani, & Beurs, 1995). The final aggression scale consisted of six items regarding behavioral, verbal, and relational oriented aggression that would occur after the conflict took place.[1] The examples of items are: "After the conflict took place…I would break something that is from my parents/friend/boss/shop assistant" (behavioral aggression), "During the conflict situation…I would say something that would hurt (my) parents/friend/boss/shop assistant" (verbal aggression), and "After the conflict took place…I would avoid (my) parents/friend/boss/shop assistant as much as possible" (relational aggression). The response categories varied from 1 (*highly unlikely*) to 7 (*highly likely*).

All scales used in the current study had moderate to high internal consistencies in all ethnic groups (Cronbach's alpha values varied from .74 to .88).

[1] The first version of Aggression scale consisted of nine items across three aggression dimensions (verbal, behavioral, and relational aggression). We confirmed the three-factor solution using CFA. However, three items did not differentiate well as they had strong cross-loadings. Therefore we deleted them from further analyses. The deleted items referred to "threatening the other", "gossiping about the other", and "showing understanding for other".

RESULTS

Multigroup Path Models (Hypotheses 1a and 1b)

We tested whether emotional suppression is related to aggression through anger in four interpersonal conflict situations (parents, friend, boss, and shop assistant) in a multigroup analysis. Indicators of emotional suppression and anger were the six scale items. Aggression was constructed based on three latent variables: verbal, behavioral, and relational aggression where each aggression subscale consisted of item indicators (two items per subscale). As expected, the results showed that the hypothesized mediation model was the best fitting model as measured by the lowest AIC and BIC values of the hypothesized model for three of the four vignettes (*Hypothesis 1a* is confirmed). This pattern holds in all ethnic groups (*Hypothesis 1b* is confirmed). So, we found support for a model in which anger fully mediates the relations between emotional suppression and aggression in the parent, friend, and shop assistant conflict situations (see Table 2 and Figures 1, 2, and 4). In all three conflicts we found that more emotional suppression was associated with less experienced anger and more anger was related with more aggression. Moreover, in the conflict situation with the shop assistant we found a strong additional direct relationship between anger and relational aggression; this relationship was positive and of a similar size as the relationship between the anger and aggression latent factor. However, we could not confirm the proposed mediation model in the conflict situation with the boss. In this situation, emotional suppression was unrelated to anger, and not only anger, but also suppression were both positively and directly related to aggression (see Figure 3).

We explored all possible variations of models where the “causal” order of variables was different from our hypothesized model (with and without mediation included). We treated emotional suppression, anger, and aggression as latent variables; each of these latent variables was used as predictor, mediator, and outcome. We found that the emotional suppression—anger—aggression model was globally the best fitting model.

Mean Group Differences across Contexts (Hypotheses 2a and 2b)

We conducted a Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) to test interethnic differences (three levels: Dutch majority, non-Western, and Western immigrants) in emotional suppression, anger, verbal, behavioral, and relational aggression, with age, education level, and net month income as covariates (see Table 1 for more details on significant effects of ethnicity on variables). The results showed that the multivariate effect of ethnic group was significant (Wilks’ Lambda = .94, $F(40, 1378) = 2.00$, $p < .001$,

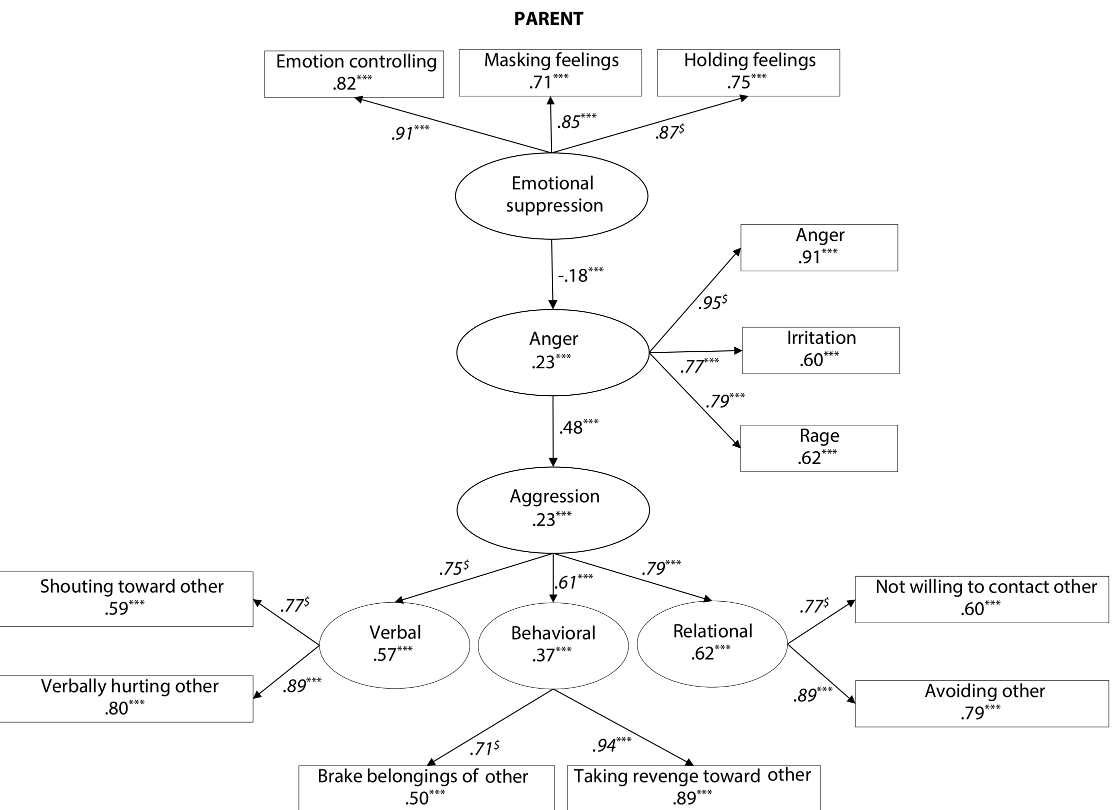
η_p^2 = .03). When further examining the univariate effects, we found small significant interethnic differences in five variables (*Hypothesis 2a* is partially confirmed). Non-Western immigrants scored lower on anger toward parent ($F(2, 1378) = 10.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$), boss ($F(2, 1378) = 5.52$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$), and shop assistant ($F(2, 1378) = 3.24$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$) than the two other groups did. Moreover, non-Western immigrants scored significantly higher on suppression of conflict with friend ($F(2, 1378) = 6.32$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$), but also on verbal aggression with parents ($F(2, 1378) = 3.16$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$) compared to all other ethnic groups. We could not confirm interethnic differences in total aggression scores across interpersonal conflict contexts.

Table 2 *Results of the Multigroup Invariance Analysis of the Hypothesized Mediation Model*

Model	χ^2 (*df*)	CFI	RMSEA (CI)	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ*df*
		Parents			
Unconstrained	601.594 (147)***	.943	.047 (.044-.051)		
Measurement weights	636.000 (161)***	.941	.046 (.043-.050)	34.405**	14
Structural weights	*657.078 (169)****	*.939*	*.046 (.042-.050)*	*21.078***	*8*
Structural residuals	708.120 (181)***	.934	.046 (.042-.050)	51.042***	12
Measurement residuals	784.075 (205)***	.928	.045 (.042-.049)	75.955***	24
		Friend			
Unconstrained	579.202 (147)***	.943	.046 (.042-.050)		
Measurement weights	622.107 (161)***	.939	.046 (.042-.049)	42.905***	14
Structural weights	*632.807 (169)****	*.939*	*.045 (.042-.048)*	*10.700*	*8*
Structural residuals	677.331 (181)***	.935	.045 (.042-.048)	44.525***	12
Measurement residuals	785.452 (205)***	.924	.045 (.042-.049)	108.121***	24
		Boss			
Unconstrained	443.889 (144)***	.962	.039 (.035-.043)		
Measurement weights	469.077 (158)***	.961	.038 (.034-.042)	25.189*	14
Structural weights	*486.872 (168)****	*.960*	*.037 (.033-.041)*	*17.795*	*8*
Structural residuals	568.296 (180)***	.951	.040 (.036-.043)	81.424***	12
Measurement residuals	630.082 (204)***	.947	.039 (.036-.042)	61.787***	24
		Shop assistant			
Unconstrained	511.101 (147)***	.957	.042 (.038-.046)		
Measurement weights	560.686 (161)***	.953	.042 (.039-.046)	49.585***	14
Structural weights	*572.729 (171)****	*.953*	*.041 (.038-.045)*	*12.043*	*10*
Structural residuals	689.494 (181)***	.940	.045 (.042-.049)	116.765***	10
Measurement residuals	762.449 (205)***	.934	.044 (.041-.048)	72.955***	24

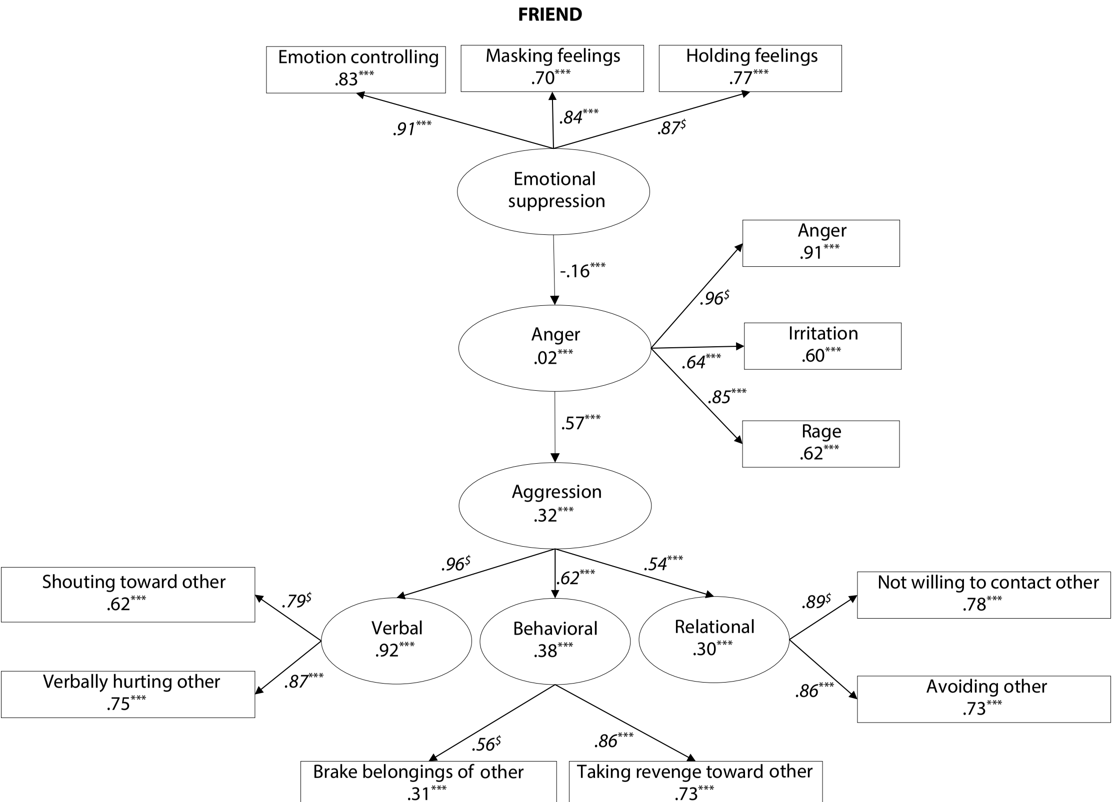
Note. Most restrictive model with a good fit is printed in italics. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square of Approximation. CI = Confidence Interval.
**$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Figure 1. A path model of emotional suppression, anger, and aggression in parent-context



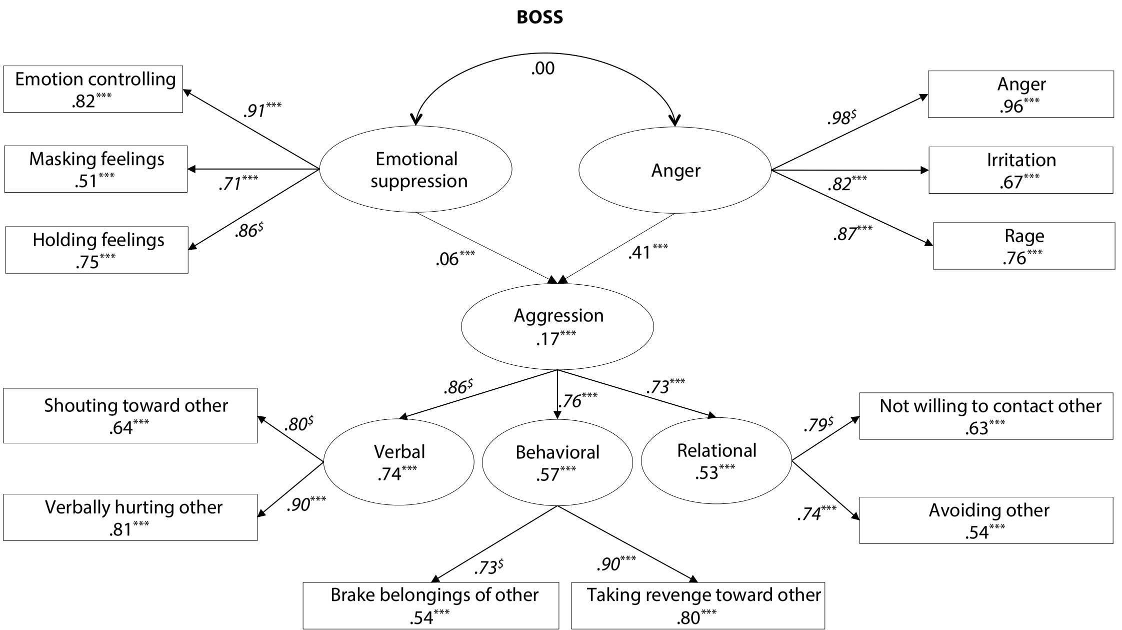
Note. Standardized regression coefficients are given next to the arrows. Factor loadings are printed in italics, next to the arrows. Numbers below construct names represent proportions of variance explained.
$^{***}p < .001$. $^{\$}$Loading fixed at a value of 1 in the non-standardized solution.

Figure 2. A path model of emotional suppression, anger, and aggression in friend-context



Note. Standardized regression coefficients are given next to the arrows. Factor loadings are printed in italics, next to the arrows. Numbers below construct names represent proportions of variance explained.
$^{***}p < .001$. $^{\$}$Loading fixed at a value of 1 in the non-standardized solution.

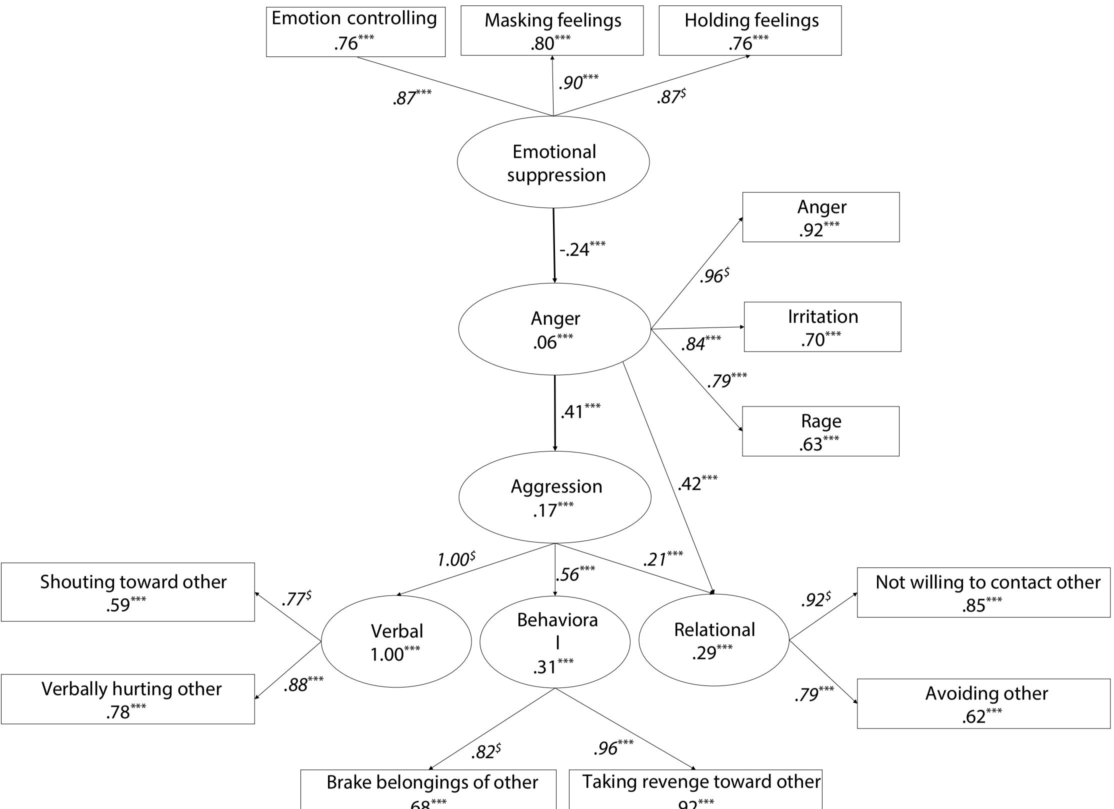
Figure 3. A path model of emotional suppression, anger, and aggression in boss-context



Note. Standardized regression coefficients are given next to the arrows. Factor loadings are printed in italics, next to the arrows. Numbers below construct names represent proportions of variance explained.

$^{***}p < .001$. $^{\$}$Loading fixed at a value of 1 in the non-standardized solution.

Figure 4. A path model of emotional suppression, anger, and aggression in shop assistant-context



Note. Standardized regression coefficients are given next to the arrows. Factor loadings are printed in italics, next to the arrows. Numbers below construct names represent proportions of variance explained.

$^{***}p < .001$. $^{\$}$Loading fixed at a value of 1 in the non-standardized solution.

Chapter 5

Additionally, we examined the significance of the two-way interaction between ethnicity and the context of the conflict (intimate versus non-intimate). This in order to test the *Hypothesis 2b* according to which interethnic differences (specifically between non-Western and Western groups) on suppression, anger, and aggression would be stronger in intimate context when compared to non-intimate context. Weights of 1, -.5, and -.5 were used for the non-Western immigrants, Western immigrants, and Dutch majority group members, respectively (with age, education, and net income as covariates). The contrast yielded a significant, yet small interaction effect only for suppression, $F(1, 1378) = 17.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. The scores on suppression tendency were higher in non-Western immigrants in intimate contexts (conflict with parent and friend) when compared to the scores in both Western immigrants and Dutch majority within the same context. However, this difference in suppression was not present in a non-intimate context (conflict with boss and shop assistant). All other contrasts of interaction effects regarding anger and types of aggression (verbal, behavioral, and relational) were non-significant. Therefore, *Hypothesis 2b* was not confirmed for any dependent variable, with the exception of suppression.

DISCUSSION

We investigated interethnic differences and similarities in emotional suppression, experienced anger, and aggression, and their interrelatedness in interpersonal conflicts with intimate and non-intimate others in immigrants and majority group members in the Netherlands. We found that a stronger tendency to suppress anger in conflict situations is related with less experienced anger which is associated with less aggression (*Hypothesis 1a* was confirmed). Our findings suggest that ethnic groups do not differ in these relationships (*Hypothesis 1b* was also confirmed) and that the mechanisms underlying aggression in interpersonal conflicts are similar across the ethnic groups studied.

An interesting finding is that the hypothesized mediation model was most applicable to the intimate contexts whereas the relationships between suppression, anger, and aggression were slightly different in non-intimate contexts. Anger was strongly related to aggression in the conflict with the boss, whereas the relationship between suppression and aggression was direct, yet very weak compared to anger-aggression relationship (this applied for all ethnic groups that we investigated). This finding could indicate that in intimate relationships people try not only to bring the expression of their emotion in line with personal and social expectations, but also the way they feel about the situation, while the regulation attempts are more exclusively focused on the

actual behavior rather than on the affective experience of the situation in important non-intimate relationships. Another interesting observation in the current study is a direct effect of anger on relational aggression in the shop context that also points to context specificity. In socially distant contexts, such as shopping, where it is fairly easy to avoid future contact, people are more likely to show aggression as the social cost is low (they do not need to preserve the relationships with the conflicting party).

The results could not support our expectations regarding interethnic differences in suppression, anger, and aggression (*Hypothesis 2a*). In particular, we found that ethnic groups are similar on suppression and aggression across four interpersonal conflicts, while non-Western groups experienced more anger than the other groups although the differences were very small. Additionally, we could also not confirm that interethnic differences in anger and aggression are larger in interpersonal conflicts with intimate other than in conflicts with non-intimate other with exception of suppression (*Hypothesis 2b* is partially confirmed). As expected, we found that non-Western immigrants have a stronger tendency to suppress their anger in intimate relationships when compared to Western groups (Western immigrants and Dutch majority); however, this interethnic distinction in suppression is not found in a non-intimate context (Argyle et al., 1986). This may be due to the fact that non-Western immigrants hold stronger family orientation (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2008) that is associated with higher emotional suppression in order to preserve social harmony, connectedness, and solidarity among family members. However, the effects in the current study were very small; therefore, we can argue whether our theoretical expectations based on the framework of Markus and Kitayama (1991) could not be confirmed within the cultural context in the Netherlands.

There are several possible explanations for the small (or even absent) interethnic differences found in suppression, anger, and aggression (and their interrelationships). First, the sample in current study consisted probably of well-adjusted immigrants. In order to be able to participate in these studies, the participants needed a fair level of mastery of the Dutch language, which is in line with an idea of more adjustment of these immigrants even when non-Western immigrants in our sample were usually younger and had lower education and income levels than Dutch majority. Among non-Western immigrants who are not well adjusted to the Dutch society (and do not speak Dutch well), the interethnic differences could be much stronger. Second, and related to former explanations, Leersnyder et al. (2011) suggested that immigrants who engage themselves in relationships with mainstreamers show higher emotional acculturation compared to immigrants that were engaged less in the host culture. It may be the case that our immigrant sample was somehow more engaged with the

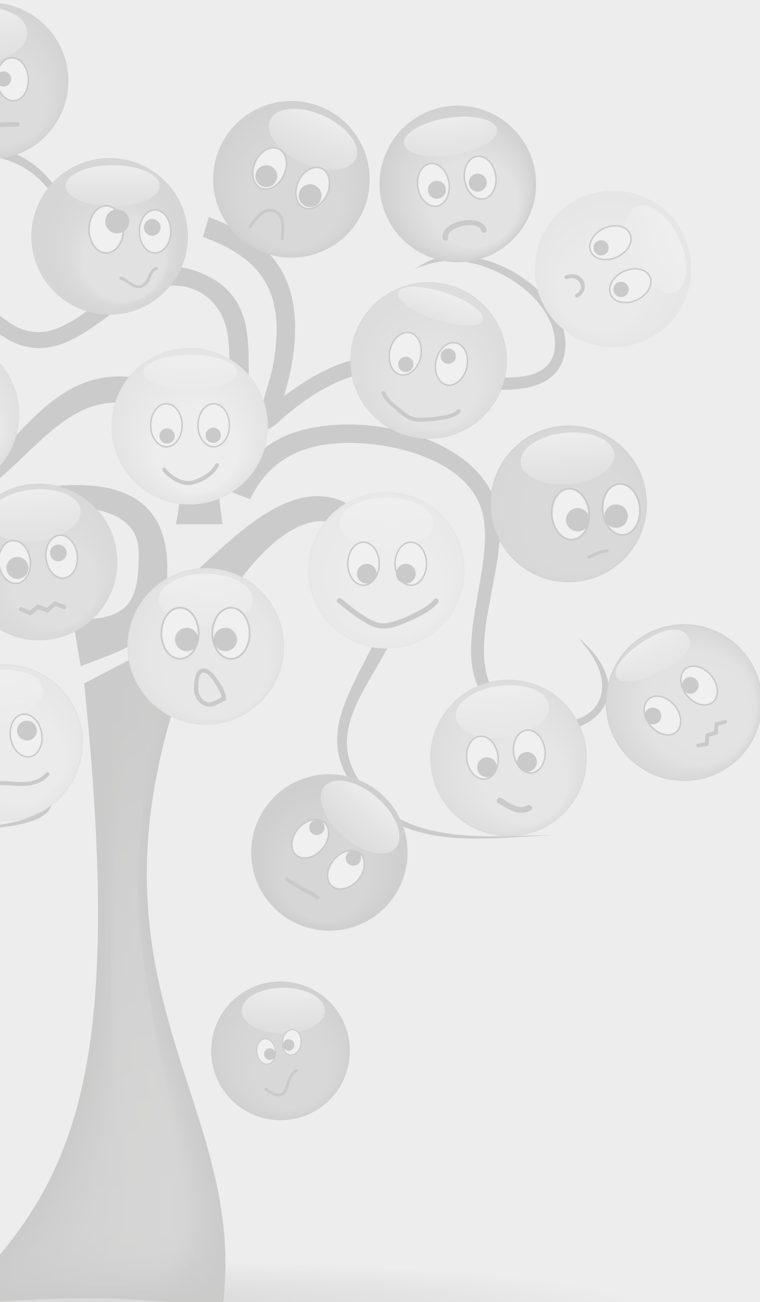
members of the host culture. Inclusion of less engaged immigrants would probably lead to stronger interethnic differences in emotion regulation. Note that engagement with the members of the host cultures can be also seen as a part of adjustment, together with acquisition of host language. Third, it is possible that the previous research mainly focused on the ethnic groups that are extremely culturally distant from each other such as majority members living in US versus majorities living in East Asia (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Samples in the current study may be culturally less distant from each other than those used in previous studies. Finally, we addressed specific behaviors in our study and we found stronger cross-cultural differences in general tendencies than in specific behaviors, similar to previous studies conducted within the immigrant panel (Stupar et al., 2014a, b). Therefore, it is not unlikely that a study that would deal with more normative aspects of conflicts (such as the question of how people in a culture are supposed to deal with interpersonal conflicts) could have shown more expected cross-cultural differences.

It is a novel aspect of the current study that we investigated interethnic differences and similarities in suppression-aggression relationship in two types of interpersonal conflicts, intimate versus non-intimate, in a large sample of immigrants and majority members in the Netherlands. We found evidence for the invariance of the suppression-aggression relationship in interpersonal conflicts regardless of the intimacy of the relationships and the ethnic background. Although hierarchy and obeying authorities are usually more emphasized in non-Western cultures and non-Western groups are therefore expected to avoid the conflicts with others, our data suggest that non-Western immigrants do not differ in management of anger in interpersonal conflict situations from Western groups.

The current study has some limitations that could be dealt with in future research. Our study is correlational in nature and therefore, our findings may not reveal causal relationships. Future research would benefit from manipulating distinct interpersonal conflicts in different ethnic groups in the laboratory. Considering that there is a large gap in emotion literature on the influence of situational context on cultural specific dimensions of aggression, we strongly recommend exploring the influence of conflict specificity in aggression mechanisms. It would be interesting to go beyond self-reports and examine whether the established associations can be confirmed in real conflicts.

Chapter 6

General Conclusion



CONCLUSION

Do immigrants regulate their emotions differently from majority group members? In order to answer this question, the current dissertation focused on eight specific research questions that were investigated in four empirical studies:

What are the interethnic differences and similarities between Dutch majority group members and Dutch immigrants in:

1. emotional suppression and well-being (Research Question 1) and in the relationship between emotional suppression and well-being (Research Question 2);
2. the associations of the valence and intensity of the emotional experience with suppression, reappraisal, and social sharing (Research question 3) and in the salience of suppression, reappraisal, and social sharing (Research Question 4);
3. motivations underlying emotional suppression (Research Question 5) and in the relationship of self-oriented and other-oriented suppression motivation with internalizing and externalizing negative emotions (Research Question 6);
4. suppression, experience of anger, and display of aggression in intimate and non-intimate conflict situations (Research Question 7) and in the relationship between suppression, anger, and aggression in these conflicts (Research Question 8).

The current findings suggest that non-Western immigrants are very similar to Western immigrants and Dutch majority group members in emotion regulation processes. Despite the theoretical expectation of substantial differences in emotion regulation between western and non-western participants, no substantial differences were found in none of the four studies of the current dissertation. Although significant, only small interethnic differences in mean scores were found in emotional suppression (Chapters 2 and 3), reappraisal (Chapter 3), depressive symptoms and mood disturbance (Chapter 2), emotion valence (Chapter 3), other-oriented motivation underlying emotional suppression (Chapter 4), anxiety/terror, compassion/sympathy, guilt/shame, and hate/humiliation (Chapter 4), and anger within conflict situations (Chapter 5). Most of these findings are in line with the framework that relates the experience of engaged and disengaged emotions to an independence versus interdependent self-construction (Kitayama et al., 2000). In line with engaged-disengaged emotion framework, non-Western immigrants used more reappraisal and suppression than Western groups, as these strategies are usually used to diminish emotional expression; low emotional expression is typical for non-Western interdependent societies where one of the primarily goals is to preserve social harmony.

The question that arises now is: Why could I not find (substantial) interethnic differences in emotion regulation processes even if previous emotion research suggested that people from non-Western cultures regulate their emotions different from people originating from Western cultures (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Mesquita, 2001)? There may be several possible explanations for the absent interethnic differences between Dutch natives and immigrants as represented in the LISS panel and that are used in the current dissertation.

First, the samples in current studies consisted probably of well-adjusted immigrants. In order to be able to participate in these studies, the participants needed a fair level of mastery of the Dutch language, which is in line with an idea of more adjustment of these immigrants even when non-Western immigrants in our samples were usually younger and had lower education and income levels than Dutch majority. Among non-Western immigrants who are not well adjusted to the Dutch society (and do not speak Dutch well), the interethnic differences could be much stronger. Second, and related to former explanations, Leersnyder et al. (2011) suggested that immigrants who engage in relationships with mainstreamers show higher emotional acculturation compared to immigrants that were engaged less in the host culture. It may be the case that our immigrant samples were somehow more engaged with the members of the host culture. Inclusion of less engaged immigrants would probably lead to stronger interethnic differences in emotion regulation. Note that engagement with the members of the host cultures can be also seen as a part of adjustment, together with acquisition of host language. Finally, it is possible that the previous research mainly focused on the ethnic groups that are extremely culturally distant from each other such as majority members living in US versus majorities living in East Asia (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Samples in the current studies may be culturally less distant from each other than those used in previous studies.

Implications for Future Research

The current dissertation addresses various questions regarding emotion regulation in immigrants and majorities. Let me return to the example of Samira (See Chapter 1). What can Samira do to become again socially accepted by her (native) Dutch friends? Should she force herself to show positive emotions to her friends or should she remain suppressing these? Also, was Samira always like this or did her emotional suppression increase during the years spent in the Netherlands? The current findings suggest that Samira's emotional suppression has probably nothing to do with her cultural background and it is probably closely related to poor psychological well-being.

It is clear that if she continues to suppress her emotions, her well-being may be even more jeopardized (Chapter 2). Although it may be true that Samira regulates and thus suppresses her emotions more than her Dutch native friends (Chapters 2 and 3), and that she is taking the others into consideration when deciding whether to suppress her emotions (Chapter 4), Samira's emotional suppression has probably its roots in more personal reasons that may be related to some external factors and that have nothing to do with her cultural background. That would imply that Samira is similar to her Dutch native friends in how she regulates her emotions and I should search for the causes of her (socially dysfunctional) emotional suppression in Samira's personal experiences or even her individual characteristics such as personality. For example, Packman et al. (2005) found interethnic differences in personality traits where non-Western groups scored higher on neuroticism. As neuroticism is positively related to aggression (Ann Bettencourt et al., 2006), it is possible that non-Western individuals are less able to suppress their anger than Western individuals. Additionally, extroverted people use more reappraisal than introverted people (Matsumoto, 2006). Therefore, inclusion of personality in the future emotion research may lead to better explanation of interethnic differences in emotion regulation. A challenge of future studies would be to investigate in which way emotional dysregulation can be prevented regardless ethnic background. An important question to be answered is at which point exactly functional emotion regulation becomes (switches to) dysfunctional and what are interethnic differences and similarities in that process.

From a more theoretical perspective, it would also be interesting to investigate whether the explicit knowledge of emotional regulation in mainstreamers increases the use of emotion regulation (as shown by Dutch majority members) in non-Western immigrants in their actual behavior. The current dissertation did not take into account possible discrepancies in explicit knowledge of emotion regulation and the actual regulating behaviors; the current findings may suggest that emotional acculturation may have taken place on the cognitive level, but not at the behavioral level. In future studies, the distinction can be made between cognitive and behaviorally oriented emotional acculturation where the immigrant's intentions to acquire the similar emotion regulation as the majority members can be emphasized (theory of reasoned action; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and distinguished from actual emotion regulation. Obviously, the experimental approach creates much more opportunities for the investigation of emotion regulation behaviors, especially in different social context that can be easier taken into account during the manipulations than in self-report assessment that was used in the current dissertation. Nevertheless, the current findings suggest interethnic similarities between immigrants and majority group members in self-reported emotion

regulation processes within a single country and as such, the current dissertation adds a small yet innovative step in cross-cultural emotion research.

Practical Implications

One may ask what can I do with the results of my dissertation in everyday practices? Previous research demonstrated that emotion regulation is a very important aspect of mental health because people who experience (intense) negative emotions for a longer period of time are prone to develop psychopathology compared to people who are more able to regulate their negative emotions (e.g., Beauchaine, Gatzke-Kopp, & Mead, 2007). Specifically, emotion dysregulation is a key feature of most DSM-V (axes I and II) syndromes, such as depression and anxiety. However, there is paucity of interethnic research delineating mechanisms behind emotion regulation in immigrant groups that are so often associated with heightened depressive and anxiety symptoms compared to majority groups in the Netherlands (De Wit et al., 2008; Schrier et al., 2009; Van der Wurff et al., 2004). Therefore, the main practical implication of the current results might be related to clinical practices. Because the current findings demonstrated that (non-Western and Western) immigrants do not differ from Dutch majority group members in emotion regulation mechanisms, it is questionable whether it is always necessary to develop culturally tailored psychological interventions for non-Western immigrants groups that are well adjusted to Dutch culture and that are clearly overrepresented in mental health care compared to less adjusted immigrants. Last years, the Netherlands witnessed the development of many so called diversity-related interventions regarding distinct mental health disorders (mainly depression and anxiety) where the starting point is usually that non-Western immigrants differ per definition from Dutch majority members in their emotion regulation. However, the current results may implicitly suggest that having higher depression or anxiety symptoms may not be related to interethnic differences in emotion regulation, but to other factors that I did not investigate and that are more related to particular socioeconomic environment of an individual; this effect may be even more stronger for the less adjusted immigrants that I unfortunately could not approach in my studies. To sum up, future clinical practices may benefit from developing the methods that are more focusing on participation of immigrant groups that are not well-adjusted (e.g., who do not master well the Dutch language and do not socially participate) in treatment or prevention programs as these groups are often underrepresented in the mental health care system in the Netherlands.

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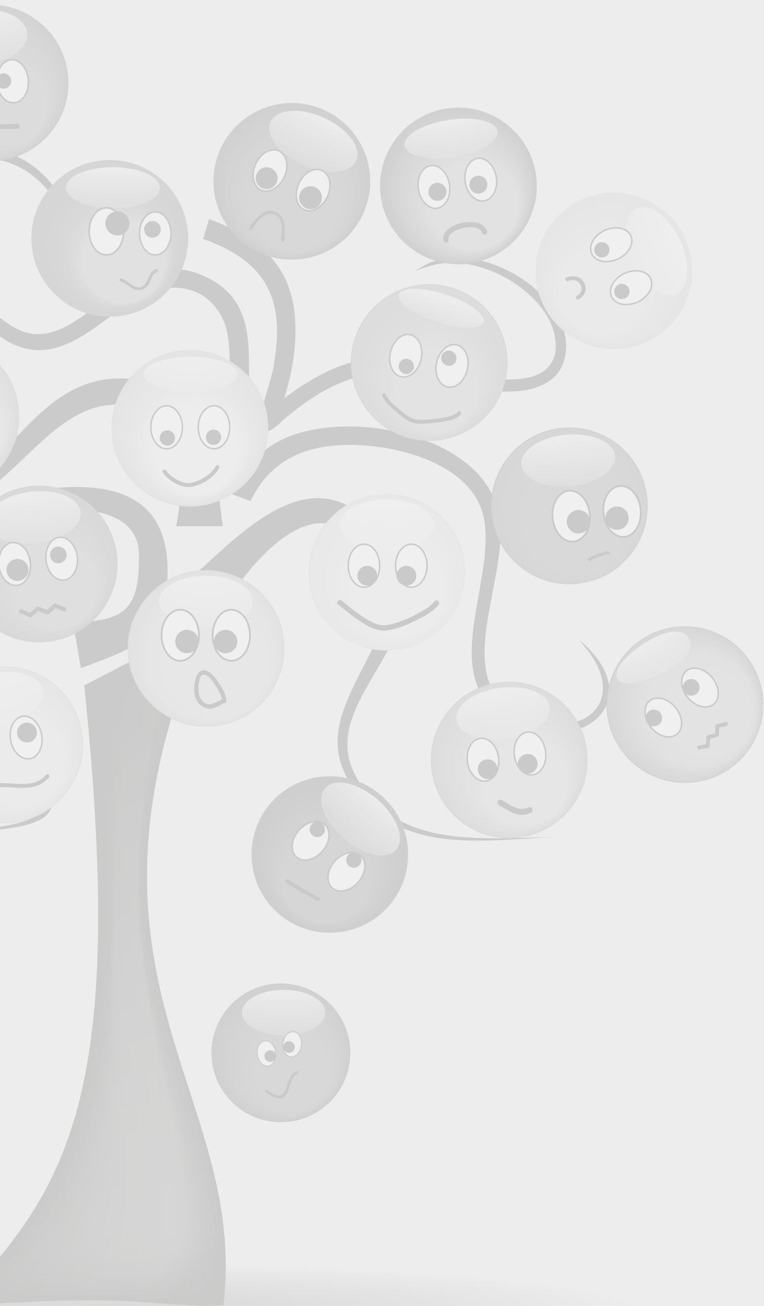

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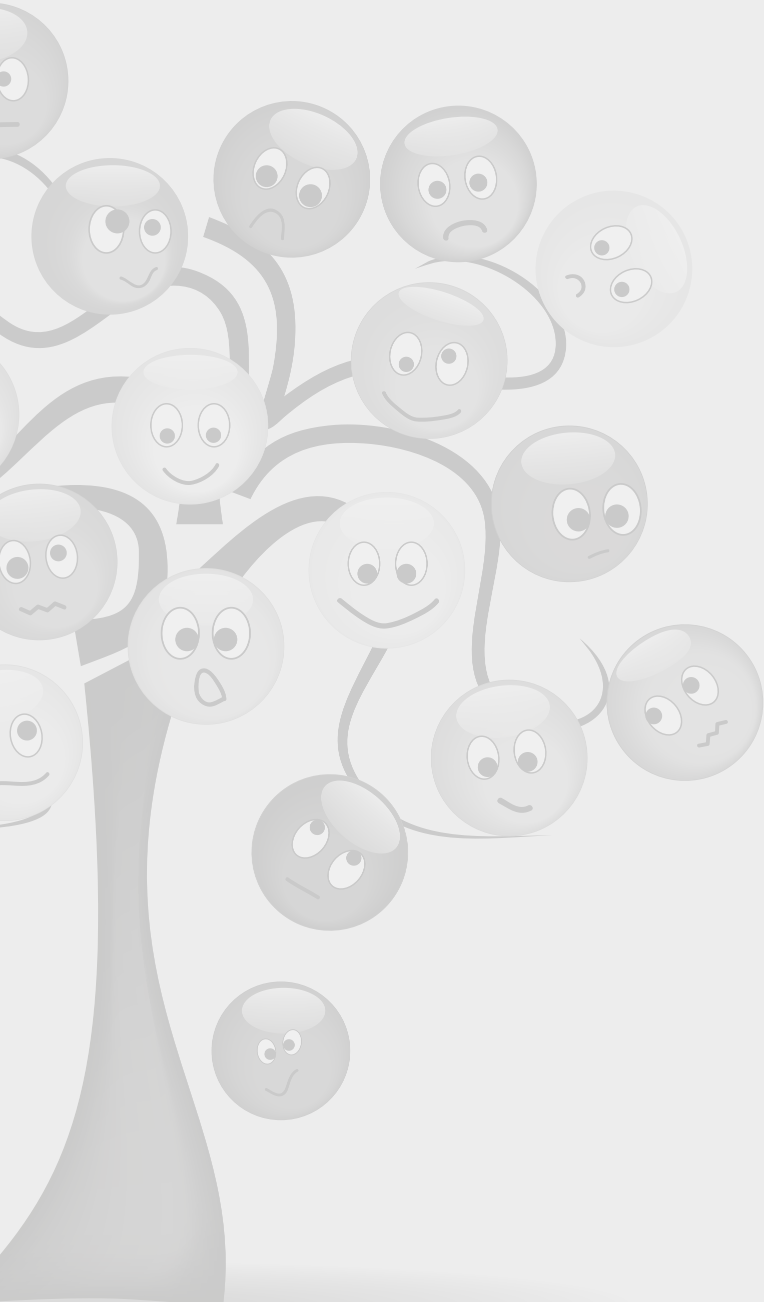
Summary



The current dissertation deals with interethnic differences and similarities in emotion regulation. I have tried to answer whether immigrants in the Netherlands regulate their emotions differently from majority group members?

In Chapter 2, I explored interethnic differences and similarities in emotional suppression, well-being and their interrelationship (Research Question 1). I proposed and tested a model in which suppression of specific emotional experiences (suppressive behaviors during interactions with others) mediates the relationship between emotional suppression tendency (intention to suppress emotions) and emotion regulation outcome of well-being (Research Question 2). As expected, non-Western immigrants scored higher on emotional suppression tendency and lower on well-being than all other groups. The full mediation model was also supported in all ethnic groups. More emotional suppression tendency was associated with more suppression of specific emotional experiences in all groups. A negative, significant relationship was found between suppression of specific emotional experiences and well-being. However, interethnic differences in well-being could not be accounted for by differences in emotional suppression. It was concluded that non-Western immigrants have a strong general tendency to suppress their positive and negative emotions, presumably because expressing of intense emotions could disturb their social relationships. Ethnic groups did not differ in suppression of specific emotional experiences but this may be explained by earlier findings suggesting that differences between Dutch immigrants and majorities tend to be smaller in measures that are closer to actual behavior; for example, in previous research conducted in similar samples in the Netherlands, feelings of solidarity showed larger interethnic differences than actual sharing. Also important to note is that I found that both aspects of emotional suppression explain individual differences in well-being to some extent. However, interethnic differences in well-being do not seem to be related to either aspect of emotion suppression.

In Chapter 3, I investigated interethnic differences and similarities in how several emotion regulation strategies (reappraisal, suppression, and social sharing) can be predicted by two aspects of emotions, namely emotion valence and intensity (Research Question 3), and whether ethnic groups differ in these variables (Research Question 4). In a path model with latent variables, data confirmed that emotion regulation strategies were significantly and similarly related to emotion valence and intensity across the groups. As expected, negative emotions were more reappraised and suppressed than positive emotions. Intensity was positively related to social sharing and negatively related to reappraisal and suppression. The Dutch majority group scored lower on reappraisal than all non-Western groups, and lower on suppression than Turkish and Moroccan

immigrants. Also, the Dutch majority group scored higher on emotion valence than Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. Therefore, group differences reside more in mean scores on some components than in how antecedents are linked to regulation strategies. The lack of interethnic differences in the relationships between valence/intensity and emotion regulations could be the consequence of intensity of the reported emotions. The participants in the current study were asked to report the most important emotional events from the last week which may be associated with the most intense experienced emotions that may be perceived as socially disruptive in each group.

In Chapter 4, I explored interethnic similarities and differences in the motivations associated with emotional suppression (Research Question 5). Based on a framework of human values and internalization-externalization clinical model, I also expected that motivations to suppress negative emotions are either self- or other-oriented (Research Question 6) and the two-dimensional solution distinguishing self- and other-oriented motivations was indeed confirmed. As expected, non-Western immigrants scored higher on other-oriented motivation than Western immigrants (although this difference was, again, very small), but no interethnic differences were found in self-oriented motivation. Non-Western immigrants scored also higher on anxiety/terror, compassion/sympathy, guilt/shame, and hate/humiliation compared to Dutch majority members. Associations of negative emotions with self- and other-oriented motivation were the same in all ethnic groups. Sadness/gloominess was positively related to self-oriented motivation whereas anger/aggravation was positively related to other-oriented motivation. So, emotional suppression depends not only on social context (self-or other-oriented) but also on the type of emotions (experienced as internalized and externalized) and these relationships are not influenced by ethnic background.

In Chapter 5, I examined the interethnic differences and similarities in emotional suppression of anger and expression of aggression (Research Question 7) and the emotional suppression-anger-aggression relationship (Research Question 8) in two different conflict contexts (conflict with close and distant other) in a vignette study. I tested a mediation model in which anger mediates the relationship between emotional suppression and aggression in each of the interpersonal conflict situations (parents, friend, boss, and shop assistant). The hypothesized mediation model held in most of the interpersonal conflict situations. A model in which anger fully mediates the relations between emotional suppression as a predictor and aggression as an outcome was fully supported in all ethnic groups and within three conflict situations (parent, friend, and shop assistant). In all three conflicts, more emotional suppression was associated with less anger and more anger was further related with more aggression. However, in the

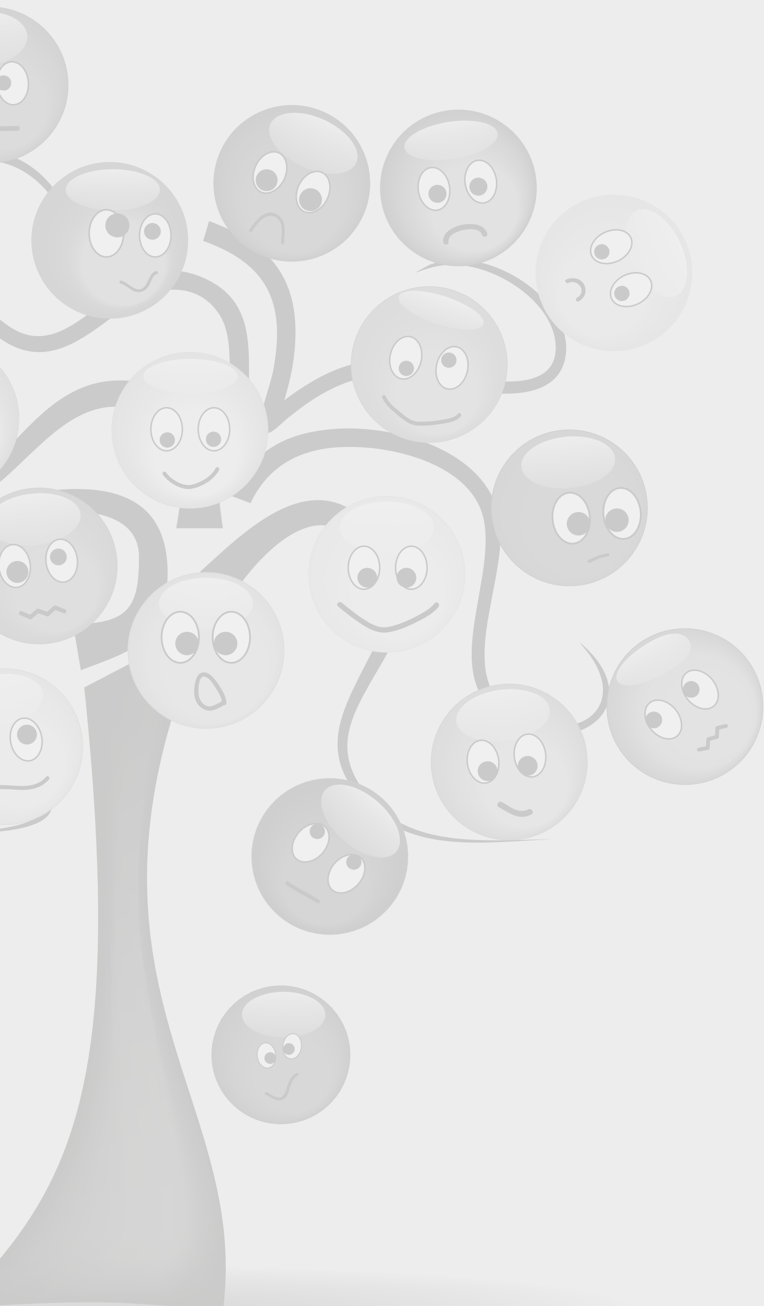
conflict situation with shop assistant, a strong additional straightforward relationship between anger and relational aggression is found; this relationship was positive and even strong as the relationship between anger and aggression latent factor. It should be noted that the proposed mediation model in conflict situation related to boss was not confirmed. In this situation, emotional suppression was unrelated to anger while both suppression and anger were positively directly related to aggression. Regarding the interethnic differences in mean scores, non-Western immigrants experienced less anger in these conflicts and these differences were again small. Based on my results, suppression-anger-aggression relationship remains the same in different conflict related situation across different ethnic groups in the Netherlands and this may be due to a high level of adjustment of immigrants in the panel to the Dutch culture.

Overall, non-Western and Western immigrants are similar in their emotion regulation to Dutch majority group members. Several reasons can be found for these findings.

First, the samples in current studies consisted probably of well-adjusted immigrants. In order to be able to participate in these studies, the participants needed a fair level of mastery of the Dutch language, which is in line with an idea of more adjustment of these immigrants even when non-Western immigrants in our samples were usually younger and had lower education and income levels than Dutch majority. Among non-Western immigrants who are not well adjusted to the Dutch society (and do not speak Dutch well), the interethnic differences could be much stronger. Second, and related to former explanations, Leersnyder et al. (2011) suggested that immigrants who engage themselves in relationships with mainstreamers show higher emotional acculturation compared to immigrants that were engaged less in the host culture. It may be the case that our immigrant samples were somehow more engaged with the members of the host culture. Inclusion of less engaged immigrants would probably lead to stronger interethnic differences in emotion regulation. Finally, it is possible that the previous research mainly focused on the ethnic groups that are extremely culturally distant from each other such as majority members living in US versus majorities living in East Asia (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Samples in the current studies may be culturally less distant from each other than those used in previous studies. Nevertheless, our data strongly suggest that emotion regulation processes are identical in immigrants and majority group members within a single cultural (Dutch) context.

Samenvatting

(Dutch Summary)



Reguleren immigranten hun emoties anders dan autochtonen in Nederland? Om deze vraag te kunnen beantwoorden, heb ik me in de huidige dissertatie gefocust op acht specifieke onderzoeksvragen die ik onderzocht heb middels vier empirische studies. Een nadere inleiding hierop is weergegeven in Hoofdstuk 1.

In Hoofdstuk 2 wordt eerst gekeken naar interetnische verschillen en gelijkenissen in emotionele suppressie, welzijn, en hun onderliggende relatie (Onderzoeksvraag 1). Ik heb een model getoetst waarbij suppressie van specifieke emotionele ervaringen (suppressiegedrag gedurende interactie met anderen) de relatie medieert tussen de neiging om emoties te onderdrukken en welzijn. Welzijn is hierbij geoperationaliseerd als depressieve en lichamelijke klachten, stemmingsproblematiek, en ontevredenheid met het leven (Onderzoeksvraag 2). Zoals verwacht hadden niet-Westerse immigranten een hogere neiging om emoties te onderdrukken en een lagere score op welzijn in vergelijking met alle andere groepen (Westerse immigranten en autochtonen). Het mediatiemodel werd ook volledig bevestigd in alle etnische groepen. Een sterkere tendens om emoties te onderdrukken was geassocieerd met een hogere suppressie van specifieke emotionele ervaringen in alle groepen (de mediatie was volledig). Een negatieve, significante relatie werd gevonden tussen suppressie van specifieke emotionele ervaringen en welzijn. Echter, interetnische verschillen in welzijn konden niet verklaard worden door verschillen in emotionele suppressie. Niet-Westerse immigranten hebben derhalve een sterke algemene neiging om hun positieve en negatieve emoties te onderdrukken, omdat expressie van intense emoties hun sociale relaties zou kunnen verstoren. Etnische groepen verschilden onderling niet ten aanzien van suppressie van specifieke emotionele ervaringen, maar dit kan verklaard worden door eerder onderzoek dat in Nederland uitgevoerd is onder een vergelijkbare onderzoekspopulatie waar gesuggereerd werd dat verschillen tussen Nederlandse immigranten en autochtonen kleiner zijn in de maten die actuele gedragingen pretenderen te meten. Tevens is een bevinding van belang dat beide aspecten van emotionele suppressie (algemene neiging om emoties te onderdrukken en concrete onderdrukking in specifieke situaties) voor een klein deel individuele verschillen in welzijn verklarenn. Echter, interetnische verschillen in welzijn lijken niet gerelateerd te zijn aan beide aspecten van emotionele suppressie.

In Hoofdstuk 3 heb ik onderzocht of immigranten verschillen van autochtonen in de voorspelling van diverse emotie regulatie strategieën (her-evalueren, suppressie en het sociaal delen van emoties) door emotionele valentie en intensiteit (Onderzoeksvraag 3) en of er interetnische verschillen zijn in de onderzochte variabelen (Onderzoeksvraag 4). Middels pad model met latente variabelen is bevestigd dat emotie regulatie strategieën

significant en op dezelfde wijze gerelateerd waren aan de emotionele valentie en intensiteit in alle groepen. Zoals verwacht werden negatieve emoties meer opnieuw geëvalueerd en onderdrukt dan positieve emoties. De emotionele intensiteit was positief gerelateerd aan het sociaal delen van emoties en negatief gerelateerd aan her-evaluatie en suppressie. Autochtonen scoorden lager op her-evaluatie dan alle niet-Westerse groepen, en lager op suppressie dan Turkse en Marokkaanse immigranten. Daarnaast scoorden autochtonen hoger op emotionele valentie dan Turkse en Marokkaanse immigranten. Er waren meer groepsverschillen aanwezig in de gemiddelde scores van de componenten van emoties dan in de relatie tussen deze componenten en afzonderlijke emotie regulatie strategieën. Een gebrek aan interetnische verschillen in de relaties tussen valentie/intensiteit en emotie regulatie strategieën kan een consequentie zijn van de intensiteit van de gerapporteerde emoties. Aan de deelnemers werd namelijk gevraagd om de meest belangrijke emotionele gebeurtenis van de afgelopen week te rapporteren. Derhalve bestaat de kans dat de respondenten de meest intenste emoties hebben gerapporteerd die mogelijk makkelijker ervaren kunnen worden als sociaal onwenselijk (ze verstoren sociale verhoudingen).

In Hoofdstuk 4 heb ik me gefocust op de interetnische verschillen in motivaties onderliggend aan emotionele suppressie (Onderzoeksvraag 5). Gebaseerd op een theorie over menselijke waarden en een klinisch model over internalisatie-externalisatie van emoties, verwachtte ik dat motivaties om negatieve emoties te onderdrukken op zichzelf of op de ander-georiënteerd zijn en deze tweedimensionale structuur werd inderdaad bevestigd (Onderzoeksvraag 6). Zoals verwacht scoorden niet-Westerse immigranten hoger op de ander-georiënteerde motivatie dan Westerse immigranten ondanks dat het verschil heel klein was en er zijn geen verschillen gevonden in de op zichzelf-georiënteerde motivaties. Niet-Westerse immigranten scoorden ook hoger op angst/schrik, compassie/sympathie, schuld/schaamte, en haat/vernedering in vergelijking tot autochtonen. De associatie tussen negatieve emoties met de op zichzelf- en de op de ander-georiënteerde motivaties waren dezelfde in alle etnische groepen. Verdriet/somberheid waren positief gerelateerd aan zelf-georiënteerde motivaties, terwijl boosheid/ergernis positief gerelateerd waren aan ander-georiënteerde motivaties. Kortom, de emotionele suppressie hangt niet alleen af van de sociale context (op zichzelf- of ander-oriëntatie), maar ook van het type emoties (internaliserend of internaliserend) en deze relaties worden niet beïnvloed door etnische achtergrond.

In Hoofdstuk 5 zijn interetnische verschillen tussen emotionele suppressie, boosheid, en agressie binnen verschillende conflictsituaties onderzocht (Onderzoeksvraag 7). Ik heb daarbij een mediatiemodel getoetst waarin boosheid de relatie tussen

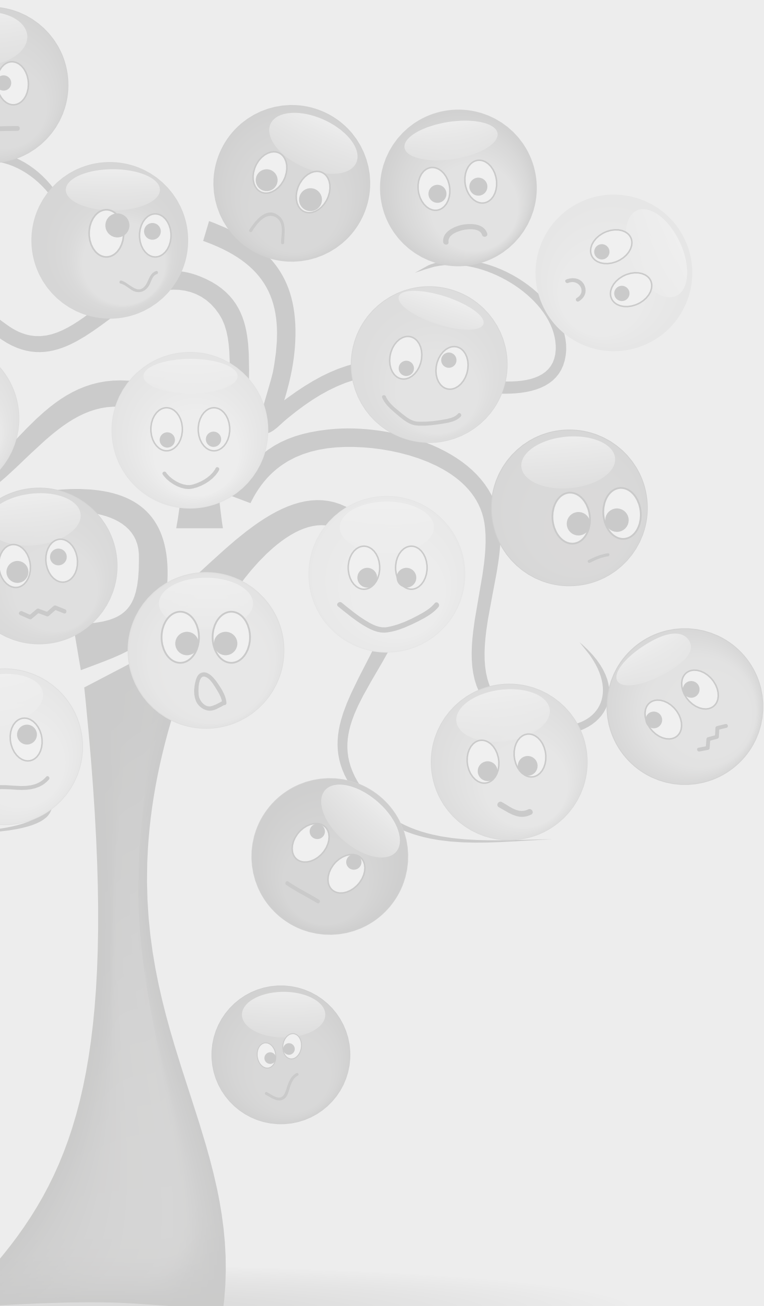
emotionele suppressie en agressie in afzonderlijke interpersoonlijk conflictsituaties (conflict met ouders, vriend, baas, en winkelmedewerker) medieert (Onderzoeksvraag 8). Het hypothetische mediatiemodel werd bevestigd in bijna alle conflictsituaties. Het model waarin boosheid de relatie tussen emotionele suppressie en agressie helemaal medieert is namelijk bevestigd in alle etnische groepen en binnen drie conflict situaties (ouders, vriend, en winkelmedewerker). Een hogere emotionele suppressie was in alle drie situaties gerelateerd aan minder boosheid; bovendien was meer boosheid gerelateerd aan meer agressie. Echter, in de conflictsituatie met een winkelmedewerker werd tevens een sterke relatie gevonden tussen boosheid en relationele agressie; deze relatie was positief en net zo sterk als de relatie tussen boosheid en de agressie latente factor. Daarnaast kon het hypothetische mediatie model niet bevestigd worden in de conflictsituatie met de baas waarbij emotionele suppressie niet significant gerelateerd was aan boosheid, terwijl zowel suppressie als boosheid positief gerelateerd waren aan agressie (latente factor). Wat betreft interetnische verschillen in de gemiddelde scores op variabelen, ervaren niet-Westerse immigranten minder boosheid dan Westerse groepen, maar deze verschillen waren weer zeer klein. Gebaseerd op deze resultaten is de relatie tussen suppressie, boosheid en agressie in afzonderlijke conflictsituaties hetzelfde bij verschillende etnische groepen in Nederland en kan dit mogelijk verklaard worden doordat de immigranten uit onze steekproef sterk aangepast zijn aan de Nederlandse cultuur (alleen immigranten die de Nederlandse taal schriftelijk goed beheersen namen deel aan deze studie).

Kortom, de huidige resultaten tonen aan dat emotie regulatie op dezelfde wijze plaatsvindt bij niet-Westerse immigranten als bij Westerse immigranten en autochtonen in Nederland. De resultaten van deze dissertatie geven soms kleine statistisch significante verschillen aan in gemiddelde scores ten aanzien van emotionele suppressie (Hoofdstukken 2 en 3), het her-evalueren van emoties (Hoofdstuk 3), depressieve symptomen en stemmingsverstoring (Hoofdstuk 2), emotionele valentie (Hoofdstuk 3), op de ander-georiënteerde motivaties onderliggend aan emotionele suppressie (Hoofdstuk 4), angst/ergernis, compassie/sympathie, schuld/schaamte, en haat/vernedering (Hoofdstuk 4) en boosheid in conflict situaties (Hoofdstuk 5). Er zijn verschillende mogelijke redenen voor het gebrek aan interetnische verschillen in de huidige dissertatie. Ten eerste is onze steekproef mogelijk niet helemaal representatief omdat immigranten die deel konden nemen aan het onderzoek goed aangepast waren aan de Nederlandse cultuur voor wat betreft beheersing van de Nederlandse taal. De interetnische verschillen zouden mogelijk sterker zijn in de niet-Westerse migrantengroepen die minder aangepast zijn aan de Nederlandse cultuur en dus Nederlands slechter beheersen dan de huidige deelnemers. Ten tweede, en gerelateerd

aan vorige verklaring, betogen Leersnyder et al. (2011) dat immigranten die meer relaties opbouwen met autochtonen grotere emotionele acculturatie vertonen dan immigranten die minder investeren in hun relaties met autochtonen. Het kan dus zijn dat onze deelnemers mogelijk meer betrokken waren bij autochtonen in termen van relaties. Het includeren van minder betrokken migrantengroepen zou kunnen leiden tot grotere interetnische verschillen. Tot slot, en gerelateerd aan de eerste reden, is het mogelijk dat de steekproeven uit de huidige en vorige studies niet vergelijkbaar zijn in termen van culturele afstanden. Vorige onderzoeken hebben vaak deelnemers vergeleken die afkomstig zijn uit culturen die erg ver van elkaar staan, zoals autochtone deelnemers die in Verenigde Staten wonen en Aziatische deelnemers die in Oost-Aziatische landen wonen. Niet-Westerse deelnemers in de huidige studies zijn daarentegen cultureel niet zo ver verwijderd van autochtonen in Nederland als in de vorige studies. Desondanks geven de huidige data aan dat er geen verschillen zijn in emotie regulatie tussen autochtone en immigranten in Nederland.

Dankwoord

(Acknowledgments)



De afgelopen jaren vormden een bijzondere periode uit mijn leven. Mijn werk aan Tilburg University was mijn eerste echte baan na mijn studie. Eindelijk was er stabiliteit en rust in mijn leven en kon ik net als ieder ander werken, hobby's hebben, op vakanties gaan en genieten van alle andere dingen in het leven. Deze periode kenmerkte zich echter niet door volkomen 'rust' en 'stabiliteit', maar ondanks alles heb ik deze klus toch naar alle tevredenheid geklaard. Ik kan trots zijn op hetgeen ik nu bereikt heb! Dat was toen ik pas in Nederland kwam een grote droom. Wie had dat ooit gedacht! En nu is het zo ver, mijn proefschrift is af en het moment is gekomen om alle mensen te bedanken die mij ondersteund hebben gedurende de afgelopen jaren bij mijn promotieonderzoek en de weg er naar toe. Het is natuurlijk niet mogelijk om iedereen persoonlijk te bedanken, maar ik zal mijn best doen om tenminste de belangrijkste mensen en organisaties/afdelingen te benoemen. Zonder jullie was dit proefschrift nooit in deze vorm tot stand gekomen!

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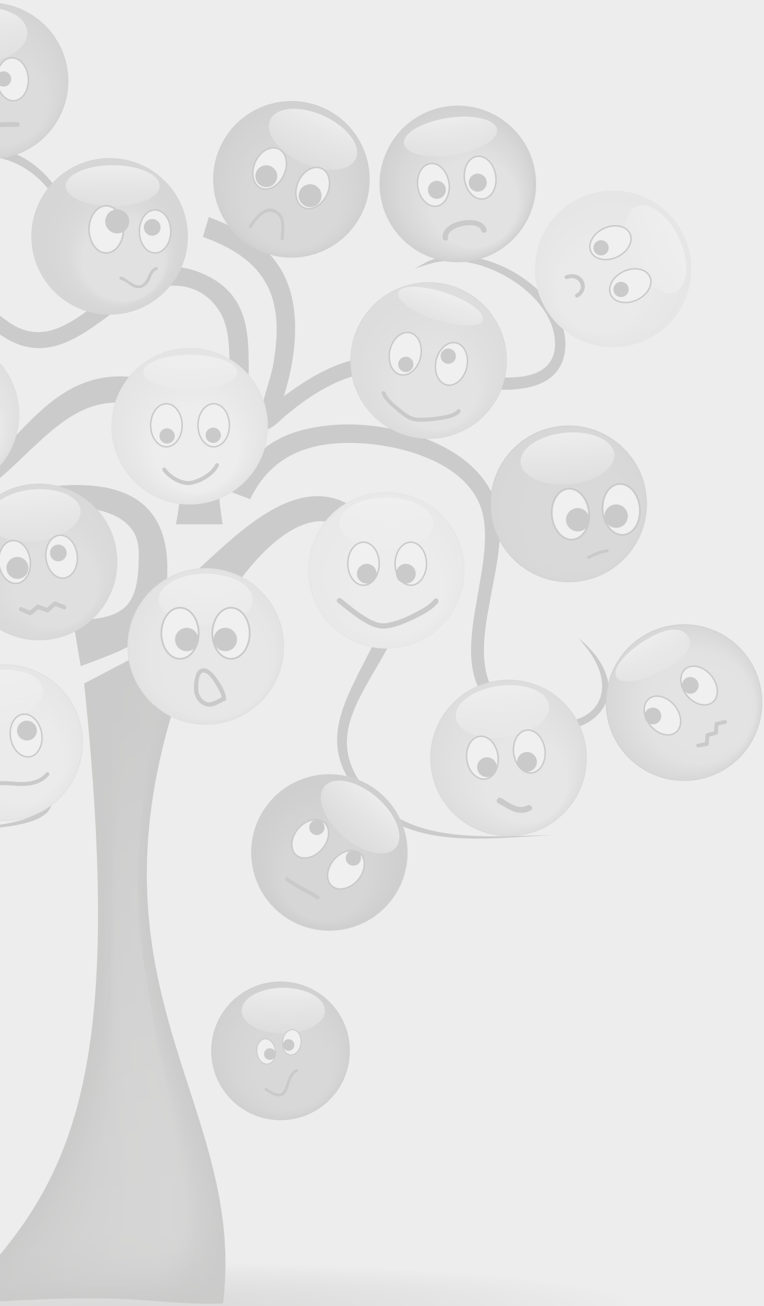
Snežana

17 december 2014, Tilburg

Curriculum Vitae



Snežana Stupar was born on April 23, 1979 in Skopje (Formal Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia). She lived in Priština (Kosovo) till 2001 where she finished the Gymnasium and completed a Bachelor degree in Psychology. She is a well-known Serbian writer; she published two books of poems, wrote a number of articles in various magazines, and received several poetry awards in national competitions. In 2001, she moved to the Netherlands where she completed a Bachelor and Master in Mental Health Sciences at Maastricht University. Snežana started working at Tilburg University in 2009 where, two years later, she began her PhD project "Immigrants regulate emotions in the same way as majority members in the Netherlands". During the three years of her PhD trajectory, she has published three empirical papers and presented her research findings at several international conferences (e.g., South Africa, France, Spain, and Russia). She has also developed a solid teaching record because she has taught, in English and Dutch, both bachelor and master courses. Besides her research and teaching activities, she is involved in several clinical and society-relevant projects. Snežana has been working since November 1, 2014 as a Lecturer in Quantitative Methods at the department of International Media and Entertainment Management, which is part of Academy of Digital Entertainment at NHTV University of Applied Sciences in Breda.

Emotions are part of our everyday life. We feel happy, sad, angry, and jealous; yet, we do not always show these emotions to others. In some cultures certain emotions are suppressed, but the expression of the same emotions can be encouraged in other cultures. This dissertation focuses on how we regulate experienced emotions in our everyday life and whether immigrants differ from majority group members in these regulation processes. Four empirical studies conducted among immigrants and majority group members in the Netherlands explain partially the interethnic differences and similarities in emotion regulation strategies (emotional suppression, reappraisal, and social sharing), the relationship between regulation and well-being, how the characteristics of emotions influence emotion regulation, the underlying motivations behind emotional suppression, and how emotional suppression of anger is related to aggression in distinct conflict situations. All studies lead to unanimous findings, which is that immigrants do not differ from majority group members in emotion regulation processes.

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