

Understanding the relationship between the food environment and food procurement in dietary acculturation

A case study of people of Moroccan origin in Amsterdam

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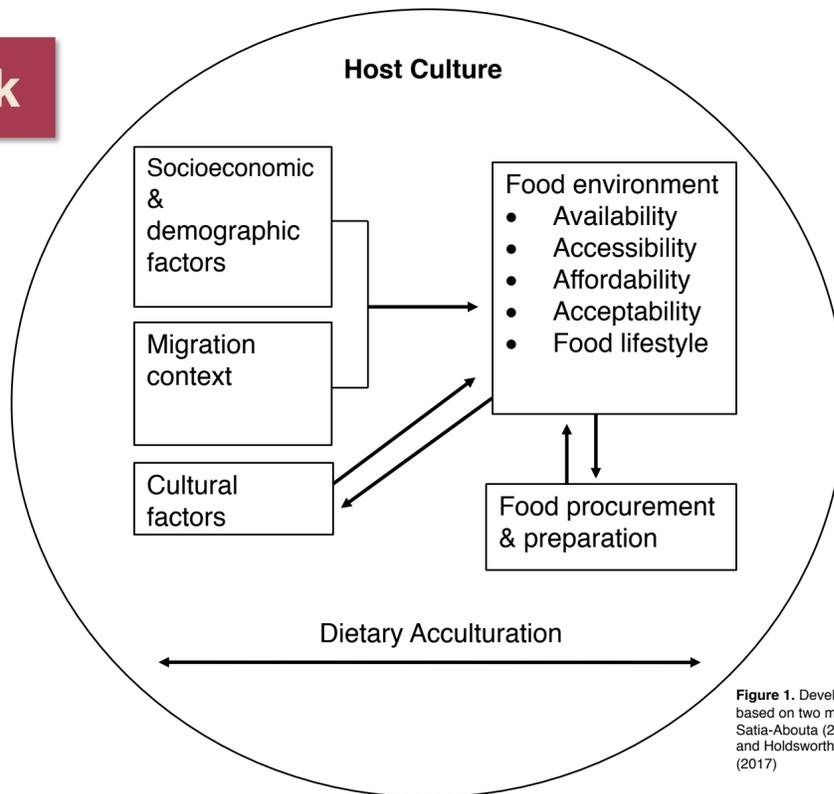
Background

- Immigration is rising and immigrating can have major health implications.
- Immigrants' dietary behavior is influenced by several factors, including culture & food environment.
- Dietary acculturation is the process of adopting eating patterns similar to those of the host country. It occurs over time.
- People of Moroccan origin make up 10% of the population of Amsterdam. They have been in the Netherlands since the 1970s and are therefore in the process of dietary acculturation.

The objective of this study was to understand the relationship between the food environment and food procurement behaviors in the process of dietary acculturation by investigating how people of Moroccan origin interact with their food environment in two different neighborhoods in Amsterdam.

Theoretical Framework

Based on two existing models, the framework adds the concept of bi-directional relationship between the food environment and food procurement & preparation.



Methods



18 semi-structured interviews w/ women of Moroccan origin

Living in Amsterdam-Oost or Nieuw-West, ages 23-77

Interviews transcribed & coded semi-structured

Data analyzed vertically & horizontally w/ Atlas.ti

Results

Host country and traditional foods are readily available in Amsterdam

"I find everything here. I want couscous, I just go to the [big shopping street] or the [market], vegetables, get everything. The chicken or meat at the butcher. This is our house, we have everything!"



Women balance several factors in procurement decision making: price, quality and convenience



"It is all about money. I will look and see, is there money? Then it can happen, grocery shopping. Then it is quality. But sometimes, if I don't have money, then it is not [quality] and then buy cheaper."

There are three main factors in choosing between traditional and host-country food: family member preferences, health and cultural changes.

"I eat Moroccan food alone. For my kids I make spaghetti, macaroni, bread because I love my kids too."



Discussion & Conclusion

Key points

- There is a dynamic, two-way relationship between the food environment and the procurement of food by immigrants.
- To facilitate healthy eating patterns, quality, affordable food should be made readily available.
- Unexpected result: the degree to which children have a role in the dietary decision-making in Moroccan families.

Strengths and Limitations

- Interviewer migrant status increased rapport (+)
- Added component to existing theory (+)
- Participant recruitment limited to community centers (-)
- Non-native language for participants & interviewer (-)

Recommendations

- Future research should consider the bi-dimensional interaction between immigrants and food environment as well as smaller or more marginalized immigrant groups.
- Policy and educational programs should consider the role of the children in dietary decision-making.

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