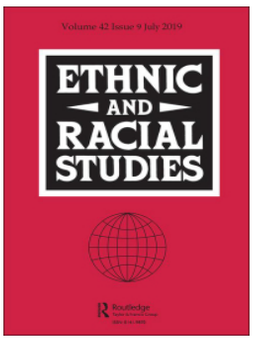

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School composition and multiple ethnic identities of migrant-origin adolescents in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Ethnic identity is central to many contemporary discussions of belonging and assimilation of migrant-origin youth. Studies typically focus on a single minority identity. Identity theory implies, however, that individuals may hold multiple ethnic identities, or none, and these may find expression to a greater or less extent depending on context. Using a nationally representative, longitudinal study of Dutch teenagers, we investigate the role of classroom ethnic composition in shaping multiple ethnic identity expression. Framing identity choices as a relational process, we show that the number of ethnic identities that children with a migrant-origin background choose is greater for those students who are exposed to a more ethnically diverse context, while less diverse classrooms foster ethnic identification with no or fewer minority groups. Classification of migrant-origin students with a single (minority) ethnicity may thus be an oversimplification of ethnic identity, even for those from a single country of origin.

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KEYWORDS Ethnic identity; multiple identity; adolescents; ethnic diversity; classroom composition; migrant-origin background

Introduction

In today's Western multicultural societies, ethnic identity is a topic of substantial interest both to researchers and policy-makers. Ethnic identification is used to measure population composition and invoked in analysis of national belonging and community cohesion (Kertzer and Arel 2002; Leszczensky, Maxwell, and Bleich 2020; Nandi and Platt 2015). Underpinning much analysis is an assumption of stable, singular ethnic identities. This is despite theoretical constructions of ethnic identity as malleable (Jenkins 2014). While ethnic

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identities are often contrasted – or combined – with national identity (Berry 2011; Verkuyten et al. 2019), multiple ethnic identification is rarely studied. An exception is research on mixed race or mixed ethnicity individuals, who are anticipated to have a choice between either or both of their heritage identities (Brunsma 2005; Davenport 2016; Herman 2004). Much of this mixedness research focuses on youth. This is partly driven by the insight that childhood is a key period for identity development and expression (Phinney 2008), and also stems from the increase in mixed race/ethnicity children across many Western societies (Alba, Beck, and Basaran Sahin 2018). Despite increasing evidence of complexity and change in the "ethnic choices" of those of mixed ethnicity (Simpson, Jivraj, and Warren 2016; Aspinall 2018; Mok 2019), much ethnicity analysis focusing on mixedness still works with implicit or explicit assumptions of the stability of ethnic group, and that options are limited to either or both parental ethnicities (Osanami Törngren, Irastorza, and Rodríguez-García 2019).

The identities of both single and mixed origin children may, however, be more varied and contextualized than is often recognized (Harris, Ravert, and Sullivan 2017). This is important because an over-simplified representation of complex and dynamic identities can misrepresent processes of acculturation and development. Given the emphasis on the importance of stable ethnic identification for psychological development (Roberts et al. 1999; Berry 2011) and educational attainment (Miller-Cotto and Byrnes 2016), changes in reporting of ethnic identity are often considered to be evidence of sub-optimal "instability" (Hitlin, Scott Brown, and Elder 2006; Mihoko Doyle and Kao 2007). If, instead, people select from a suite of potential identities according to context, we are led to focus on the enabling or limiting potential of specific environments for identity expression, rather than on individual deficits. From a policy perspective, a better understanding of ethnic identities and the factors shaping their expression enhances the measurement of demographic change and ethnic inequalities (Burton, Nandi, and Platt 2010), and clarifies the limits as well as the possibilities for identity expression in diverse societies (Song 2017).

At present, we know relatively little about the influence of ethnic and socio-economic context on multiple ethnic identity formation among youth (Song and Aspinall 2012), particularly outside the US. However, not only ethnic origins but the wider socio-spatial context is clearly relevant to identity expression more generally (Davenport 2016; Herman 2004; Osanami Törngren, Irastorza, and Rodríguez-García 2019; Telles and Paschel 2014). Aside from their family, the contexts in which children meet other children would therefore be expected to influence identification with an ethnic or racial group (Burton, Nandi, and Platt 2010; Herman 2004; Holloway, Wright, and Ellis 2012). While much literature on adult identity expression employs neighbourhood context as the relevant measure of social context (e.g. Mägi et al. 2020), school is typically regarded as the relevant unit for measuring social

influences on adolescents' identity development, an age group particularly sensitive to peer influences (e.g. Leszczensky, Jugert, and Pink 2019).

We investigate the influence of school social context on multiple identity formation for a sample of students in secondary education in the Netherlands, using The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey in Four European Countries (CILS4EU). CILS4EU is a longitudinal study that surveyed teenagers of immigrant origin and their majority group comparators in four European countries starting in 2010. We focus on the Netherlands sample since the question on ethnic identification involves multiple-response categories of ethnic identity, including subnational or transnational ethnicities, as well as those based on nation states. These sub- or transnational identities can plausibly be asserted alongside national identities of countries of origin and hence provide the opportunity for students, even those not of mixed parentage, to select different numbers and combinations of ethnicities. This offers traction for investigating the extent to which students do, indeed, select multiple identities. The longitudinal nature of the study, meanwhile, reduces the analytical challenge of differential selection into schools and classes in estimating the impact of classroom context on these identity choices. We can thus show how far more (less) diverse school contexts promote expression of more (fewer) ethnic identities.

Background and theory

Ethnic and racial identity

Migrant-origin students develop multiple identities across different domains of their lives. These can include global identities such as art or music or religious identity, which are shared across national boundaries (Ladson-Billings 2014); national or regional identities in the country of residence – such as Dutch identity, and identities related to their minority status and migrant origins (Brunsma, Delgado, and Rockquemore 2013). Minority or migrant identities may themselves comprise racial identities, understood as identification with phenotype and linked to ascriptive processes of racialization, and ethnic identities, which are more often linked to symbolic dimensions (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001) such as shared (perceived) heritage, language and history (Hutchinson and Smith 1996; Schermerhorn 1970). In practice, however, ethnicity is often racialized, that is, it becomes salient to the individual through processes of othering and ascription; and race is itself contextually contingent (Cornell and Hartmann 2007; Song 2017). Moreover, it is argued that students do not distinguish between their ethnic and racial identity (Miller-Cotto and Byrnes 2016; Umaña-Taylor et al. 2014). Nevertheless, young people of migrant origin may still wish to express different elements of their racial/ethnic identity concurrently, reflecting how they understand their social

position within a given national context, alongside those cultural practices they engage in, or historical antecedents with emotional valence.

In research and government statistics, migrants' ethnicity is typically defined in terms of mutually exclusive indicators, with country of origin most frequently used in European data to demarcate ethnic groups (Aspinall 2002; Burton, Nandi, and Platt 2010). Similarly, in current literature on the identity of migrant-origin students, ethnicity and country of origin continue to be conflated (e.g. Veerman, Van de Werfhorst, and Dronkers 2013). Although country of origin may overlap with an individual's ethnicity, it is only one possible element of ethnic identity, which may include identification with regions of either country of destination or origin; and may be transnational, for example through identification with a diaspora or a group that crosses national boundaries. To have a better understanding of the formation, development and heterogeneity of ethnic identity among the growing migrant-origin populations of European societies, it is helpful to follow Phinney in conceptualizing ethnicity as a multifaceted social construct of which "objective" heritage is only one dimension (Phinney and Ong 2007).

Phinney (1990) distinguishes four distinct components of ethnic identity: ethnicity, self-identity, ethnic belonging and ethnic involvement. The first component, *ethnicity*, refers to a person's *heritage*, that is, the country of origin of the individual or of his/her parents. Country of origin, here, references not simply the country of birth, but the country associated with an individual's antecedents – their national "heritage". *Self-identity*, for Phinney, reflects an individual's identification with an ethnic group; and people may identify with more than one group. Individuals with single or multiple identities are not always accepted by others as a member of that ethnic group (Berry 2011), and consequently, *self-identity* may differ from *ethnicity*. *Ethnic belonging* refers to the sense of belonging to the self-identified group(s) and the majority group. Finally, *ethnic involvement* refers to behaviour such as language spoken and participation in group-based activity.

While all four components are of empirical interest for understanding young people's ethnic identity formation and realization, we focus on *self-identification* with one or more groups This is the domain in which individuals have most freedom to express choices, even if within constraints of others' acceptance (Harris and Sim 2002). It is thus most susceptible to peer and contextual influences.

Mixed and multiple self-identities

Research on multiple self-identification has been constrained by limited measures in national census and survey data. These measures have themselves been driven by conceptions of race and ethnicity that racialize and essentialize difference, and regard categories as mutually exclusive (Kertzer

and Arel 2002; Ballard 1997). In the US, whence much recent research on mixed and multiple identities derives, it was only in the 2000 census that the option to tick multiple boxes was introduced, enhancing the literature on developmental paths of mixed identities in the United States (Brunsma 2005). In these studies, however, mixed identities are often categorized as respondents who identify as both black and white – or with their black and white parentage. Multiple non-white identities, such as Asian and black, have been relatively neglected (Alba, Beck, and Basaran Sahin 2018). While qualitative literature on mixed identities in the European context has explicitly encompassed a wide range of forms of "mixing" (e.g. Edwards, Caballero, and Puthussery 2010), quantitative analysis has been constrained by the mutually exclusive categorizations typical of European census questions on race / ethnicity, and their focus on national origins.

The extent to which respondents would choose to select more than one category or privilege a sub- or trans-national category over national heritage if they were able to do so remains, therefore, hard to determine. But there are many reasons why we might expect respondents to wish to "own" identities that modify or differ from their national heritage. First, there could be a mismatch between country of origin and experienced ethnicity, if for example those who identify as Armenian but are born in Turkey are categorised as Turkish. Second, the opportunity for multiple identification across country and sub-/trans-national categories facilitates expression of identities experienced as multiple and complex. For example, some children of Moroccan parents might prefer to identify both as Moroccan and as Berber.

Formation of multiple self-identities

It is generally assumed that once developed, ethnic identity is relatively stable through life (Phinney and Ong 2007). Self-identification with racial/ethnic identities by multiracial/multi-ethnic children is shaped by parents but is mediated by structural, personal and contextual factors (Burton, Nandi, and Platt 2010; Townsend et al. 2012). Social status and migration generation are both relevant. Social status is argued to influence ethnic and racial identification (Saperstein and Penner 2012), though the relationship is complex (Kramer, DeFina, and Hannon 2016). Higher social status tends to be positively related to identities that also have a higher status. For example, people with a relatively high social status and of black-Hispanic heritage will rarely choose a single black racial identity (Daniel 2002). Similarly, Duncan and Trejo (2011) have shown that upwardly socially mobile of Hispanic origin are less likely to identify as Hispanic. At the same time, the selection of multiple or mixed identities has also been associated with higher social status (Townsend et al. 2012). Ethnic identification also differs between the first and second generations of immigrant origin, as origins

become more distant (Essed and Trienekens 2008), and substitution by transnational identities takes place (Jacobson 1997). Lastly, phenotype influences the choice of identities for mixed race/ ethnicity individuals: not only skin colour but how an individual perceives his/her appearance is linked to identity choice (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001). The perceptions of phenotype of mixed people and associated meanings vary according to differences in country context, such as colonial history and social hierarchies in the country (Chito Childs, Lyons, and Jones 2019; Osanami Törngren, Irastorza, and Rodríguez-García 2019; Rodríguez-García et al. 2021).

The contextual factor most relevant for the ethnic identification of youth is school, and more specifically classroom composition (Brunsma 2005). Children spend a considerable proportion of their time at school. In more ethnically diverse classrooms children have greater opportunities for contact with those from other ethnic groups (Veerman, Van de Werfhorst, and Dronkers 2013; Burgess and Platt 2020). According to the psychological literature, the attainment of a stable ethnic identity is a developmental process, and during adolescence, students' ethnic identity development is at its peak (Phinney 1990). At this period, the influence of peers on identity development increases while the influence of parents decreases (Eccles and Roeser 2011; Jugert, Leszczensky, and Pink 2019). There is therefore scope for identity formation to be influenced by the ethnic composition of classrooms. In addition, for multiracial children, the setting (home vs. at school) has been shown to influence how they categorize their identity (Harris and Sim 2002). We might therefore expect that asking about ethnic identity in the school context will make children more sensitive to aspects of school composition.

A better understanding of the influence of ethnic classroom composition on mixed or multiple identity formation of young people in Europe has the potential to refine our understanding of what options individuals regard as available to them when given a choice (cf. Harris, Ravert, and Sullivan 2017; Brunsma, Delgado, and Rockquemore 2013). Brunsma (2005) showed that children with a multi-racial background were less likely to identify with those of native origins if their school had a higher percentage of migrant origin students; there was, however, no significant relationship between school composition and choosing to belong to a multi-racial group. This study, however, used a cross-sectional approach and studied children during their early childhood, when peer influences are weaker and identity formation arguably in flux (Roberts et al. 1999). Current research is therefore inconclusive on the role of classroom composition in promoting or reducing multiple identification.

We argue that there are four mechanisms by which ethnically diverse schools may influence multiple identification, all of which arise through interpersonal interactions (Goffman 1959). First, schools with greater ethnic diversity may reduce the costs associated with identifying with a (potentially lower-valued) minority identity (Brewer 1991; Jenkins 2014; Roberts, Settles,

and Jellison 2008). Conversely, low diversity settings may encourage students not to identify with a minority identity due to the idea that these identities could be seen as less valued (Daniel 2002; Roberts, Settles, and Jellison 2008). Kiang and Johnson (2013) have explored how self-labelling varies in response to peers of different ethnicities, related to perceived discrimination. Second, according to Optimal Distinctiveness Theory, choice of identity expression can be understood as driven by children's attempts to balance claims to uniqueness with pressures towards similarity (Brewer 1991). Students in schools with greater ethnic diversity are surrounded by relatively larger numbers of co-ethnics, as well as minority groups as a whole (Veerman, Van de Werfhorst, and Dronkers 2013; Burgess and Platt 2020). Ethnic diversity may therefore facilitate the expression of uniqueness through multiple identification (for example, refining self-definition as Moroccan with the addition of Berber); while in schools with low ethnic diversity, uniqueness will already be captured by expression of single (minority) ethnicity (e.g. Moroccan alone). Conformity is also important at this life stage, and in low diversity classrooms, such conformity may be achieved by avoiding minority ethnic identification, or coalescing round higher order groupings. In general, children will aim to avoid dissonance between self-identification and the way they are perceived by others (McFarland and Pals 2005).

Third, students in classrooms with higher ethnic diversity have relatively greater opportunities for contact with those from other groups (Veerman, Van de Werfhorst, and Dronkers 2013; Burgess and Platt 2020). In a more diverse classroom, more knowledge about different ethnic groups and specific boundaries can be assumed. This knowledge could oblige children to correct "manifestly" incorrect identities of others (Jenkins 2014), leading to more specific, refined ethnic identities. Finally, more diverse schools might additionally be expected to have school cultures that place a premium on diversity and which emphasize (minority) ethnic identity as a resource (Schachner et al. 2016). In such contexts, where more refined self-definitions are seen as an enrichment, multiple ethnic identification may be positively reinforced. For all these theoretical reasons, we expect that adolescent students who are exposed to more ethnically diverse classrooms will self-identify with more ethnic groups.

Investigating the expression of multiple identities can thus enhance our interpretation of perceived fluidity in identification. It can shed light on how this may reflect changes in context, which foster different identity expressions. Existing studies exploring multiple identity formation typically employ a cross-sectional design, where it is harder to ascertain the extent to which findings may be driven by selection of pupils into more or less diverse schools. Since parents may select into areas that align with their own or their children's ethnicity (Holloway, Wright, and Ellis 2012), and since school composition follows to a substantial degree from

neighbourhood composition, it is necessary to consider the potential endogeneity of identity and school composition. While observational studies cannot provide clear evidence of causal influence, a longitudinal analysis can leverage temporal ordering in the measurement of diversity and identification to offer indicative evidence (cf. Hitlin, Scott Brown, and Elder 2006). This is the benefit of the data and approach we use, which we describe next.

Data and variables

Data and sample

We use The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey in Four European Countries (CILS4EU) (Kalter et al. 2016). CILS4EU sampled teenagers from Germany, England, the Netherlands and Sweden in 2010 from the grade in which most students are or will become 14 years old (Kalter et al. 2016), and followed them over two subsequent years. The focus of the study was on those of migrant origin in comparison with their non-migrant peers. The survey collected information on a rich array of student characteristics, social networks, attitudes and orientations, including ethnic identification. Although the questionnaires are comparable across the four countries, the possible answer categories for the question on ethnic identification differed between countries due to different migration histories. Only Sweden and the Netherlands included sub- or trans-national ethnic categories, such as Kurdish, in their questions on ethnic identity, with consequent higher percentages of multiple identities compared to Germany and England (see Supplementary Materials Table S1). Even in Sweden and the Netherlands, the way the question was formulated differed. We therefore focus on the Netherlands. The question is reproduced in the Supplementary materials, Figure S4.

Students in the Netherlands were in third grade during the first survey wave and in the fourth grade for the second survey (Kalter et al. 2016). The education system in the Netherlands means that students on a vocational track leave their secondary school at the end of the fourth grade. It is therefore not possible to measure classroom composition effects for these students at the third wave; and migrant origin students are over-represented in these vocational tracks. We therefore restrict our analysis to waves one and two. Identity questions were asked in the same way at both.

Wave one contains information on the country of origin of 4269 students. In line with existing literature on multiple ethnic identities of minority groups, we exclude native-origin students (defined as having both parents and all grandparents born in the Netherlands): empirically (non-Dutch) ethnic identification is rare for such students. Our analytical sample therefore comprises those 1716 students with a measured migration background. Of these, 30.5 per cent had missing data (primarily through attrition) on relevant

measures at wave 2. Our working sample therefore comprises a balanced two-wave panel of 1196 students in 216 classrooms, in 100 schools.

Measures

Dependent variable

The CILS4EU questionnaire asks students "Some people feel that they belong to other groups too. Which, if any, of the following groups do you feel you belong to?" The Dutch questionnaire contains the option "no other groups" and thirteen specific ethnic identity options with two spaces for providing write-in answers. Examples of ethnic identity options are "Turkish", "Kurdish", "Moroccan", "Berber", "Surinamese" and "Creole". Respondents can select (and write in) as many as they consider apply. This measure is an indicator of self-identity according to Phinney's (1990) conceptualization. The question does not include a majority group (Dutch) identity as an option, though students were asked a preceding question on strength of identification with Dutch identity. Ethnic belonging and ethnic involvement was asked in follow up questions but only for the (minority) ethnic group that the students feel they belong to most strongly. Since we cannot therefore calculate measures of belonging and involvement for all identified groups, and given our interest in multiple identification specifically, we focus on the *number of minority ethnic groups identified,* coded as no group, one group, two groups, and more than two groups. At both waves 1 and 2, around 17 per cent of the sample identified with two or more groups, though two-fifths of the sample identify with no (non-Dutch) group. Students who identified with two or more groups cover a wide range of different origin countries or ethnicities from and within different world regions, including diaspora identities such as Chinese, which can represent both a national and an ethnic identification. The most frequently found combinations are identities that encompass ethnic transnational or subnational identities and ethnic national identities, such as Berber with Moroccan and Kurdish with Turkish. Students from Caribbean former colonies are particularly likely to say they do not belong to any other group, perhaps reflecting their adherence to their Dutch nationality (see Supplementary materials, Table S2); and this is also the case for those with (non-Dutch) European and North American origins, perhaps indicating that "ethnicity" is equated with racialized difference among these students.

Main independent variable

Classroom ethnic diversity was constructed using information on country of birth of the student and his/her parents and grandparents for all students in the classroom. For more information on the construction of students' ethnic origins see Dollmann, Jacob, and Kalter (2014). From this information

on migrant origins we computed the inverse of the Herfindahl index to measure ethnic diversity. We calculated the index as follows for the summed proportion, p, of each ethnic group, g (including native-origin pupils), in the classroom:

$$\text{Diversity} = 1 - \sum_{g=1}^{N} (p_g)^2$$

Since we take the inverse of the index, a higher number represents a more diverse classroom. The index, therefore, captures students' opportunities to encounter children from a range of other ethnic groups. In our sample, diversity ranged from 0.07 to 0.89.

Additional independent variables

In order to evaluate how far school context influences the ethnic identification of immigrant-origin children, we control for key individual level measures that might shape identification and are expected to vary with class composition.

Most literature on multiple identification has focussed on mixed parental ethnicity or origins. Unfortunately, the option to identify with an ethnic group is only available for children and not for parents. We therefore followed common practice in using country of birth as a proxy for ethnic group in our measures of Mixed and Multiple parentage. *Mixed parentage* was defined where one parent was born outside the Netherlands and one parent was born in the Netherlands, and *Multiple parentage* where both parents were born in different countries outside the Netherlands. Although students with parents from two different origin countries outside the Netherlands were more likely to state that they belonged to two or more ethnic groups, both students with single parental origins as well as those with mixed parental origins identified with multiple ethnic groups (Supplementary Materials, Table S3).

We include a number of control variables that are frequently related to ethnic identification. We included three dummies for the largest migrant-origin groups (Turkish, Moroccan, and Caribbean former colonies) compared to all other origin groups. Socio-economic background of the individual and the mean for the class was measured using a five-point scale of the number of books in the home. This measure is commonly used as part of the measure of socio-economic background in studies such as PISA (OECD 2016); has been shown to have good explanatory power (Marks, Cresswell, and Ainley 2007). The results were consistent using an alternative measure of the highest parental international socio-economic index of occupational status (ISEI) from the parental questionnaire supplemented by student responses where parental responses were missing. As students from later generations

can be expected to be less likely to express (multiple) non-Dutch affiliations, we introduced a dummy for 3.75th generation, that is, those with native-born parents and only one migrant grandparent. These migrant-origin students with multiple Dutch-born antecedents comprise 18 per cent of our sample. Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables are provided in the Supplementary Materials, Table S4.

Analytical approach

Given the structure of the data, with individual students nested in classrooms, we estimated 2-level mixed-effects ordered logistic regressions (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012). Classrooms are also nested within school-years, but only two classrooms were selected per school, and, compared to a 3-level model, a likelihood-ratio test supported the more parsimonious 2-level model. Given the restricted number of choices of ethnic identity an ordered regression is the most appropriate specification, which we implemented using the meologit command in Stata 15.

Our two-level ordered logistic model estimates the cumulative probability of observing a response higher than each level k of the dependent variable (number of identities) for each respondent i in classroom j, incorporating a fixed measure of classroom diversity, a random intercept at the classroom level, and an idiosyncratic error term. The general model can be specified as:

$$\Pr(y_{ij} > k | x_{ij},\ \kappa,\ u_j = H(x_{ij}\beta + u_j + z_{ij} - \kappa\mathrm{k})$$

Our first model simply estimates the association between ethnic diversity measured at wave 1 and identities measured at wave 2 (age 15) without controls (Model 1). For ease of interpretation, we present the predicted probabilities of this basic model graphically, estimated at different values of ethnic diversity. Since our main interest is in how being exposed to a given ethnic diversity at the classroom is associated with (changes in) identity expression, conditional on prior identity expression, we then controlled for wave 1 identities (Model 2), before adding further controls in Models 3 and 4. We supply graphs of the results from these models in the Supplementary Materials.

Results

There was substantial change between wave 1 and wave 2 in the number of groups selected: more than 34 per cent of the students changed the number of groups over time, and they did so in both directions (Supplementary Materials, Table S5). Rather than only random "instability" due to the range of ethnic options of the students, we proposed that such variation in identity choices might be partly understood in relation to classroom context. The results of our nested models to investigate this are given in Table 1. Figure 1

illustrates the predicted values of the number of identities at wave 2 at different values of ethnic diversity at wave one from Model 1. It shows how migrant-origin students in more diverse classes were subsequently less likely to claim no ethnic (minority) identities and more likely to state multiple ethnic identities. The high rates of students in classrooms with low ethnic diversity estimated as selecting no ethnic identity is notable, challenging assumptions about the primacy of minority ethnic identities among migrant-origin students.

Model 2 shows that the relationship is still found when the wave 1 values of numbers of ethnic groups are included. Respondents were more likely to increase the numbers of groups and less likely to claim no other groups at higher levels of classroom ethnic diversity, and *vice versa* (see also Figure S1 in the Supplementary materials). Even if differential selection of those with different identities into more or less diverse classrooms were driving numbers of identities at wave 1, we can plausibly interpret change between wave 1 and wave 2 as deriving from classroom composition, particularly when we adjust for other measures (Models 3 and 4). These show that the relationship between classroom ethnic diversity and number of identities selected is robust to the inclusion of additional covariates. Predicted values from the full models show a clear pattern of declining probability of belonging to no ethnic group from 55 per cent at the lowest observed level of classroom diversity to under 35 per cent at the highest level of classroom diversity (see

Table 1. Estimates from 2-level mixed-effects ordered logistic regressions of classroom ethnic diversity and covariates on the number of ethnic identities chosen by immigrant origin students at wave 2 (N=1196).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Cut point 1	1.88**	0.31	2.18**	0.27	1.09**	0.28	0.96*	0.40
Cut point 2	4.21**	0.33	5.01**	0.31	4.05**	0.31	3.93**	0.42
Cut point 3	5.38**	0.35	6.38**	0.33	5.39**	0.34	5.27**	0.43
Constant: classroom	0.53**	0.14	0.14*	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ethnic diversity of the class	3.71**	0.48	2.54**	0.42	1.60**	0.40	1.59**	0.41
Number of ethnic groups identified with at wave1			1.48**	0.08	1.20**	0.09	1.19**	0.09
Turkish-origin student					0.61**	0.18	0.59**	0.19
Moroccan-origin student					0.57**	0.19	0.55**	0.20
Caribbean former colonies-origin student					0.45**	0.17	0.44*	0.17
3.75th generation					−2.26**	0.24	−2.23**	0.24
Mixed parents					−0.73**	0.15	−0.70**	0.15
Multiple parents					−0.07	0.30	−0.01	0.32
Number of books at home							−0.05	0.08
Classroom mean of number of books at home of classroom							−0.00	0.13
Log likelihood:	−1289.58		−1113.82		−1042.33		−1041.92	

Source: CILS4EU, Netherlands Sample, waves 1 and 2.
*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

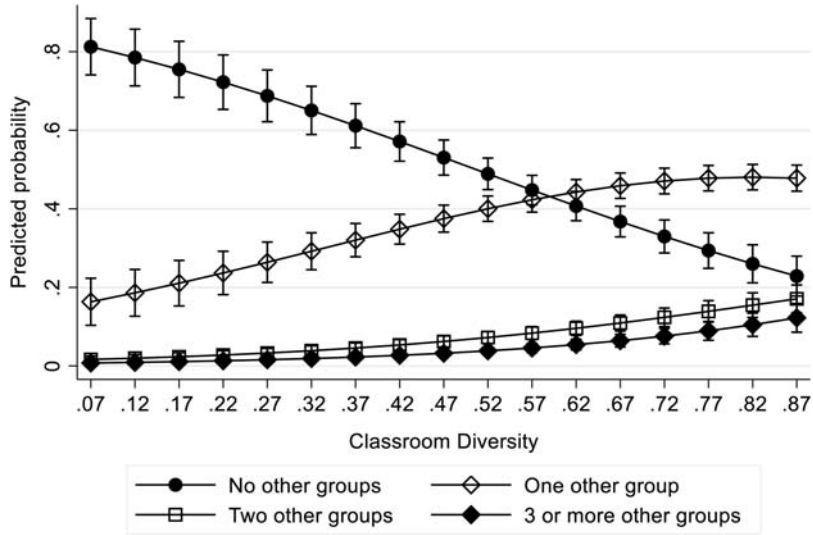

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of number of identities chosen by immigrant origin students at wave 2 by classroom diversity at wave 1, estimates and 95 per cent confidence intervals (*N*=1196). Source: CILS4EU, Netherlands Sample, waves 1 and 2. Note: Estimates from random effects ordered logit with random intercept on classroom.

also Supplementary Materials, Figures S2 and S3). Similarly, estimated probabilities of stating 2 (or 3+) ethnic groups double from 6 (3) per cent to 12 (8 per cent) between the lowest and highest levels of classroom diversity. These results present striking indicative evidence of the relevance of context in facilitating or inhibiting the expression of multiple ethnic identities.

Turning to the additional covariates, Model 3 shows a significant positive relationship with Turkish-origin, Moroccan-origin and former Caribbean Colony-origin. Given these are the largest origin-groups, this may represent the opportunity to combine similarity and individuality; and those ethnicities offering greater scope for selecting additional options. For instance, the Moroccan dummy partly captures Moroccan-origin students who indicate both their Berber and Moroccan identity; and the former Colony-origin dummy partly captures students who identified with different islands in the Caribbean area (for instance Aruba and Curacao). We also see the anticipated negative relationship between the 3.75th generation and the number of ethnic groups identified with. Net of these variables, the relationship between mixed parents and number of ethnic group identifications is not statistically significant. Interestingly we observe no significant relationship either of the indicators of socio-economic background (Model 4). This suggests that the arguments that "mixed" identity choices are a signal of privilege are not substantiated in the Dutch case with this sample.

Robustness

We conducted a range of robustness checks. First, we estimated alternative models with the percentage of migrant-origin students as an indicator of classroom ethnic composition. Comparing the results with our full model, showed a better model fit with the diversity measure, endorsing our preferred measure of ethnic diversity. Second, we estimated a poisson model for count data. The results were consistent with those from the ordered logit. Third, we estimated models with the difference in number of ethnic identities between waves 1 and 2. The directions of the effects were consistent with our main models, though the parameter estimates of ethnic diversity lacked statistical significant due to the loss of variation. Finally, given that the ethnic composition of neighbourhood and classroom are related, we estimated models controlling for the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood where the students live. This enabled us to check that our attribution of associations to classroom composition was not, instead, driven by the wider neighbourhood context. While neighbourhood composition was significantly associated with number of identities in the simplest model, this effect was rendered non-significant when adjusting for number of identities at wave 1. This finding is consistent with parental selection into neighbourhoods being associated with children's initial identification, but reassures us that the observed association of identity change with classroom composition stems from the within-school processes.

Discussion and conclusions

We set out to consider how far migrant-origin youth asserted multiple ethnic identities, and whether such identification was shaped by their immediate context, specifically the composition of their school classroom. We demonstrated that non-negligible proportions (around 1 in 6) of Dutch migrant-origin youth identified with multiple minority ethnicities, while more than two-fifths identified with none. This challenges the binary perspective that allocates ethnicity on the basis of exclusive national origins, while encoding all those of migrant origin as necessarily of minority identity. While those with multiple parentage were more likely to claim multiple identities, identification with more than one minority ethnic group was not limited to these students. As research and policy respond to increasing diversity in Western nations, there is scope for recognizing and finding better ways to measure such multiplicity in standard, as well as cross-nationally harmonized instruments. One option that is already used in some contexts is to offer a "tick all that apply" option in ethnic group questions (cf. Aspinall 2018). This would have the advantage of enabling a similar format to work across different country-specific ethnic categorizations, but would only be fruitful for measuring complex multiple identities if it also facilitated responses

that encompassed sub- and transnational ethnic identities as well as national origins. Such an effort is relevant for both statistical offices that aim to chart demographic composition and change, and for analysts wishing better to understand the different elements of identity, their correlates and in which contexts some but not others come to the fore.

Despite widespread recognition of the relevance of context for the salience of identity expression (Osanami Törngren, Irastorza, and Rodríguez-García 2019; Yip and Fuligni 2002), research on the consequences of classroom composition for minority identity expression and for single/multiple ethnic identification in particular is limited. Using longitudinal analysis, we showed that the diversity of a classroom is implicated in the number of ethnic identities students claim. Extensive research has highlighted the relational aspects of identification (Kiang and Johnson 2013), including processes of ascription of identity. Our findings can thus be situated within interactions between students, which, we argue, illustrate negotiations between expressions of both similarity and difference (Brewer 1991), that will play out differently in more or less diverse classrooms. While greater classroom diversity was associated with moves to higher numbers of identities, our results are driven in part by those who move between no and one minority identity. For such students, greater diversity may imply higher numbers of "own" group students to endorse or legitimise identity choices (cf. McFarland and Pals 2005). Schools dominated by majority group pupils, conversely, appear to result in greater identity assimilation (i.e. sole identification as Dutch) or marginalization (identification neither as Dutch nor with country of origin) (Berry 1997). This may stem from students experiencing explicit or implicit devaluation of their ethnic origins (Yip and Fuligni 2002). The implication is that for migrant-origin youth, more diverse school contexts may offer psycho-social benefits linked to identity development and choice (Phinney 1990).

Our study is not without limitations. We were only able to capture identification, not the salience or strength of that identification. Relatedly, the separation of questions on national (Dutch) belonging from those on ethnic identification, made it impossible to consider these two potentially complementary or competing domains of identification together. We therefore cannot distinguish those who have multiple (or no) ethnic identity and feel strongly Dutch from those who do not feel Dutch. This means that we cannot ascertain whether more diverse classrooms facilitate inclusiveness with respect to Dutch identity alongside multiple minority ethnic identities, or whether they do so at the expense of majority identity. In addition, despite our longitudinal data and estimation strategy, we cannot claim that our results, while suggestive, demonstrate a causal impact of classroom composition on identity. Selection or unobserved heterogeneity may still be contributing to our findings.

These caveats aside, the illustration of the relevance of classroom context for the expression not only of ethnic identity but of multiple ethnic identities enhances understanding of identity formation in multicultural societies. It sheds light on how identity formation and change is susceptible to local contingent factors, by contrast with analysis which has located the drivers of changing identities only with the individual. Attributing singular national-origin identities to migrant origin youth can be seen, in the light of these findings, to represent a partial perspective on the complexity of their patterns of ethnic identification, with potentially misleading consequences for demographic projections (cf. Alba 2018). Finally, given the importance of identity development for psychological wellbeing, our paper provides a partial corrective to accounts of classroom ethnic diversity that have highlighted the negative consequences for pupils' outcomes (e.g. Veerman and Dronkers 2016).

Future research could explore the implications of such multiple identities. It is theoretically plausible that they may have consequences for future trajectories, through the forms of ethnic resource they represent and through different patterns of psycho-social development. Understanding if and how multiple identification – or fluctuation in identity-expression – relates to policy-relevant outcomes such as school performance and well-being is a logical next step. Ethnic identity is, of course, not the only – or even the most important – aspect of identity for those of migrant origins (cf. Nandi and Platt 2020). Given the multi-dimensionality of identity, and variation in its strength and salience, it could be instructive to ascertain how far multiple identities across other aspects of identity such as sport or music (Ladson-Billings 2014), substitute for or complement multiple, single, or no expressions of ethnic identity and provide supplementary or competing ways of maintaining both conformity and singularity.

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