



Ethnic minorities' support for redistribution: The role of national and ethnic identity

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Abstract

According to liberal nationalists, sharing a national identity offers a solution to the growing concern that increasing diversity within Western societies might erode solidarity. Based on the national identity framework, a positive relation between peoples' support for redistribution and their national identification is expected. Partially confirmed among majority group members, the aim of this study is to broaden the perspective and investigate the redistributive attitudes of people with a migration background. Since the social identification of people with a migration background is more complex and tends to be based on belonging to both the nation of residence and a specific ethnic group, we additionally consider the role of ethnic identification. We perform multivariate analyses on data from the Belgian Ethnic Minorities Election Study 2014 (BEMES), a survey conducted among Belgians of Turkish and Moroccan descent. The results confirm our hypothesis about the positive role of national identification. Ethnic identification, on the contrary, is negatively related to support for redistribution and particularly the combination of a low attachment to the country of residence and strong attachment to the country of origin is associated with lower levels of support for redistribution.

Keywords

Attitudes, ethnic minorities, national identity, redistribution

Introduction

How will the large-scale migration of the past decades affect the nationally organized and highly institutionalized solidarity in European welfare states? A central concern in the literature that deals with this

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question is that the increased ethnic diversity caused by immigration might erode social cohesion and popular support for the welfare state (Alesina et al., 2001; Freeman, 1986). As a possible solution for the dilemma between diversity and solidarity, political theorists have suggested that the sharing of a national identity can serve as the necessary social glue (Miller, 1995). Empirically, the so-called ‘national identity argument’ has been tested by studies looking at the relation between peoples’ national identification and their support for redistribution (Johnston et al., 2010; Miller and Ali, 2014; Shayo, 2009; Wright and Reeskens, 2013). However, these studies yielded mixed results and tend to focus exclusively on the opinions of majority group members towards an ever-diversifying society. The current study adds to the literature by investigating the national identity argument from the perspective of people with a migration background.

There is an extensive literature on the migration–welfare state nexus, showing for instance that migrants are perceived by native citizens as taking their jobs, houses and social services away (Crepaz and Damron, 2009) and as the least deserving target group of welfare state benefits (Reeskens and Van der Meer, 2018; Van Oorschot, 2008). However, the opinions held by migrants and their descendants themselves towards economic redistribution and other welfare policies remain rather poorly understood. Especially in times of budgetary constraints, this knowledge is important given that minority groups have a growing impact in the public arena (Dancygier and Saunders, 2006). In order for policy-makers to assess the consequences of increasing societal diversity for solidarity and whether national identity might indeed be the necessary ‘glue’, it is important to know whether the prediction of the national identity argument also holds for the very people who cause there to be diversity within Western societies. The first aim of this study is to test whether national identification is relevant for explaining ethnic minorities’ support for redistribution and whether it has the positive impact suggested by liberal nationalists and empirically supported by some studies among majority members (Johnston et al., 2010; Wright and Reeskens, 2013). Focusing on people with a migration background, more

specifically people of Turkish and Moroccan descent living in Belgium, a second aim of this study is to investigate the role of ethnic identity. Based on the politicization literature and the concept of dual identity (Simon and Klandermans, 2001), we examine how identification with the country of origin – both separately and in combination with national identification – relates to ethnic minorities’ solidarity within the country of residence.

The national identity argument

According to political theorists – particularly from the school of liberal or instrumental nationalism – the dilemma between diversity and multiculturalism on one hand and well-functioning systems of social solidarity on the other can be overcome by the sharing of a national identity. Liberal nationalists claim that national identification provides the ‘societal glue’ that allows for the organization of welfare state arrangements and peoples’ support for redistribution (Marshall, 1950; Miller, 1995). Mutual trust and a sense of sympathy or solidarity play key roles in the organization of redistributive justice and the welfare state. By bonding community members together, shared national identities are said to be able to provide these required conditions (Miller, 1995). The national identity argument therefore expects a positive relation between peoples’ national identification and support for redistribution. Related arguments on the link between identity and support for solidarity are also found in different fields. Theories of symbolic politics argue in general that symbolic attitudes such as identification with the nation or ethnic group are able to determine peoples’ preferences and policy attitudes (Sears et al., 1980). Within social psychology, predictions have been made regarding the positive effects of a collective identity on social cohesion. Social identity theory states that peoples’ self-image is influenced by the perceived status of their in-group. A strong sense of group identification thus enhances the likelihood of behaviour in favour of fellow group members (Tajfel, 1982) and the prioritization of the group’s welfare in individuals’ decision making (Kramer and Brewer, 1984). Finally, according to Self-Categorization Theory (SCT; Turner et al., 1987), people internalize the

group norms and stereotypes associated with the group of which they perceive themselves to be a part. Depending on the content of the stereotypical group position, they will be inclined to endorse attitudes that are close to that position (Abrams et al., 1990). In other words, if citizens perceive their national identity to be constructed in a way that emphasizes equality between citizens, they are more likely to support equality values and redistributive policies the more they identify with the nation.

The national identity argument has theoretically been well developed; however, results of empirical tests are rather inconclusive and even contradictory, depending on the investigated context and the operationalization of both dependent and independent variables (Miller and Ali, 2014). On the one hand, studies show that national identity increases peoples' general welfare state support (Wright and Reeskens, 2013) and support for government intervention (Johnston et al., 2010), and that people with a strong national attachment are more likely to feel obliged to help fellow citizens (Theiss-Morse, 2009). On the other hand, particular conceptualizations of national identity, like patriotism (Citrin et al., 2001) or support for the political community (Martinez-Herrera, 2004), appear to be irrelevant for peoples' support for government spending and welfare policies. National pride even relates negatively with peoples' support for the reduction of income inequality (Shayo, 2009).

Even in the case of a positive relation between national identity and solidarity, it is questionable whether this relates to a very inclusive notion of solidarity. Although national identity increases the welfare state support of European citizens, it also increases their aversion to immigrants' access to the welfare state (i.e. welfare chauvinism) (Wright and Reeskens, 2013). Similarly, Theiss-Morse (2009) notes that while Americans with a strong national attachment are more willing to help others, they set more exclusive boundaries on the group they are willing to help. An exception is the Canadian context where national identity promotes solidarity by reducing anti-immigrant feelings which, according to the authors, might be ascribed to the importance of multiculturalism for Canadian national identity (Johnston et al., 2010).

In sum, the most consistent conclusion based on existing research is that the relation between national

identity and support for redistribution is context dependent (Miller and Ali, 2014). As proposed by Holtug (2016), the act of sharing an identity is not sufficient to promote social cohesion. Rather, it matters which values are shared by this identity. National identities can be based on different value-sets (Breidahl et al., 2017; Holm, 2016) and individuals are able to have different conceptions of nationhood or ideas of what is required to attain membership in their national community (Kunovich, 2009). According to the ethnic conception of nationhood, citizenship should be based on ethnic ties and ancestry. The civic conception is more open and considers allegiance to shared political values and legal norms as the main criterion for national belonging. People with a cultural conception of nationhood consider speaking the same language and sharing cultural values as the most crucial criteria (Miller, 1995). Distinguishing between peoples' ethnic, civic and cultural conceptions of national identity, Wright and Reeskens (2013) find that only ethnic national identity underpins support for the welfare state.

Even though the investigation of the national identity argument usually starts from concerns about the effect of increased diversity on the sustainability of the welfare state, these issues are almost exclusively investigated from the viewpoint of majority group members. The present study aims to broaden the perspective and test the argument for ethnic minority group members, more specifically Belgians of Turkish and Moroccan descent. Although we acknowledge the importance of differentiating between ethnic and civic conceptions of national identity among non-migrants, we argue that in the context of migrants and their descendants, the level of identification with the country of residence is a more meaningful predictor. Regardless of some country and group variations (De Vroome et al., 2014; Staerklé et al., 2010), ethnic minorities overall have a lower sense of belonging to the national society than majority group citizens, and at the same time, they generally show more adherence to the civic rather than the ethnic conception of national identity (Kunovich, 2009). Applying the national identity argument to the case of ethnic minorities, we expect that a stronger attachment to Belgium is related to higher levels of support for redistribution

among Belgians of Turkish and Moroccan descent (Hypothesis 1).

The multiple social identities of ethnic minority group members

When investigating the relation between national identification and redistributive attitudes among ethnic minority group members, one must consider the distinctiveness of this population such as the possible additional role of their ethnic identity. More specifically, this section focuses on the known consequences of the different relationships between minorities' national and ethnic identity. Although classic assimilation theories predict a unidirectional process where immigrants gradually come to identify with their country of residence while losing the attachment to their country of origin, the implied negative relation between the two identities has been questioned in more recent work (Berry, 2005; Hutnik, 1991). Empirical research finds different patterns and, depending on the sociopolitical context, national identity and ethnic identity can be unrelated, conflictual or compatible (Fleischmann and Phalet, 2016). Based on how strong a person identifies with both the national and ethnic entity, four scenarios can then be conceptualized. Following Berry (2005) and Hutnik (1991), separation describes the scenario where people identify almost solely with their ethnic group and national identification is minimal. The opposite case, with people identifying exclusively with the destination society is called assimilation. Marginalization is defined by a turning away from both national and ethnic identity. Finally, within this framework, the combination of both a strong identification with the country of residence and ethnic group is called integration.

Ethnic minorities' national and ethnic identification have been associated with different outcomes like out-group evaluations and political action. The literature on politicized identities states that in order for individuals to participate in political activity with regard to shared grievances of their ethnic minority group, they need to identify with both the disadvantaged group and the wider society (Simon and Grabow, 2010; Simon and Klandermans, 2001). Therefore, politicization is especially expected

among minority group members with an integrated identity, identifying with both the ethnic and national group, and to a lesser extent among minority group members with a separated or assimilated identity. Ethnic minorities' politicized collective identities have been related to different consequences, with a focus on behavioural outcomes, like the participation in collective action and support for political action. However, the types of causes that people would mobilize for or the ideologies they are likely to embrace are largely overlooked by the politicization literature. This study aims to investigate whether its insights can be extended to ethnic minorities' attitudes about the basis of many topics within political and policy debates, namely, economic redistribution.

The concept of social identity complexity (Citrin and Sears, 2009; Roccas and Brewer, 2002) provides a useful indication of what to expect about the effect of different identification strategies on ethnic minorities' support for redistribution. Assimilated or separated identities are said to be dominance representations where one identification takes precedence over the others, which requires less cognitive complexity than the integration of multiple social identities. Individuals with a dominant national or ethnic identity might feel solidarity towards their considered in-group but this group is more exclusively defined than the group of people with whom individuals with an integrated identity are willing to share resources. As more complex forms of social identification, such as an integrated identity, are associated with increased tolerance and positivity towards outgroups (Roccas and Brewer, 2002), we expect that minority group members who combine high levels of attachment to the country of residence with high levels of attachment to the country of origin are more in favour of redistribution than minority group members with one primary identification, that is, with an assimilated or separated identity.

In sum, the literature presented in this section addresses the importance of considering both national and ethnic identification of immigrants and their offspring, and the different relations that are possible between the two concepts. Building on the first goal of our study, the relation between support for redistribution and ethnic identity will be examined as well,

in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of how ethnic minorities' identities might be related to their redistributive attitudes. On one hand, it is tested whether there is a main effect, and in what direction, of a stronger identification with the country of origin on support for redistribution while taking into account national identity. On the other hand, the role of the different combinations of national and ethnic identification will be investigated. In this regard, we expect minority group members with an integrated identity to be more supportive of redistribution than those with an assimilated or separated identity (Hypothesis 2).¹

Determinants of ethnic minorities' attitudes towards redistribution

Based on research among the general population, we know that peoples' attitudes towards redistribution are determined by individual characteristics related to self-interest, social beliefs and political ideology. According to self-interest and rational choice approaches, the welfare state and redistributive politics are likely to be supported by social benefit recipients or people who are at risk of becoming a welfare recipient (Kangas, 1997). Welfare state support is, however, not purely based on self-interest but has also been associated with religiosity (Ervasti, 2012), opinions about reciprocity (León, 2012) and ideas about the deservingness of social groups (Van Oorschot, 2010).

Despite an extensive literature on the welfare attitudes of majority group members and the relation between migration and the welfare state, our knowledge regarding the determinants of the welfare attitudes of migrants and their descendants remains minimal. Recently the opinions of specific groups of labour migrants towards the welfare state and welfare deservingness have been explored in several qualitative (Kremer, 2016; Timonen and Doyle, 2009) and mixed-method studies (Albertini and Sempredon, 2018). The existing quantitative studies often focus on how migrants' opinions differ with those of native citizens and test whether there is evidence for the assimilation of their opinions (Reeskens and an Oorschot, 2015; Schmidt-Catran

and Careja, 2017). With regard to the determinants of the attitudes, they tend to investigate the effect of traditional predictors, like unemployment experience, income, level of education, work status and left-right orientation (Dancygier and Saunders, 2006; Degen et al., 2018; Lubbers et al., 2018; Reeskens and an Oorschot, 2015). Although of certain relevance, these predictors are able to explain only a limited amount of the variation. In addition to the more traditional predictors, the redistributive preferences of ethnic minority group members have been related to their generational status, the preferences in their country of origin (Luttmer and Singhal, 2011) and the relative welfare reciprocity of their own ethnic group (Luttmer, 2001; Renema and Lubbers, 2018).

A recent study aiming to expand the explanatory framework for ethnic minorities' welfare attitudes with determinants related to their specific position within society exposed the relevance of perceived group discrimination and religious involvement (Galle et al., 2019). Based on insights from relative deprivation theory and the collective action literature, it is suggested that minority group members consider redistribution as a collective solution and desirable policy to counteract the unfair disadvantage of their in-group. Accordingly, ethnic minorities' redistributive attitudes are not solely determined by characteristics and perceptions about their individual socioeconomic position but also by the feeling of being unfairly deprived or discriminated against as an ethnic group. Perceived group discrimination was found to be related to a greater willingness to challenge income inequality and to greater support for redistribution. Furthermore, the study originally confirmed the positive association between religiosity and welfare support that has been studied within populations with Protestant, Catholic or secular denominations (Ervasti, 2012), among Muslim minorities living in Europe (Galle et al., 2019). A strong religious involvement suggests the endorsement of the Islamic visions of a just socioeconomic order with a strong emphasis on reducing the gap between rich and poor (Dean and Khan, 1997). The current study aims to contribute to the further understanding of ethnic minorities' redistributive attitudes by investigating the role of

identity, while taking into account the effects of known predictors related to socioeconomic position, generation, religious involvement and perceived group discrimination.

Contextualization: Turkish and Moroccan minorities in Belgium

In order to test the relation between ethnic minorities' identification and their support for redistribution, the case of Turkish and Moroccan minorities living in Belgium will be analysed. Specifically, the data for this study were collected in two cities with a considerable migrant population: Liège, located in the French-speaking part of Belgium (Wallonia), and Antwerp, located in the Dutch-speaking part of the country (Flanders). Although the Belgian case is marked by a quite strong presence of subnationalism which has the potential to be mobilized for the decentralization of welfare arrangements (Singh, 2015), this has been largely prevented in the Belgian institutional context (Béland and Lecours, 2005), and both among native Belgians as well as Turkish and Moroccan Belgians, social security remains an important factor in people's conceptions of Belgian citizenship (Phalet and Swyngedouw, 2002).

Similar to other countries in the north-west of Europe, a large share of the migrant population in Belgium has its origins in the labour migration of the 1960s and 1970s, and subsequent family reunification and marriage migration. It is estimated that about 2 percent of the Belgian population is of Turkish descent (Schoonvaere, 2013) and 3.8 percent of Moroccan descent (Schoonvaere, 2014). Turkish and Moroccan Belgians are disadvantaged in considerable societal domains and, compared with majority group members, they attain lower levels of education (Timmerman et al., 2003), and are five to six times more likely to be unemployed (Van den Broucke et al., 2015). Although most of them have Belgian citizenship (Gsir et al., 2015) and identify quite strongly with both Belgium and their country of origin (Torrekens and Adam, 2015), members of these two groups are still considered as outsiders or foreigners by Belgian majority citizens (Martens and Verhoeven, 2006).

Data and measurements

Data

The analysis is based on the Belgian Ethnic Minorities Election Study 2014 (BEMES), a survey conducted among first- and second-generation Belgians of Turkish and Moroccan descent aged at least 18, and living in Antwerp or Liège (Swyngedouw et al., 2015). Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews were conducted by trained interviewers at participants' homes in Dutch or French. Using the cities' population registers, respondents from four groups were randomly selected: Belgians of Moroccan descent in Antwerp ($n=243$), Belgians of Turkish descent in Antwerp ($n=239$), Belgians of Moroccan descent in Liège ($n=188$) and Belgians of Turkish descent in Liège ($n=208$). Considering the difficulties related to surveying ethnic minorities (Font and Méndez, 2013), a reasonable overall response rate of 34.9 percent was obtained. Since the data only concern minorities with Belgian citizenship and sufficient knowledge of Dutch or French, the first generation is likely to be underrepresented and respondents may be relatively well integrated. Given that population information about citizens' migration or ethnic background is unavailable for the whole of Belgium, only the information provided by the city administrations could be used to evaluate the representativeness of the sample. Post-stratification weight coefficients were constructed based on the available information about age, gender, city of residence and ethnic background. In order to correct for the underrepresentation of the elderly and Belgians of Moroccan descent, these coefficients were applied during the subsequent analyses.

Measurements

The dependent variable in this study, *support for redistribution*, is operationalized by a latent scale based on three Likert-type items (1: completely disagree, to 5: completely agree): 'The differences between social classes ought to be smaller than they are now' ($M=4.00$; $SD=1.01$), 'The differences between high and low incomes should stay as they are' ($M=2.21$; $SD=0.98$) and 'The government should reduce income differentials' ($M=3.78$;

SD=1.02). *National identification* was measured by asking respondents to what degree they felt connected to Belgium (0: not at all connected, to 4: strongly connected; M=3.17; SD=0.92). A similar question regarding respondents' connectedness to Turkey or Morocco was used to measure *ethnic identification* (M=2.61; SD=1.16). As one of the many dimensions of the concept of collective identity (Ashmore et al., 2004), the focus in this article is on national attachment which is according to Miller and Ali (2014: 254) the most appropriate measure to test the national identity argument. Based on these two survey questions, we also constructed dummy variables to investigate the combination of ethnic and national identification. The category of people with an assimilated identity refers to respondents saying that they felt (rather) strongly connected to Belgium while feeling not at all or (rather) little connected to Turkey/Morocco (29.08%). Having a separated identity is operationalized as the opposite, a (rather) strong connection with Turkey or Morocco, and no or (rather) little connection with Belgium (8.63%). An integrated identity means that people feel (rather) strongly connected to both the country of residence and country of origin (53.31%). Finally, people with a marginalized identity responded to feeling not at all or (rather) little connected to both Belgium and their country of origin (8.98%).

Age is centred on 17 for the analysis. Respondents' *level of education* is measured in four categories: up to primary education, lower-secondary education, higher-secondary education and tertiary education. Dummy's for *gender* and *ethnic background* are included with being male and having a Moroccan background as reference categories. *Labour market position* is operationalized by a variable with three categories: respondents not active in the labour market, blue-collar workers and white-collar workers. The *generation* to which respondents belong is divided into three categories: first-generation migrants are defined as people who were born abroad and migrated to Belgium after the age of 15, the intermediate generation (or generation 1.5) refers to people who were born outside Belgium and migrated before the age of 15 (Heath et al., 2013; Rumbaut and Ima, 1987) and the second-generation refers to respondents who were born in Belgium with one or

both parents having been born in Morocco or Turkey. In order to take into account religion, a distinction is made between respondents who reported not being Muslim, non-strictly practising Muslims and strictly practising Muslims. To define this last category, we differentiate between male and female respondents (Loewenthal et al., 2002). If a female respondent reported having always fasted during the last Ramadan and to pray at least five times per day, she was categorized as a strictly practising Muslim. For male respondents in this category, it was additionally required to have reported visiting a mosque weekly or more. Last, *perceived group discrimination* is operationalized by a latent factor based on four 5-point Likert-type items referring to perceived differential treatment of the respondents' own ethnic group by the government, city services and at the social assistance agency.

A confirmatory factor analysis in Mplus version 7.1 (Muthén and Muthén, 2012 [1998]) showed that support for redistribution and perceived group discrimination represent empirically distinct constructs. On the basis of the measurement model, structural equation models are estimated with support for redistribution as the dependent variable and the latent construct for perceived group discrimination as an independent predictor, in addition to the identity-related variables and the other manifest variables. Descriptive information about the variables and the standardized factor loadings of the latent constructs are provided in Table A1 in the Online Appendix.

Results

Table 1 presents the fit indices and standardized parameter estimates of the full structural model explaining support for redistribution by national and ethnic attachment and the different control variables.

Confirming the national identity argument, Turkish and Moroccan Belgians' support for redistribution is positively related to their national attachment (Hypothesis 1; $\beta=0.142$; $p=0.003$). This is more than just a reflection of citizenship or generational belonging, given that the effect coexists with a significant positive effect of belonging to the second generation

Table 1. Effect parameters of model explaining support for redistribution by national and ethnic identification.

	Support for redistribution	
	β	p value
National identification	0.142 **	(0.003)
Ethnic identification	-0.110 *	(0.021)
Generation		
1st generation (ref.)		
1.5 generation	0.100	(0.165)
2nd generation	0.174 *	(0.033)
Religion		
Strictly practising Muslim (ref.)		
Non-strictly practising Muslim	-0.195 **	(0.001)
Other	-0.008	(0.891)
Perceived group discrimination	0.223 ***	(0.000)
Age	0.071	(0.326)
Gender		
Male (ref.)		
Female	-0.030	(0.611)
Education		
Up to primary education (ref.)		
Lower secondary	-0.205 *	(0.018)
Upper secondary	-0.185 *	(0.038)
Tertiary	-0.099	(0.213)
Labour market position		
Not active in labour market (ref.)		
Blue collar worker	-0.045	(0.450)
White collar worker	-0.022	(0.734)
Background		
Moroccan (ref.)		
Turkish	-0.088	(0.054)
City		
Antwerp (ref.)		
Liege	0.049	(0.374)

Source: Belgian Ethnic Minorities Election Study (BEMES) 2014 (Swyngedouw et al., 2015).

N = 867; Fit indices: $\chi^2 = 257.182$; $df = 127$; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.034; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.931; Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.917.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

and because respondents are selected on having the Belgian citizenship status. The results also show that the redistributive attitudes of Turkish and Moroccan Belgians are negatively associated with their attachment to their country of origin ($\beta = -0.110$; $p = 0.021$).

Considering that both forms of attachment are included in the model and relate positively to each other, the negative effect of attachment to the country of origin goes beyond the mere absence of national attachment and suggests that it is an additional element to consider when investigating ethnic minorities' welfare attitudes.

In order to verify whether the specific combination of national and ethnic identification is relevant for ethnic minorities' redistributive attitudes, a second structural model was estimated, the results of which are shown in Table 2. Replacing the two separate measures of attachment by dummies for the different combinations of ethnic and national attachment, we expected minority group members with an integrated identity to be the strongest supporters of redistribution because of the inclusiveness and complexity of their social identification (Hypothesis 2). However, this is not confirmed and the results show that compared with the reference group of people with an assimilated identity, only those with a separated identity, that is people combining a (rather) strong attachment to Turkey or Morocco and no or (rather) little attachment to Belgium, are considerably less supportive of redistribution ($\beta = -0.148$; $p = 0.020$). Meanwhile, people with a marginalized ($\beta = -0.009$; $p = 0.873$) or an integrated identity ($\beta = -0.028$; $p = 0.668$) do not differ significantly from the reference group. This amends the main negative effect found in the previous model and implies that it is not the attachment to the country of origin as such, but rather the combination of high ethnic and low national attachment, which is related to a significantly reduced support for redistribution.

The role of national and ethnic identification should, however, not be overestimated given the size of the standardized parameters and the relative importance of other predictors such as perceptions of group discrimination, religious involvement and the generation to which people belong. Consistent with previous research (Galle et al., 2019), Belgian citizens of Turkish or Moroccan descent with higher levels of perceived group discrimination are more in favour of redistribution ($\beta = 0.205$; $p = 0.000$) and compared to strictly practising Muslims, those who are non-strictly practising are less egalitarian

Table 2. Effect parameters of model explaining support for redistribution by assimilated, separated, integrated and marginalized identity.

	Support for redistribution	
	β	p value
Identity		
Assimilation (ref.)		
Integration	-0.028	(0.668)
Separation	-0.148 *	(0.020)
Marginalization	-0.009	(0.873)
Generation		
1st generation (ref.)		
1.5 generation	0.095	(0.183)
2nd generation	0.150	(0.071)
Religion		
Strictly practising Muslim (ref.)		
Non-strictly practising Muslim	-0.203 ***	(0.000)
Other	-0.027	(0.627)
Perceived group discrimination	0.205 ***	(0.000)
Age	0.058	(0.426)
Gender		
Male (ref.)		
Female	-0.035	(0.548)
Education		
Up to primary education (ref.)		
Lower secondary	-0.199 *	(0.021)
Upper secondary	-0.187 *	(0.038)
Tertiary	-0.106	(0.189)
Labour market position		
Not active in labour market (ref.)		
Blue-collar worker	-0.065	(0.273)
White-collar worker	-0.028	(0.661)
Background		
Moroccan (ref.)		
Turkish	-0.078	(0.101)
City		
Antwerp (ref.)		
Liege	0.060	(0.253)

Source: Belgian Ethnic Minorities Election Study (BEMES) 2014 (Swyngedouw et al., 2015).

N = 867; fit indices: $\chi^2 = 191.049$; df = 109; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.029; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.955; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.945.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

($\beta = -0.203$; $p = 0.000$). While the model estimated with the distinct measures for national and ethnic identification illustrates a significant positive effect of belonging to the second rather than first generation on support for redistribution ($\beta = 0.174$; $p = 0.033$), this effect is no longer significant ($\beta = 0.150$; $p = 0.071$) in the second model with combined identity categories. This suggests that first-generation migrants are overrepresented in the group with a separated identity, which is in line with the acculturation literature (Berry et al., 2006). Finally, with regard to the control variables, the results show that education plays a considerable role with stronger support for redistribution being more likely among minorities with a lower than secondary level of education. Age, gender, ethnic background and city of residence are not significantly related to the dependent variable when all other factors are taken into account. Markedly, ethnic minorities' labour market position is also unrelated to their support for redistribution, confirming that these attitudes are not based on pure economic self-interest (Luttmer and Singhal, 2011).

Conclusions and discussion

In light of the debated impact of societal diversity on popular support for the welfare state, national identity has been argued to be able to provide the necessary social cohesion for organizing systems of solidarity (Miller, 1995). Extending the empirical grounds of the national identity argument beyond native majority group members (Johnston et al., 2010; Theiss-Morse, 2009; Wright and Reeskens, 2013), this study among Belgians of Turkish or Moroccan descent confirms the expectation of a positive association between national attachment and support for redistribution. Within most recent scholarly work on the argument, the focus is on the role of the shared values associated with national identity and whether their specific content matters for promoting social cohesion (Breidahl et al., 2017; Holtug, 2016). Yet the results of this study show that merely feeling attached to a country like Belgium, which is known for having only a thin national identity, is able to enhance ethnic minorities' egalitarian attitudes. We therefore suggest that in order to verify

whether national attachment is indeed sufficient for social cohesion or whether it matters which underpinning values are shared, the literature would advance from future research on combined samples of both majority and minority group members.

Focusing on first- or second-generation migrants rather than citizens without a migration background called for a consideration of their ethnic identification. Unstudied before, our results provide no evidence that a strong attachment to the country of origin is by definition problematic for ethnic minorities' engagement with solidarity in their country of residence. Based on the idea that national and ethnic identities are able to interact in various ways (Berry, 2005; Hutnik, 1991), we found that only those who combine a strong attachment to the country of origin with little national attachment, or have a so-called separated identity, are less inclined to support redistribution compared with minorities who are attached to both countries or only the country of residence.

In times of budgetary pressures to reform social policies and given the growing number and increasing political weight of people with a migration background, it is highly relevant for policymakers in Western Europe to understand the welfare opinions of this population. Although our main expectation has been confirmed, national and ethnic identifications have a rather limited role in explaining the redistributive attitudes of Turkish and Moroccan Belgians considering that other factors like religious involvement, level of education and perceptions of group discrimination were shown to be much more relevant. Hence, we would argue that promoting national identification should not be the number one priority of policymakers aiming to guarantee ethnic minorities' involvement in the national solidarity mechanisms.

It is plausible that a number of factors have influenced the obtained results in this study. Although using national attachment is recommended in order to test the national identity argument (Miller and Ali, 2014), by operationalizing identity as attachment to the country, other dimensions of the identity-concept, such as self-categorization, importance for the self-concept, or behavioural involvement, are neglected (Ashmore et al., 2004). Partly due to this operationalization and

the fact that all respondents have Belgian citizenship and speak one of the country's official languages, overall high levels of national attachment were reported. This suggests that all investigated minorities have a certain minimum sense of belonging to the country of residence, which might be a reason for the rather weak effect of national attachment in our study. Since our conclusions are confined to naturalized migrants who are relatively well integrated, future research would benefit from testing other operationalizations of the identity-concept and from examining people lacking a sense of national belonging such as more recent immigrants without citizenship in the country of residence or highly marginalized minority groups.


Focusing in this study on a general support for redistribution without considerations of specific policies, our main suggestion for the further exploration of the link between identity and solidarity would be to investigate attitudes that go beyond the broad principle of egalitarianism. The salience of social identities partially depends on whether they have been mobilized by political elites in a specific debate, which is again contingent on possible electoral gains (Helbling et al., 2016). Compared with the topic of redistribution, it is more likely that national identities have been mobilized in political debates on the boundaries of welfare state arrangements, migrants' access to social rights (Wright and Reeskens, 2013), and the pressures of supra-national organizations like the European Union on the national welfare state (Hooghe and Marks, 2005). Based on previous research (Degen et al., 2018; Theiss-Morse, 2009; Wright and Reeskens, 2013), it would seem questionable that solidarity based on national identity is highly inclusive towards new immigrants who are seeking access to the welfare state. A natural progression of the current study would be to investigate the effect of ethnic minorities' multiple social identities on their views about the boundaries of the national welfare state.

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Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Note

1. We have no clear expectation about minority group members with a marginalized identity, often only a residual group, and their support for redistribution. Having both a low national and ethnic attachment might either be an indication of a rejection by or withdrawal from society, or on the contrary, a representation of a cosmopolitan or merged identity that is highly inclusive. The first would suggest a low willingness to share resources with other citizens, while the latter suggests high levels of egalitarianism.

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