

# Children's supportive attitudes toward refugees during the European refugee crisis of 2015

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## ABSTRACT

Using cross-sectional ( $n = 340$ ) and longitudinal data ( $n = 208$ ) collected during the European refugee crisis of 2015, this study examined elementary school teachers' role in the supportive attitudes toward refugees of their students. We focused on teachers' self-reported multicultural attitudes, students' reports of teachers' anti-prejudice norms and their relational closeness to the teacher. Using multilevel analyses, we found that teachers' multicultural attitudes predicted more supportive attitudes toward refugees in October 2015 and an increase in supportive attitudes by February 2016 (Wave 3). We also found cross-sectional and longitudinal evidence for a positive effect of perceived closeness to the teacher. We did not find positive cross-sectional effects of teachers' anti-prejudice norms, and we found negative relations over time. These relations were stronger in classrooms with relatively more non-majority students, presumably due to increased threat perceptions. It is very important for teachers to be aware of such possible adverse effects.

## Introduction

In 2015, the European Union experienced a peak in the number of refugees applying for asylum (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016). The reactions of native inhabitants to this peak were decidedly mixed. Many of them expressed resentment against the settlement of refugees, stating that it would be an economic burden to their country, cause surges in criminality rates, and increase the risk of terrorist attacks. At the same time, many others supported the intake of refugees, and there were several initiatives to welcome and help them (see Böhm, Theelen, Rusch, & van Lange, 2018; Wike, Stokes, & Simons, 2016). The refugee crisis and the intense societal debates it spawned did not go unnoticed by children in those receiving countries either. For example, in the Netherlands, where the current study took place, some students could not have physical education lessons because gyms were used as refugee shelters (van Heelsum, 2017), and the crisis and related topics were frequently addressed in the daily news bulletin for children ("Jeugdjournaal") on national television as well (e.g., Nederlandse Omroep Stichting, 2016).

Although the refugee crisis of 2015 was a hot topic, we still know very little about children's opinions about helping refugees, let alone about the attitudes they held toward the support and influx of refugees

at the time, or about the predictors of those attitudes in the school context. Still, such knowledge is highly relevant from a policy perspective, as people will likely continue to flee their countries in the foreseeable future.

Although there is a large literature on children's intergroup relations and possible school influences on those attitudes (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014; Raabe & Beelmann, 2011; Rutland, Nesdale, & Brown, 2017; Ülger, Dette-Hagenmeyer, Reichle, & Gaertner, 2017), there is little research on children's attitudes toward refugees in particular (e.g., Taylor & Glen, 2020). Still, this is important both from a developmental intergroup perspective. That is, what sets refugees apart from most other ethnic outgroups is that they are in need of help, and are dependent on how supportive natives are toward helping them. This might mean that children's attitudes toward refugees do not only reflect the concerns with group boundaries and social identities that are typically examined in the developmental intergroup literature, but also, and perhaps predominantly so, their empathy and their practical considerations about the feasibility and costs of helping (see Sierksma & Thijs, 2017). In turn, this raises the question whether school-related factors that are relevant for children's prejudice and ethnic outgroup attitudes in general are also relevant for their attitudes toward refugees in particular.

In the present study we use three waves of longitudinal data to

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examine ethnic majority primary school students' attitudes toward refugee support from October 2015 to February 2016, which was the period right after the height of the refugee influx in the Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2019). Data were collected as part of a larger project on teachers' approaches to diversity, and the participating children were in late childhood to early adolescence at the time (i.e., ages 8–13 years). This is an appropriate developmental stage for interventions to improve group relations (Monteiro, de França, & Rodrigues, 2009) because thinking about in- and outgroups is no longer affected by cognitive limitations, such as the inability to use multiple classifications (Aboud, 1988), and is increasingly dependent on social contexts (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). Individual teachers are important agents in these social contexts. Primary school children spend a lot of time in their classrooms, and in the Dutch school system they tend to have only one or two teachers throughout the school year. Hence, our goal was to predict children's pro- versus anti-refugee attitudes, from three teacher-related factors: teachers' self-reported multicultural attitudes, as well as students' reports of teachers' anti-prejudice norms and their relational closeness to the teacher. We conducted multilevel analyses as the participating children were nested in classrooms, and we focused on ethnic Dutch majority children rather than children of other or mixed ethnic descent because those other groups were too small in our sample to allow meaningful group comparisons. Moreover, our theoretical interest lied in children without migration backgrounds, for whom refugees might be typical ethnic others (e.g., Şafak-Ayvazoğlu, Künüroğlu, van de Vijver, & Yağmur, 2020). The large majority of the refugees coming to Europe in 2015 were Syrians, whose culture and religion are arguably less distant from that of other ethnic groups in Dutch society (e.g. people of Turkish or Moroccan descent, the largest non-Western minority groups in country; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2019).

#### Research on refugee attitudes

Most research on refugee attitudes examines adults and tends to focus on (perceived) competition and symbolic and realistic threat as explanations for negative attitudes (for a review, see Esses, Hamilton, & Gaucher, 2017). As refugees are mostly strangers to native ethnic majority children, it seems reasonable to assume that the latter's attitudes toward them are also (at least partly) based on a lack of familiarity and the associated fear of unknown others (see Stephan & Stephan, 2000). In fact, some of the existing studies among children have focused on interventions to reduce this unfamiliarity, and their results indicate that extended contact (i.e., via stories about friendships between ingroup members and refugees; Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006) and structured lessons involving “the culture, lifestyle and experiences of refugees” (Turner & Brown, 2008, p. 1299) can improve children's attitudes toward refugees. In addition to this, there is evidence that presenting children with empathy-inducing stories about refugee peers can improve these attitudes as well (Taylor & Glen, 2020).

The current study differs in two important respects from the available research on children's refugee attitudes. First, rather than examining children's evaluations of refugees as a group (Cameron et al., 2006; Turner & Brown, 2008) or their judgments about refugees who have already entered their country (i.e., asylum seekers; Ruck & Tenenbaum, 2014; Verkuyten & Steenhuis, 2005), we focused on children's attitudes toward supporting and accommodating new refugees. This distinction is potentially relevant because children might be positive about earlier arrived refugees, yet also be opposed to the influx and accommodation of new ones (for a comparable distinction between immigrant attitudes versus immigration attitudes, see Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998). Second, we did not take an intervention approach or examine the effects of specific communications about refugees – which were not available in the dataset – but we were more interested in the impact of the teacher on student's attitudes toward refugees. More specifically, we examined whether the teachers' self-reported multicultural attitudes, as well as

students' perceptions of their anti-prejudice norms and of the quality of the student-teacher relationship affected children's attitudes toward refugees. We did this both cross-sectionally, to examine whether we could detect teacher effects already early in the school year (i.e., October 2015), and longitudinally, to examine whether these teacher-factors predicted changes in students' helping attitudes toward refugees.

#### Teachers' multicultural teaching attitudes and anti-prejudice norms

Different studies have shown that multicultural education can improve children's ethnic outgroup attitudes (Levy, Lytle, Shin, & Hughes, 2009; Ülger et al., 2017; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). Multicultural education is rooted in multiculturalism, the ideological position that we should recognize and celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity in order to support the identities of all and to increase people's understanding and appreciation of ethnic others (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Accordingly, two important goals of multicultural education are to provide equal opportunities for students from all cultural and ethnic groups, and to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations (Banks, 2004; Zirkel, 2008).

Although multicultural education is typically implemented and studied at the level of the curriculum, what teachers believe and teach about ethnic and cultural diversity may strongly vary from teacher to teacher even within the same schools. A study in Belgian primary schools (Agirdag, Merry, & van Houtte, 2016), for example, found strong differences between individual teachers rather than between schools in teachers' self-reported multicultural content integration, which is the degree to which examples from different cultures are used in teaching (Banks, 2004). In the present research, we acknowledged this potential variation by examining teachers' personal attitudes toward multicultural teaching as well as a possible consequence of such attitudes, namely the teacher's established anti-prejudice norms as perceived by the student.

Teachers' multicultural attitudes can be defined as their “awareness of, comfort with, and sensitivity to issues of cultural pluralism in the classroom” (Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera, 1998, p. 1003). Teachers who endorse such attitudes are on average less prejudiced (Hachfeld et al., 2011; Ponterotto et al., 1998), less implicitly biased (Abacioglu et al., 2019), more likely to take the perspectives of others (Abacioglu et al., 2019), and more motivated to contribute to the integration of immigrant students (Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, & Kunter, 2015). Probably, they are also more likely to practice multicultural education (see Ponterotto, Utsey, & Pedersen, 2014). There are various multicultural teaching practices that potentially stimulate a positive and understanding attitude toward ethnic diversity, either directly or indirectly. For example, teachers could provide information about the cultures, contributions and positions of different ethnic groups, but they could also pay attention to the particular needs of students from different ethnic backgrounds and thereby model a positive approach to dealing with differences (Banks, 2004; Zirkel, 2008). Taking the above-mentioned studies into account, it is reasonable to assume that teachers with stronger multicultural attitudes will be more likely to use such practices and exhibit their positive stance toward cultural diversity. Having a teacher who models positive diversity behavior, could then also make children more supportive of cultural out-groups. Therefore, we expected to find a positive effect of teachers' multicultural attitudes on children's attitudes toward refugee support.

One particular way in which multicultural education can improve intergroup relations is by prescribing anti-prejudice norms, that is to say by explicitly teaching that ethnic prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). The hope and aim of multicultural interventions is that students learn to respect those others by embracing egalitarian and anti-discriminatory beliefs as personal values and self-endorsed standards (Bigler, 1999). A recent study on anti-prejudice motivations in ethnic majority children indicates this to be the case, as it was found that children who perceived stronger

expressions of anti-prejudice norms by their parents, classroom peer group, and teacher were generally more likely to endorse equality and kindness as reasons to be nice to other ethnic peers (Jargon & Thijs, 2020). In the present study we measured children's perceptions of the extent to which their teacher stressed that people from all cultures are equal and should be respected and treated the same way. We tested whether these perceived anti-prejudice norms of their teacher predicted a more supportive attitude toward refugees.

#### *Importance of the student-teacher relationship*

Based on attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1988), we also anticipated that students' attitudes toward refugee support depend on the quality of the student-teacher relationship in terms of their perceived closeness to the teacher. Initially, the focus of Ainsworth (1973) and Bowlby (1988) was on infants' relationships with their primary caregivers. They claimed that these bonds are crucial for the ways in which they deal with stress and challenges later in life. Furthermore, they claimed that secure attachments provide both a safe haven to return to in times of threat, and a secure base from which to confidently explore one's social world, meaning that children are confident that they can fall back on these attachment figures if they encounter any potential dangers. In attachment theory, it is further assumed that children's attachment experiences are represented in so-called internal working models that can be activated also when the attachment figures are not present. In the case of secure attachment, these models indicate that one can trust the attachment figures, and they allow children to feel safe and confident, because they know that there are important others they can ultimately rely on (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999; Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 2008).

Despite its initial focus on infants and primary caregivers, there is also research that has successfully applied attachment theory to relationships with various significant others at different stages in life. It is generally recognized that teachers can be considered as secondary attachment figures to their students, because, just like parents, they can also serve as a "safe haven" and "secure base" for both younger and older children (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Hamilton & Howes, 1992; Verschuere & Koomen, 2012). Whether children's attachment to their teacher is secure is typically indicated by the degree of closeness, or warmth, in their mutual relationship (Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003) and research has shown that this relational security is associated with several beneficial outcomes such as higher school achievements, higher social competence, less delinquency, greater emotional regulation and a higher willingness to approach challenging situations (for reviews, see Baker, 2006; Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Theoretically, the positive effects of close and supportive relationships with teachers may also extend to children's attitudes toward refugee support. People may fear unknown others from ethnic outgroups (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), but according to attachment theory, such fear would be mitigated by the experience of relational security. Moreover, feeling securely attached not only increases one's well-being (Coulombe & Yates, 2018), but also increases one's concerns for the well-being of others because there would be less preoccupations with one's own needs (see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Research among adults has shown that priming a sense of secure attachment promotes helping behavior in general (Mikulincer, Shaver, Gillath, & Nitzberg, 2005) but also improves outgroup attitudes in particular by diminishing perceived outgroup threat (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001) and increasing outgroup empathic concern (Boag & Carnelley, 2016). Moreover, a study among Swedish adolescents found that perceived teacher support was positively related to adolescents' attitudes toward immigrants (Miklikowska, Thijs, & Hjern, 2019), and three Dutch studies found that ethnic Dutch majority students who perceived a closer relationship with their teacher had more favorable ethnic outgroup attitudes (Geerlings, Thijs, & Verkuyten, 2017). The present research analyzes new data from one of those Dutch studies, and tests whether children's relational

closeness with their teacher predicts a more supportive attitude toward refugees.

#### *Ethnic classroom composition*

Next to the impact of the teacher-related factors, we also examined the role of classroom ethnic composition. Given the small number of refugees relative to the Dutch population as a whole (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2019), it was and still is rather uncommon for ethnic Dutch majority students to have refugees as classmates. However, from an ethnic Dutch majority perspective, refugees are ethnic outgroups. Thus, students' attitudes toward ethnic outgroups in general might be affected by their exposure to other ethnic non-majority students. Also, this exposure might moderate the impact of the teacher-related variables. Theoretically, there are different possibilities. Less segregated classrooms imply more opportunities for positive interethnic contact, and from the perspective of contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) this could increase children's willingness to support ethnic others such as refugees. As children's refugee attitudes would be already quite positive in those classrooms, the effects of the teacher-related variables might be weaker there. However, a larger proportion of other-ethnic students may also deteriorate the ethnic outgroup attitudes of majority children, as they might perceive this as a threat to their dominant social status (Vervoort, Scholte, & Scheepers, 2011). In that case the anticipated effects of the teacher-related variables would be more relevant in less segregated classrooms. Given these different possibilities, we did not formulate specific hypotheses.

#### *Summary of the present study*

The current study examined ethnic Dutch majority children's attitudes toward refugee support directly after the refugee crisis of 2015, and investigated whether these attitudes depended on the multicultural attitudes reported by their teachers (Hypothesis 1), the student-perceived anti-prejudice norms (Hypothesis 2) of their teacher, as well as student-perceived relational closeness with their teachers (Hypothesis 3). Because children's refugee attitudes were measured at three waves, we could test these hypotheses both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. Thus, using multilevel analyses, we examined whether the expected relations could be observed in the beginning of the school year already (October 2015), and whether the independent variables predicted children's attitudes later in the school year (December 2015 and February 2016) as well as the change in their attitudes over time (October 2015 → December 2015; October 2015 → February 2016). In testing our hypotheses, we also explored the main and moderating effects of the proportion of ethnic non-majority students in each classroom. Please note that given many missing values for teachers' multicultural attitudes (see below), we did not examine the interaction between that variable and ethnic classroom composition.

## **Method**

### *Participants and procedure*

The data used in this study come from a collaborative research project on diversity in the classroom, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. The main aim of that project was to examine how Dutch primary school teachers handle ethnic and behavioural diversity in the interactions and relationships with their students.

Originally, the presently used dataset included 57 primary school teachers and 910 children from Grades 2–6. These teachers and students were from 24 schools in various parts of the Netherlands, and completed questionnaires in October 2015 (Wave 1), December 2015 (Wave 2), and February 2016 (Wave 3). Moreover, between Wave 1 and Wave 2, 44% of the teachers received an intervention in which they reflected on their interpersonal relationships with two of their students. Before data

collection, all parents received an information letter, and only children with parental consent participated. Teachers completed their surveys online but students filled out paper questionnaires in their classroom, under supervision of a researcher or research assistant who was available to answer questions.

The final sample for the present study was selected in three steps. First, we excluded the 131 students from grades 2 and 3. The reason was that some of their answers had relatively low internal consistencies indicating that the questions were too difficult for them. Next, we removed 62 of the remaining 779 students (grades 4–6) as they had missing scores on closeness, perceived teacher norms, or attitudes toward refugee support at Wave 1. Missing value analyses suggested that this missingness was completely at random, LMCA:  $\chi^2(19) = 18.808, p = .47$ . Finally, we selected those students who identified themselves and both of their parents as ethnic Dutch (see below, for measures and selection criteria). Of the 717 children still left over we dropped those who reported either a non-Dutch ethnicity for both of their parents (34.7%), a Dutch ethnicity for one parent and a non-Dutch ethnicity for the other parent (15.1%), no ethnicity for one of their parents but a non-Dutch one (1.1%) or a Dutch one (0.4%) for the other, or no ethnicities for both of their parents (0.1%) or themselves (0.1%). All of the remaining children self-identified as Dutch.

The final sample consisted of 340 children (54.1% girls, and  $M_{age} = 10.11, SD = 0.84$ ) who were nested within 33 classrooms but examined in relation to 40 teachers. Dutch school children have one or two primary teachers, and for fourteen of the classes two teachers participated. In those cases, most students were divided over the two teachers. This division was random for most children, except for two to six children per class who were selected by the teachers themselves. We had no information about the ethnic background of the teachers. However, only 1 out of 10 primary school teachers in the Netherlands has a migration background (Traag, 2018). Of the 340 children, 208 (61.2%) reported their attitudes toward refugee support at both subsequent waves, and respectively, 30 (8.8%) and 10 (2.9%) did so only at Wave 2 or Wave 3.<sup>1</sup> Data were collapsed over children's age and gender as these variables were unrelated to the other measures.

## Measures

### Student ethnicity and classroom ethnic composition (Wave 1)

At Wave 1, students reported on the ethnicity of their mothers, fathers, and themselves. First, they were presented with the following description: "In the Netherlands, there are different groups of people. Those people or their families have come from different countries. For example, there are Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, but also Dutch and many more." Next, they were asked to indicate what groups their mother, their father, and they themselves belonged to.

Classroom ethnic composition was measured as the proportion of ethnic non-majority students, which was calculated for each classroom by dividing the number of students who identified themselves and/or at least one of their parents as non-Dutch, by the total number of students who could be identified as Dutch or non-Dutch. Please note that this measure was calculated after the first step of our sample selection. For all other measures described below, we calculated the mean scores of the individual items and used these in our analyses.

### Attitudes toward refugee support (waves 1, 2, 3)

At each wave, children's attitudes toward refugee support were

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, there was quite some attrition at the class level, as nine classes dropped out after Wave 1, 3 classes dropped out after Wave 2, and one class participated at Waves 1 and 3 (but not Wave 2). This attrition was due to organizational and practical issues of schools, and classrooms that did not participate at Wave 2 or Wave 3 were less likely to have a teacher that took part in the intervention, respectively  $\phi = -0.60$ , and  $\phi = 0.69$ , both  $p < .001$ .

assessed with two newly developed questions. The first question was: "Some people think that there are too many refugees coming into the Netherlands, and other people do not think so. What do you think?" Children could answer on a scale from 1 (*Not at all too many!*) to 5 (*Way too many!*). Second, children received the question "Some people think that refugees are helped too little, and other people think that refugees are helped too much. What do you think?". The response scale ranged from 1 (*Way too little!*) to 5 (*Way too much!*). The correlation between both items was 0.56 in wave one, 0.56 in wave two and 0.58 in wave three. We took the average scores of both items and recoded them so that higher scores indicated a more positive attitude.

### Relational closeness with the teacher (wave 1)

To measure students' perceptions of the relational closeness with their teacher we used the closeness subscale of the Student Perception of Affective Relationship with Teacher Scale (SPARTS; Koomen & Jellesma, 2015). In classrooms with two teachers, children were explicitly instructed to complete this measure for the teacher assigned to them. The SPARTS contains subscales for different relationship dimensions (i.e., closeness, conflict, and negative expectations), and its final and preliminary versions have been successfully used in various Dutch studies. The closeness subscale consists of six items such as "I feel at ease with my teacher", "My teacher understands me", and "I think I have a good relationship with my teacher". In the present study, the answer categories ranged from 1 (*NO, that is not the case*) to 5 (*YES, that is certainly the case*) and Cronbach's alpha was 0.80. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in Mplus Version 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) showed that the six closeness items loaded on a single factor,  $\chi^2(9) = 17.82, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.03$ .

### Perceived anti-prejudice norms (wave 1)

To measure students' perceptions of teachers' anti-prejudice norms we used three items that have successfully been used in previous research in the Netherlands (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013): "Does your teacher ever say that all cultures should be respected?", "Does your teacher ever say that it is wrong to discriminate?", and "Does your teacher ever say that people from all cultures are equal?" The response scale ranged from 1 (*absolutely never!*) to 5 (*very often!*), and Cronbach's alpha was 0.69.

### Teachers' multicultural attitudes (wave 1)

We used eight items to assess teachers' multicultural attitudes (see Table 1). Unfortunately, only 24 of the 40 participating teachers completed these items. The exact reason for this large number of missing data was unknown but teachers who didn't complete this measure didn't complete any other measures either (e.g., date of birth, teaching experience). Moreover those teachers were less likely to be in the intervention condition,  $\phi = -0.612, p < .001$ , and thus had fewer contacts with

**Table 1**  
Multicultural teaching attitudes items.

1. Teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of students with different cultural backgrounds.
2. All students are essentially the same, so it is disadvantageous to take cultural background into account in teaching methods.
3. Teachers have the responsibility to take their students' cultural backgrounds into account.
4. In teaching practice, a child is just a child; cultural background does not play a role.
5. Regardless of the cultural makeup of my class, it is important that students are extensively educated about cultural diversity.
6. In order to teach effectively, it is essential for teachers to consider cultural differences present in the classroom.
7. In schools with few or no students from different cultural backgrounds, teaching about cultural diversity is not necessary (not included).
8. It is essential that we approach students as individuals, without allowing cultural background to play a role.

Note. Items were translated from Dutch.

the research team. Possibly they felt less committed about completing the online questionnaires. We dealt with this missing data pattern by including intervention status as a control variable in our main analyses (dummy with '1' for intervention condition, and '0' for control condition).

The eight items were based on the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS; [Ponterotto et al., 1998](#)), the literature about diversity ideologies ([Rosenthal & Levy, 2010](#)), and conversations with teachers. First, we selected and translated four of the twenty TMAS items that referred to teaching and had positive and relatively high loadings in [Ponterotto et al.'s \(1998\)](#) study, and were appropriate to the Dutch situation (i.e., items 1, 3, 5, and 6 in [Table 1](#)). Next, we created four items for the opposite of multicultural teaching (i.e., colour-blind teaching), and two of those items were based on TMAS items (i.e., items 2 and 7). Answer options ranged from 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 7 (*Totally agree*).

We used scores from 65 additional teachers to examine the factor structure of the items. These teachers taught lower grades (2–3) or participated in other studies (not focused on refugee attitudes) in the same broader research project. CFA in Mplus yielded very weak support for a one factor model,  $\chi^2(20) = 62.35$ , CFI = 0.65, TLI = 0.51, RMSEA = 0.15, SRMR = 0.10. Hence, we also tested a two-factor model in which the original TMAS items (multicultural) and the newly created items (colorblind) loaded on two correlated factors. After excluding one of the new items (item 7), and allowing an error correlation between item 1 and 2, model fit was satisfactory,  $\chi^2(12) = 13.01$ , CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.03, SRMR = 0.05.<sup>2</sup> Because the correlation between both factors was high,  $r = -0.62$ , we recoded the new items, and used the average score on all items except item 7. Cronbach's alpha was 0.84 for the 24 participating teachers, and 0.72 for the larger sample of 89 teachers.

## Results

### Means and intercorrelations

The means and intercorrelations for main variables are shown in [Table 1](#). Please note that the correlations with teacher attitudes were calculated at the teacher level, and the correlations with ethnic composition at the classroom level. On average, students' attitudes toward refugee support were rather neutral, and did not significantly deviate from the midpoint of the scale at Wave 1, Wave 2 or Wave 3,  $p > .05$  (one-sample *t*-tests). The last column of [Table 2](#) also shows the mean attitude scores for the 208 students who completed the measures at all waves. For them, the change in attitudes appeared to be quadratic,  $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.032$ ,  $p < .01$  (repeated measures GLM) with a small increase from Wave 1 to Wave 2,  $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.013$ ,  $p < .1$  and a small decrease from Wave 2 to Wave 3,  $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = 0.035$ ,  $p < .01$ .

The correlations indicated that there was strong temporal stability in students' attitudes toward refugee support. Moreover, teachers' multicultural attitudes and closeness were positively related to the refugee attitudes at all waves, although two correlations were marginally significant. Children's perceptions of the norms of their teacher were unrelated to their refugee attitudes, and remarkably, unrelated to the multicultural attitudes of their teacher as well. Finally, closeness was positively related to teachers' multicultural attitudes and the perceived anti-prejudice norms.

### Multilevel analyses

To examine the impact of teachers on children's attitudes toward

<sup>2</sup> Two teachers teaching the same class had identical scores on the multicultural attitude items suggesting they might have completed them together. CFAs without those identical scores yielded similar model fit. Our robustness checks also dealt with the fact that both scores were identical.

refugee support we used multilevel analyses in Mplus Version 8.4 ([Muthén & Muthén, 2012](#)) in conjunction with the Robust Maximum Likelihood (MLR) estimator ([Muthén & Muthén, 2012](#)). We made a distinction between the student-level (level 1) and the teacher-level (level 2), and we tested two sets of models: a set of cross-sectional models involving Wave 1, and a set of longitudinal models involving Waves 2 and 3 as well as the changes from Wave 1 to Waves 2 and 3. MLR uses the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) method to deal with missing data. We included teacher attitudes as an endogenous variable by modelling its variance. Hence, we could do our cross-sectional analyses for all 340 participants, and the longitudinal analyses for, respectively, 238 students and 27 teachers (Wave 2), and 218 students and 27 teachers (Wave 3). We also controlled for intervention status, as teachers in the control condition were more likely to have missing attitude scores than were teachers in the intervention condition.

### Main effects cross-sectional analyses

First, we tested a so-called intercept-only model to examine the variance distribution of the attitude measure at Wave 1. Results showed that a significant proportion of the variance was at the teacher level, 11.1%,  $p = .011$ , necessitating multilevel analyses. Next, we used attitudes, closeness, and ethnic composition as predictors, while controlling for intervention condition. Results are shown in the second column of [Table 3](#). The perceived anti-prejudice norms and the proportion of ethnic non-majority students in the classroom were unrelated to children's attitudes toward refugee support, but teachers' multicultural attitudes and children's closeness to their teacher had the expected effects: Children were more in favour of refugee support if their teacher had strong multicultural attitudes. Also, children were more in favour of refugee support if they felt close to their teacher.

### Main effects longitudinal analyses

For our longitudinal analyses we predicted children's attitudes toward refugee support at Waves 2 and 3 in a set of multivariate regression models. First, we tested an intercept-only model to test the variance at both levels. For both waves, a significant proportion of variance was at Level 2, respectively 13.2% for Wave 2 and 18.9% for Wave 3, both  $p < .05$ .

Next, we regressed these attitudes on the predictor variables controlling for intervention condition but not yet for children's attitudes at Wave 1. Results are shown in the third and fifth columns of [Table 3](#). Similar to the cross-sectional results, teacher attitudes and closeness at Wave 1 predicted more positive refugee attitudes at Waves 2 and 3. In addition to this, children in less segregated classrooms (with relatively fewer ethnic Dutch children) had less positive attitudes at Wave 3 only.

Lastly, we entered children's refugee attitudes at Wave 1 to examine the effects of the predictors on the change in attitudes over time (fourth and last columns of [Table 3](#)). Despite strong autoregressive effects of children's earlier attitudes, closeness had positive effects on their later attitudes. For Wave 3 this effect was marginally significant,  $p = .094$ , yet in line with our hypothesis. Thus, having a close relationship with the teacher was also related to children becoming more welcoming toward refugees over time. Additionally, the effects of perceived teacher norms, teachers' multicultural attitudes, and ethnic classroom composition were all significant for children's attitudes at Wave 3, but not at Wave 2. As shown in [Table 3](#) (last column), children became more positive toward refugees over time if their teacher had stronger multicultural attitudes, but less positive if they perceived a stronger emphasis on multicultural norms and if they had more non-majority classmates.

### Cross-level interactions (cross-sectional and longitudinal)

Next, we examined whether the effects of perceived teacher norms and closeness obtained in the previous models depended on the

**Table 2**  
Means and intercorrelations of main variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Refugee Support W1							
2. Refugee Support W2	0.72**						
3. Refugee Support W3	0.69**	0.73**					
4. Perceived Teacher Norms	0.04	0.06	0.01				
5. Teacher MC Attitudes	0.30	0.39†	0.40†	0.20			
6. Closeness	0.17**	0.25**	0.26**	0.16**	0.08		
7. % Non-Majority Students	-0.41*	-0.60**	-0.58**	-0.19	-0.22	0.07	
<i>n</i>	340	238	218	340	24	340	33
<i>M (SD)</i>	2.90 (1.01)	3.01 (0.97)	2.88 (0.99)	2.86 (0.97)	4.33 (1.07)	3.82 (0.80)	0.46 (0.26)
<i>M (SD) complete (n = 218)</i>	2.95 (0.98)	3.03 (0.96)	2.89 (0.99)				

Note. MC = multicultural attitudes. All correlations with ethnic composition are on the class-level (including the correlation with teacher's multicultural attitudes), and the other correlations with teacher's multicultural attitudes are on the teacher level.

\*  $p < .1$ .

\*\*  $p < .05$ .

†  $p < .01$ .

**Table 3**  
Multilevel regression analyses for attitudes toward refugee support at W1 (cross-sectional) and W2 and W3 (longitudinal).

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3	
	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)
Intercept	1.01 (0.49)*	0.30 (0.48)	0.25 (0.32)	0.29 (0.42)	0.28 (0.30)	
<b>Level 1 Predictors</b>						
Teacher Norms	0.02 (0.06)	0.01 (0.06)	0.00 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.05)	-0.10 (0.04)*	
Closeness	0.24 (0.05)**	0.30 (0.05)**	0.11 (0.04)**	0.32 (0.06)**	0.11 (0.07)†	
Refugee Support Wave 1	-	-	0.63 (0.04)**	-	0.58 (0.06)**	
<b>Level 2 Predictors</b>						
Teacher MC Attitudes	0.20 (0.08)*	0.27 (0.09)**	0.08 (0.07)	0.29 (0.08)**	0.17 (0.08)*	
% Non-Majority	-0.39 (0.40)	-0.47 (0.36)	-0.15 (0.22)	-0.76 (0.36)*	-0.49 (0.20)*	
Intervention Condition	0.31 (0.16)†	0.63 (0.23)**	0.21 (0.14)	0.51 (0.18)**	0.22 (0.08)**	
Level 1 Res. Variance/R <sup>2</sup>	0.87**/0.04*	0.75**/0.07**	0.43**/0.50**	0.73**/0.08*	0.45**/0.44**	
Level 2 Res. Variance/R <sup>2</sup>	0.04/0.68**	0.02/0.93**	0.00/0.97†	0.03/0.89**	0.00/1.00**	

Note. MC = multicultural attitudes. Residual (Res. Variance) and explained variance (R<sup>2</sup>) is displayed for level 1 and level 2 separately.

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

†  $p < .10$ .

proportion of ethnic non-majority students in the classroom. We tested cross-level interactions with ethnic composition separately for perceived norms and closeness in each model. Because of estimation problems (i.e. saddle point warnings) we had to constrain the slope variance of each predictor and its covariance between the intercept and slope to zero. However, analyses that included each predictor as the only variable showed that this variance and covariance were not significant for perceived norms in all models, and for closeness in Models 1 and 3 (Model 2 again gave saddle point warnings; results are available from the corresponding author upon request).

Results showed that the interaction between closeness and the proportion of ethnic non-majority students was significant for children's attitudes at Wave 1,  $b = 0.75$ ,  $SE = 0.22$ ,  $p < .001$ , and for their attitudes at Wave 2 and 3 (without controlling for Wave 1 attitudes), respectively,  $b = 0.72$ ,  $SE = 0.33$ ,  $p = .027$ , and  $b = 0.68$ ,  $SE = 0.28$ ,  $p = .017$ . As shown in Fig. 1 the effect of closeness appeared to be stronger in classes with more (75%) versus less (25%) ethnic minority students. Next,

ethnic classroom composition moderated the effect of perceived norms on children's Wave 3 attitude when their Wave 1 attitude was not modeled,  $b = -0.57$ ,  $SE = 0.25$ ,  $p = .025$ , and, marginally so, when their Wave 1 attitude was controlled,  $b = -0.35$ ,  $SE = 0.19$ ,  $p = .056$ . As shown in Fig. 2, the negative effect was most pronounced in classrooms with a larger proportion of ethnic non-majority students.

*Additional analyses*

*Robustness checks*

In 7 of the 33 classrooms in our sample, two teachers participated. Treating these 14 teachers as independent Level 2 units could have led to an underestimation of the standard errors for the effects of teachers multicultural attitudes and especially ethnic classroom composition (which was identical for the two teachers in each classroom). Thus we conducted two sets of additional analyses, to test the robustness of the results for teachers' attitudes and ethnic classroom composition (results are available from the corresponding author upon request). In the first set, we reran our models taking students' nesting in classrooms (rather than teachers) into account, and for those classrooms where two teachers participated we took the mean of their multicultural attitudes and intervention status (leading to score of '0.5' if one teacher was in the intervention condition '1' and the other in the control condition '0'). If only one of the teachers reported their multicultural attitudes we only included the score of that teacher. For ethnic classroom composition, the main effects were similar and sometimes even more significant, and all aforementioned interactions were fully significant. For Waves 1 and 2, the effects of teacher's attitudes were similar to those of the main analyses, but was no longer significant for Wave 3. This lack of full robustness could have been due to the aggregation of attitude scores in classrooms where two teachers participated. Hence, in a second set of analyses, we generated two datasets that contained either one or the other of those two teachers using random selection and reran those models in Table 3 with a significant effect of teacher attitudes for each dataset. Results showed that two of the four significant effects in Table 3 were significant for both datasets, and that the other two were significant for one of them. Together, these analyses indicate that the effects of ethnic composition were solid and that the effects of teacher attitudes were partly robust.

*Closeness as a moderator*

We also explored whether closeness interacted with teachers' multicultural attitudes and student-perceived anti-prejudice norms. Although we proposed different and independent theoretical mechanisms for the effects of these variables (i.e., relational security versus socialization), it could be expected that the effects of teachers' multicultural attitudes and perceived norms would be more positive for students who experienced a close relationship with their teacher. For

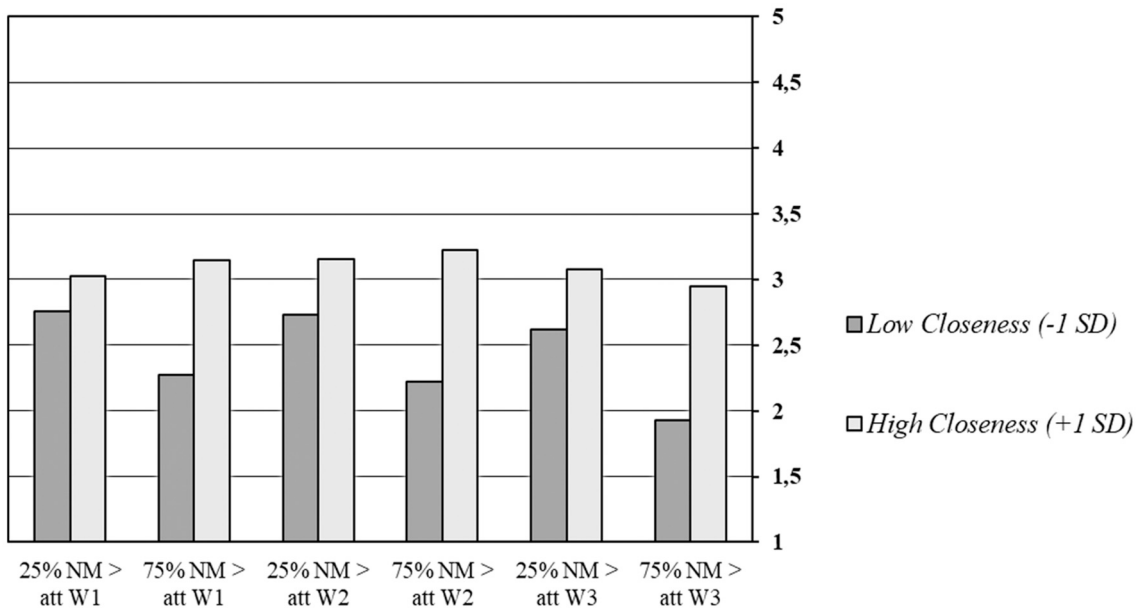


Fig. 1. Interaction effect of % non-majority students (NM) and closeness on attitudes toward refugee support (att) at Wave 1 (W1), Wave 2 (W2), and Wave 3 (W3).

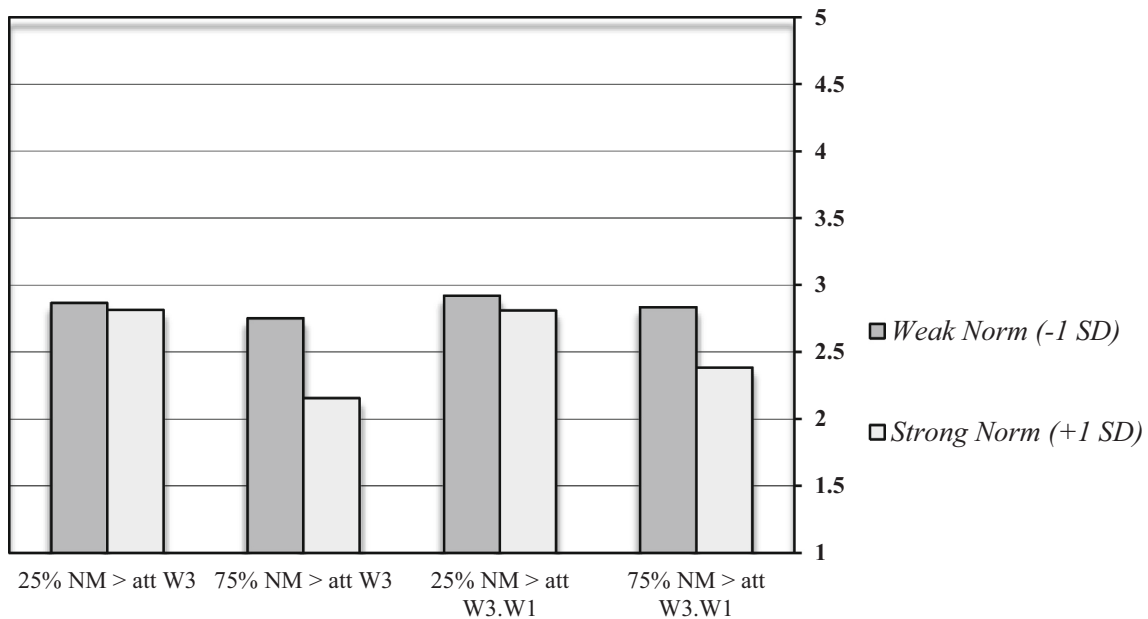


Fig. 2. Interaction effect of % non-majority (NM) students and perceived teacher norms on attitudes toward refugee support (att) at Wave 3 with (W3.W1), and without (W3) Wave 1 attitudes controlled for.

example, according to Self-Determination Theory individuals are more likely to internalize the standards in their social environment if they feel related to it (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and research has shown that the effectiveness of parental socialization depends on parent-child relationship quality (e.g., Tsai, Telzer, Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2015). However, there was no support for these additional hypotheses (results are available from the corresponding author upon request).

**Discussion**

The inflow of refugees continues to evoke strong reactions and sometimes heated debates in Western societies. As there will likely be refugees in the times to come, it is crucial to study how future adults think about helping this group, and how important adults like teachers

could influence these attitudes in children. The present research did so by analysing data obtained in a sample of ethnic Dutch majority students in late childhood to early adolescence (age 8–13) directly after the refugee crisis of 2015. We focused on children's attitudes toward refugee support – rather than refugees as an outgroup – and examined these attitudes at three consecutive waves in, respectively, October 2015, December 2015, and February 2016.

Although children's attitudes on average became slightly more positive at Wave 2 and slightly less positive again at Wave 3, they were rather neutral overall. That is to say, on average, children did not indicate that there were too many or too few refugees coming to the Netherlands, or that refugees were helped too little or too much. Still, there were important differences between individual children, and we performed both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses to predict

these differences from three potentially relevant teacher-related factors in combination with the ethnic composition of the classroom.

Our first expectation that teachers' multicultural attitude would have a positive effect on children's attitudes toward refugee support received considerable support in our main analyses. Children whose teacher personally believed at Wave 1 that ethnic and cultural differences should be acknowledged and accepted were more in favour of refugee support at all waves. In addition to this, teachers' multicultural attitudes also predicted an increase in students' average supportive attitudes from Wave 1 to Wave 3. However, these effects were only partly supported by our robustness checks in which we considered the nesting in classes rather than teachers. When we aggregated the available teacher attitudes in classes where two teachers participated, those attitudes did not significantly affect the changes in students' attitudes from Wave 1 to Wave 3. Moreover, when we examined one teacher per classroom, this unique longitudinal effect was significant in one of the two analysed datasets, and the same held for the cross-sectional effect at Wave 1. Although these robustness analyses indicate that some of the main results should be considered with caution, it is important to note that they involved a reduction in sample size especially on the teacher level. Moreover, teachers' multicultural attitudes at Wave 1 were consistently related to children's supportive attitudes at Wave 2 and Wave 3.

Importantly, we cannot explain the impact of teachers' multicultural attitudes by children's perceived anti-prejudice norms, as those norms were not significantly related to children's attitudes and had unexpected effects themselves (as discussed below). Thus, we assume that multicultural teaching attitudes prompt various other teaching practices that stimulate a positive and supportive attitude toward ethnic others in children. Those practices were not included in the present data, but theoretically, they could for instance involve direct instruction about different groups or social modelling (i.e., teaching by example; Geerlings, Thijs, & Verkuyten, 2019). We suspect that direct instruction played a minor role here, because we had to exclude one item about the importance of diversity education from the multicultural teaching attitudes scale. Yet we assume that teachers who strongly endorsed these attitudes modeled a more supportive attitude toward ethnic outgroups, because they themselves were more comfortable with ethnic diversity (Ponterotto et al., 1998) and understanding toward ethnic others (Abacioglu et al., 2019).

Unexpectedly, teachers' student-perceived anti-prejudice norms did not predict more positive attitudes toward refugee support, and even predicted an average deterioration in these attitudes from Wave 1 to Wave 3. These findings are important, because earlier studies found that perceived anti-prejudice norms are associated with students' ethnic outgroup positivity (see Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). One possibility is that refusing support to refugees was not seen as a matter of ethnic prejudice or discrimination by the participating children. That is to say, they might have had other reasons to be against the accommodation of refugees, such as concerns with the burden to their own society (cf., Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2019). Perhaps their perceptions of anti-prejudice norms gave the impression that such legitimate objections were not taken seriously, making them all the more salient and pressing. This could have caused those norms to backfire over time. Indeed, research among adults has shown that pro-diversity messages can have unintended effects if they make people feel excluded (Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, & Sanchez-Burks, 2011). Our finding that the perceived norms had most impact in classrooms with more ethnic non-majority students (to be discussed below) is consistent with this interpretation. However, for now, this is mere speculation, and we do not know, for example, whether teachers themselves discussed the refusal to help refugees as a matter of discrimination. Future research could test this possibility by studying children's reasoning about whether or not supporting refugees.

Our third hypothesis was based on the theoretical notion that student-teacher relationships can function as secondary attachments bonds to children (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Hamilton & Howes, 1992; Verschueren & Koomen, 2012) and that attachment security can

diminish fear of outgroups and promote empathic responding (Mikulincer et al., 2005; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001). We expected that children's attitudes toward refugee support would depend on the relational closeness with their teacher, and this hypothesis received both cross-sectional and longitudinal support. Thus, children who shared warmer relationships with their teacher at the beginning of the school year were more in favour of helping and accommodating refugees at the different waves, but also increasingly so as the school year proceeded. Close relationships with teachers can provide students with a safe haven and secure base, which allows them to follow their natural inclination to explore their worlds and learn new things (see Thijs & Fleischmann, 2015). We suspect that, unlike teachers' multicultural attitudes, the experience of relational closeness increased students' understanding of and for refugees over time, because it stimulated their desire to learn about unknown others. Earlier research using the same data set indeed showed that students' perceptions of relational closeness were positively related to their internal motivation for intercultural openness at the first wave (Geerlings et al., 2017). We also explored whether the links of teacher's multicultural attitudes and perceived norms with children's refugee attitudes were more positive among children who perceived a closer relationship with their teacher, as, according to Self-Determination Theory, individuals are more likely to internalize the standards in their social environment if they feel related to it (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, we did not find evidence for such moderation effects. Thus socialization and the provision of relational security seem to be two independent mechanisms through which teachers can promote positivity to refugees.

We also explored the main and moderating effects of classroom ethnic composition. We assumed that the proportion of ethnic non-majority children in the classroom could affect children's attitudes toward helping refugees, because from the Dutch perspective refugees are also an ethnic out-group. However, there were different theoretical possibilities. Based on contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) we could expect that the proportion of ethnic non-majority students could be related to more positive outgroup attitudes, and that it could diminish the impact of the teacher-related variables. Yet ethnic majority children might also perceive a larger proportion of ethnic non-majority students as a threat to their dominant status (Vervoort et al., 2011) which could undermine their attitudes toward refugee support and increase the relevance of the teacher-related variables.

Although we did not test this moderation for teachers' attitudes (due to missing data), our results were generally in line with this second perspective. A higher proportion of ethnic minority students in each classroom predicted less supportive refugee attitudes at Wave 3 and a deterioration in these attitudes from Wave 1 to Wave 3. Moreover, closeness to the teacher was more important for the refugee attitudes of children with many ethnic non-majority classmates. Presumably, they felt threatened by the arrival of additional ethnic non-majority groups, i.e., refugees, and were therefore more in need of teacher closeness. In addition to this, the unexpected negative effect of teachers' student-perceived anti-prejudice norms on the change in children's refugee attitudes from Wave 1 to Wave 3 was stronger in less segregated classrooms. These findings are interesting because they provide some further insights in the conditions under which multicultural teaching practices could be less effective or even counterproductive. A recent study found that ethnic majority children had less positive outgroup attitudes if they perceived strong teacher norms against discrimination and if they perceived many positive interactions between their teacher and their ethnic outgroup classmates, presumably because this made them feel excluded (Geerlings et al., 2019). We assume that teachers with stronger multicultural attitudes in our study had more positive interactions with ethnic non-majority children as well. This could have led to a sense of exclusion among the ethnic Dutch children, which may have diminished the otherwise positive effect of teachers' attitudes. Likewise, anti-prejudice norms may be counterproductive when children feel threatened and consider those norms to be non-applicable.



In evaluating the present study it is important to consider some limitations and additional suggestions for further research. First, we used only two items to measure children's welcoming attitudes toward refugees, which were not validated with other measures, and we did not explain the term "refugees" to them. Still, given the societal debates about refugees at the time it is very likely that children understood the term, and the internal consistency, stability, and face validity of our measure indicate that it was appropriate for our analyses. Second, the numbers of teachers and classes in this study were comparatively small and there was considerable dropout at the class level. Our sample size prohibited the estimation of random slopes and undermined the power to obtain teacher or class level effects. Moreover, the fact that two teachers participated for some classrooms necessitated the use of robustness checks that had their own disadvantages. Thus, future studies on classroom determinants of attitudes toward refugees should sample more school classes, and preferably one teacher per class. Third, there were many missing values for teachers' multicultural attitudes, although most results for this variable conformed to our expectations. Next, we could not predict the changes in children's attitudes from Wave 1 to Wave 2, and this could be due to the short time span between waves in combination with the stability of children's attitudes. Thus it would have been better if the waves had been spaced throughout the whole school year.

Fourth, except for the results involving the change from children's attitudes from Wave 1 to Wave 3, we cannot make strong claims about the direction of effects. Thus, it is possible, but not very likely, that teachers' personal attitudes about multicultural teaching in general depended on their students' attitudes toward refugee support. Furthermore, due to sample size restrictions we were not able to examine specific groups of ethnic non-majority students, and neither were we able to discern which students had a refugee background. Given that it is highly important to also focus on the perceptions of ethnic minorities, we strongly recommend future studies to include them, as to give us better insight in the attitudes toward refugees of this diverse and growing group of children. Still, although their perspectives are no less important than those of the ethnic majority, our focus was on the latter as they had no migration background and we could be certain that refugees formed an ethnic out-group for these children.

Next, we focused on teacher-related factors but did not consider the role of other social agents in this study. One of the studies by Geerlings et al. (2017) found that relational closeness with parents was less important for children's ethnic outgroup attitudes than closeness with teachers, yet in another recent study on children's ethnic outgroup attitudes, the perceived anti-prejudice norms of parents and peers were found to be more important than those of teachers (Jargon & Thijs, 2020). Future studies on children's attitudes toward refugee support should also include the role of parents, peers, and social media to rule out third-variable explanations.

Lastly, more research is needed to examine the mechanisms underlying the presently obtained effects. Consistent with attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1988), we assumed that children's experience of relational closeness with their teacher increased their concern for others in general, and therefore for refugees as well, but this needs to be tested. In fact, it is not unthinkable that both their refugee attitudes and relational closeness with their teacher depended on children's level of empathy or prosociality. Thus, future studies should examine whether those variables mediate the link between closeness and refugee attitudes, rather than spuriously cause it as third variables. Future research should also investigate the implicit and explicit ways by which teachers' multicultural attitudes affect students' attitudes toward refugee support. It would be particularly interesting to examine what they communicate about refugees in their classrooms.

All in all, this study indicates that children's closeness with their teacher as well as the multicultural attitude of that teacher can matter for their support toward refugees. Clearly, more research is needed to substantiate our interpretations and to examine whether similar results

would be obtained now the refugee crisis of 2015 lies further behind. Still, our findings might be useful for educational policy makers, school leaders, and teachers who want to promote more supportive and welcoming attitudes toward people who have to flee their countries. Teachers need to be aware that the relationships with their students and their own multicultural attitudes are potentially important, but also that an emphasis on anti-prejudice norms might unintentionally backfire in the case of refugees, particularly in more diverse classrooms.

Teacher education programmes could stimulate this awareness, and offer workshops or courses about ways to establish good relationships with students – and actions that could actually harm such relationships – and about more and less successful forms of diversity education. More specifically, future teachers may be trained to have honest conversations with their students about their implicit and explicit communications about diversity and the ways they are received. We hope that such conversations and the awareness they raise ultimately contribute to peaceful intergroup relations.

## Authorship statement

### Term Definition

1. Conceptualization: Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims – Roy Konings, Jochem Thijs
2. Data Curation: Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse – Jochem Thijs
3. Formal analysis: Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data – Jochem Thijs (second/final version), Roy Konings (first version)
4. Funding acquisition: Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication – Jochem Thijs
5. Investigation: Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection – Jolien Geerlings, Jochem Thijs
6. Methodology: Development or design of methodology; creation of models – Roy Konings, Jochem Thijs
7. Project administration: Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution – Jochem Thijs, Jolien Geerlings
8. Resources: Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools – Not applicable
9. Software: Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components - Not applicable
10. Supervision: Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team – Jochem Thijs
11. Validation: Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs – Jochem Thijs
12. Visualization: Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation – Jochem Thijs
13. Writing - Original Draft: Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation) – Roy Konings, Jochem Thijs
14. Writing - Review & Editing: Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or postpublication stages – Roy Konings, Jochem Thijs, Jolien Geerlings

The basis of this paper was a master thesis, written by Roy Konings, which was then slightly adapted by Jochem Thijs and rewritten by Jochem Thijs and Jolien Geerlings, together with Roy Konings. Jochem Thijs was also part of the research team that collected the data.

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