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# Bridging (Identification) divides: Ethnic minority endorsement of new diversity ideologies

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ABSTRACT

In culturally diverse societies, ethnic minorities are faced with the challenge of negotiating between their national and ethnic identification. Diversity ideologies address this challenge in different ways, by prioritizing national identification in the case of assimilation, and ethnic identification in the case of multiculturalism. However, existing research has highlighted the risks and drawbacks of *both* ideologies, presenting polyculturalism and interculturalism as new alternatives which construe identities as more complex, dynamic, and interconnected between groups. Given that little is known about these ideologies from the minority perspective, the present study investigated their endorsement among ethnic minorities, as well as associations with their ethnic and national identification in the USA. Results show that, in general, pro-diversity ideologies (multiculturalism, interculturalism, and polyculturalism) are all supported by ethnic minorities, in contrast to assimilation. Moreover, ethnic identification is associated with support for multiculturalism, national identification is associated with support for assimilation, and both are associated with polyculturalism. For interculturalism, associations with ethnic and national identification depend on its subcomponents, which seem to address and bring together the other three ideologies. Interculturalism may therefore be a promising way forward to minimize the risks of assimilation, multiculturalism, and polyculturalism, while also maximizing their benefits to minorities and societies at large.

## Introduction

In many contemporary societies, ethnic minorities[1] face the challenge of negotiating between their ethnocultural identities and their identification with the larger society. Scholars, policymakers, and organizations are interested in understanding how to ideally manage this challenge as well as intergroup tensions associated with increasing diversity. One approach has been to favor the assimilation of minorities into dominant societies, encouraging them to identify with the country at large rather than with their ethnic group (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gordon, 1964; Yinger, 1981). Another approach has instead called for the multicultural recognition and

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[1] We use the term "ethnic minority" to encompass both ethnic and racial minority groups in the United States, including Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and Multiracial. While the distinction between race and ethnicity is not without interest, it is not central to the present study which focuses on the minority perspective on diversity ideologies more generally.

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celebration of differences and minorities' distinct ethnic group identities (see also Berry & Kalin, 1995; Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008; Green & Staerklé, 2013; Guimond et al., 2013; Koopmans, 2010; Novoa & Moghaddam, 2014; Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, & Sanchez-Burks, 2011; Verkuyten, 2005; Wolsko, Park, & Judd, 2006). Existing research has shown that, by and large, ethnic minorities tend to prefer the second approach as it is generally favorable to the presence of diverse groups and identities in society (Verkuyten, 2006; Wolsko et al., 2006; but see Tseung-Wong & Verkuyten, 2018).

However, in many parts of the world including Europe and the United States, multiculturalism has been criticized for encouraging fragmentation along essentialized group lines. As a result, academic, public and policy discourse has proposed polyculturalism and interculturalism as alternative pro-diversity approaches that construe cultural identities as complex, dynamic, and interconnected between groups (Barrett, 2013; Bernardo et al., 2016; Meer & Modood, 2012; Morris, Chiu, & Liu, 2015; Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020b). While recent research has examined how *majority* group members perceive these 'newer' diversity ideologies (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010, 2012; Verkuyten, Yogeeswaran, Mepham, & Sprong, 2020), little or no research has examined their endorsement (or lack thereof) among ethnic and racial minorities. Therefore, we do not know whether minorities consider, for example, interculturalism as an alternative way for addressing questions of diversity. Moreover, if assimilation and multiculturalism are distinguished from each other primarily by the way in which they address minority identity (assimilation prioritizing national identification, and multiculturalism prioritizing ethnic identification; Guimond, de la Sablonnière, & Nugier, 2014), then it is unclear how national and ethnic identification among minorities relates to their endorsement of polyculturalism and interculturalism in particular.

In the present research, we examine two central questions: (1) to what degree do ethnic and racial minorities endorse diversity ideologies of polyculturalism and interculturalism in comparison to multiculturalism and assimilation? And (2) to what extent are minority national and ethnic identification differentially associated with endorsement of each of these diversity ideologies? We examine these questions using survey data among ethnic and racial minorities in the USA.

### *Diversity ideologies*

People have preferences in terms of how cultural diversity should be managed and show varying levels of support for different diversity ideologies. Within the social science literature, two widely discussed approaches to managing diversity include assimilation and multiculturalism (Bloemraad et al., 2008; Green & Staerklé, 2013; Guimond et al., 2013; Koopmans, 2010; Verkuyten, 2005; Wolsko et al., 2006). Assimilationist strategies ask for minority groups and newcomers to give up their cultural identities and adopt the beliefs, norms, and practices of the dominant group in public life. Such an approach has been deemed problematic as it tends to produce negative intergroup outcomes including increased inequality and prejudice while undermining minority well-being and identity (Guimond et al., 2014; Hahn, Banchefsky, Park, & Judd, 2015; Verkuyten, 2010; Wolsko et al., 2006; see also recent meta-analyses by Leslie, Bono, Kim, & Beaver, 2020; Whitley & Webster, 2019). Indeed, ethnic minorities generally show weak levels of support for assimilation (Verkuyten, 2006; Wolsko et al., 2006).

As an alternative, despite its many variations and interpretations (Gale & Staerklé, 2019; Ward, Gale, Staerklé, & Stuart, 2018), multiculturalism calls for the recognition and celebration of cultural differences, thereby allowing minority groups to maintain their unique identities. Multiculturalism has been shown to have positive benefits for intergroup relations by reducing majority group members' prejudice and increasing their positive behaviors toward minority groups (see Leslie et al., 2020; Whitley & Webster, 2019, for meta-analyses). Moreover, the emphasis on ethnic identities inherent to multiculturalism is crucial, as research shows that minorities' larger distance from a societal "point of reference" (i.e., their lack of national prototypicality) means that their distinct group identification has more importance for their self-concept and well-being (relative to majorities; Deschamps, 1982; Gale & Staerklé, 2019). By recognizing their ethnic group membership (positively), multiculturalism therefore legitimizes ethnic minorities' inclusion in society (Taylor, 1992). Indeed, it has been shown to predict increases in minority well-being and self-esteem, and ethnic minorities generally show strong levels of support for multiculturalism, especially relative to assimilation (2009a, Hehman et al., 2012; Plaut, Thomas, Hurd, & Romano, 2018; Urbiola, Willis, Ruiz-Romero, Moya, & Esses, 2017; Verkuyten, 2006; Wolsko et al., 2006).

Nevertheless, despite the benefits of multiculturalism for minorities, research has highlighted its risks, especially in the USA and Europe where a backlash against multiculturalism has surfaced over recent decades (Barry, 2001; Joppke, 2014; Malik, 2015). Research has shown that, with its emphasis on cultural group differences in these contexts, multiculturalism can increase stereotypes and essentialist beliefs about minority groups, encouraging fragmentation along group lines (Bernardo et al., 2016; Wilton, Apfelbaum, & Good, 2019; Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). It can also create conflict and negative intergroup outcomes when focused exclusively on minority groups, by leading majority group members to feel excluded (Plaut et al., 2011) and by increasing perceived threats to their ethnic and national identities (Morrison, Plaut, & Ybarra, 2010; Tip et al., 2012; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014a).

Given the challenges faced by multiculturalism, recent research has begun to explore polyculturalism and interculturalism as alternative pro-diversity ideologies. Polyculturalism assumes that individuals' cultural identities and traditions are plural, interacting systems (Morris et al., 2015). The approach is similar to multiculturalism in that cultural and ethnic groups are recognized and valued, but the focus is on interconnectedness between these groups rather than on the differences between them (see Rosenthal & Levy, 2010, 2016). This approach recognizes that people of different cultural backgrounds interact every day and have been interacting throughout history. Contemporary cultures and its members are shaped by these interactions, implying important intertwining between them. Boundaries between groups are therefore blurred. Nevertheless, polyculturalism differs from assimilation in its emphasis on celebrating peoples' cultural uniqueness and complexity, rather than encouraging them to give up their heritage and to adapt to a dominant group identity (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012).

Research has found that polyculturalism can overcome the risk of 'parallel societies' (Sen, 2006), ethnic segregation (Sears, Citrin, Cheleden, & van Laar, 1999), and perceived group essentialism (Bernardo et al., 2016) that is associated with multiculturalism's strong

emphasis on differences between cultural groups. Moreover, studies show that polyculturalism is associated with pro-diversity attitudes like multiculturalism, and contrasts with assimilationist attitudes (see Rosenthal & Levy, 2012). In the present study, we explore whether ethnic minorities more strongly endorse polyculturalism than multiculturalism, given its benefits highlighted above, or whether the somewhat assimilationist connotation focusing on the mixing of identities rather than group distinctiveness might make it a less preferred pro-diversity ideology among ethnic minorities.

Similar to polyculturalism, interculturalism is another diversity ideology that has been put forward as an alternative to multiculturalism through, for example, policies, education and also research (Verkuyten et al., 2020). Despite some variations and different usages of this term depending on the national context, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, for example, have adopted an "intercultural policy" whereby cultures are encouraged to interact (positively) in public spaces through "intercultural dialogue" (Council of Europe, 2008; UNESCO, 2009). Political philosophers and scientists consider this European version of interculturalism to emphasize the three components of unity, identity flexibility, and dialogue (for a review, see Meer, Modood, & Zapata-Barrero, 2016). Specifically, interculturalism (a) promotes national unity and commonalities against the backdrop of cultural differences, (b) promotes new flexible, mixed, and changeable forms of identity, including hybrid identities and mixed race individuals, through recognition of cultural fusions and blending of cultures, and (c) promotes intergroup dialogue as key to promoting positive relations in diverse countries, all at the same time.

Empirical research has established that these three features of interculturalism collectively emerge as components of an overarching interculturalism construct in lay people's understanding (Verkuyten et al., 2020). Importantly, studies from the USA, the Netherlands, and New Zealand also establish that interculturalism improves majority group members' attitudes and behaviors toward ethnic minority groups, and increases their desire for intergroup contact (Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020a; Yogeeswaran, Verkuyten, & Ealam, 2020). However, no research has examined whether ethnic minorities endorse interculturalism as a strategy for managing diversity.

Recent research has also shown that among majorities, interculturalism is positively associated with multiculturalism, and negatively associated with assimilation (Verkuyten et al., 2020). While no research has empirically examined its association with (or distinctiveness from) polyculturalism, interculturalism's identity flexibility component is what theoretically brings them closest together. Both of these ideologies indeed emphasize interconnectedness and mutual influence between cultural groups. The main distinguishing feature is that polyculturalism implies a rather descriptive construal of how societies and individuals function and have historically functioned, whereas identity flexibility (and interculturalism more generally) involves prescriptive beliefs regarding how societies and individuals *ought* to function (see Verkuyten et al., 2020; Yogeeswaran et al., 2020). We therefore explored whether ethnic minority endorsement of interculturalism differs depending on the feature of interculturalism under scrutiny (i.e., identity flexibility, dialogue, unity), and how these three features relate to endorsement of other diversity ideologies.

### *Identification and diversity ideologies*

The second goal of the present research is to examine how minority members' ethnic and national identification are associated with their endorsement of polyculturalism and interculturalism, in addition to multiculturalism and assimilation. When examining how people can consider their group membership to be at different levels of self-categorization, social psychologists have made a distinction between subgroup and superordinate identification (e.g., Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009; Dovidio, Gaertner, Ufkes, Saguy, & Pearson, 2016; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Among ethnic minorities, this can refer to their ethnic and national identification, in particular. As Guimond et al. (2014) point out, diversity ideologies are defined and distinguished from each other by the different ways in which they address minority ethnic and national identification.

Given that minority identity is a key feature of diversity ideologies and that social identities provide a lens through which people make sense of the world and through which attitudes are shaped (Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010), the way in which a minority group member construes their sense of identity should be associated with their support for particular diversity ideologies. By definition, for example, assimilation prioritizes national identification by recategorizing subgroup identities into a superordinate, national category (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993; Guimond et al., 2014). Furthermore, national identification among minorities can imply the legitimization of the status quo and existing inequalities (see for example Bilali, 2014), which assimilation is known to do (Levin et al., 2012). Research shows that the more strongly people identify with a given country, the more strongly they support an approach to managing cultural diversity which favors and preserves nationally defining beliefs, norms and values (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014b). In the present study, given the United States' melting pot analogy, higher national identification among ethnic minorities is expected to be associated with stronger support for assimilation.

National identification has sometimes been shown to be associated with support for multiculturalism among minorities (see Grant & Robertson, 2014; Ng Tseung Wong & Verkuyten, 2016), but only when the country itself is defined by multicultural norms and when minorities are therefore encouraged to identify with their ethnic group as well (see also Nandi & Platt, 2015). Multiculturalism, by definition, encourages minorities to identify with their ethnic group. Indeed, the more minorities identify with their ethnic group, the more they may *reject* assimilation (Verkuyten, 2005) and support, instead, an approach which (sometimes) functions to contest the status quo and existing inequalities like multiculturalism (see also Simon, 2011). It is therefore likely that ethnic identification is predominantly associated with support for multiculturalism among minorities, particularly in a melting pot country like the USA.

The link between minority ethnic and national identification with polyculturalism is harder to predict because polyculturalism, by definition, views identities in a nuanced fashion (Morris et al., 2015; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010, 2012, 2016). Some studies on polyculturalism have included measures of identification (Bernardo, Rosenthal, & Levy, 2013; Rosenthal, Levy, & Moss, 2012), showing that both national (Bernardo et al., 2013, Study 1) and ethnic (Rosenthal et al., 2012, Study 2) identification are positively associated

with support for this diversity ideology. However, these studies were conducted primarily among majority group members and therefore provide limited insight into minority identifications and polyculturalism.

In a similar way, it is unclear how minorities' identification with their ethnic and national group relates to their endorsement of interculturalism. As interculturalism involves the three interrelated components of unity, identity flexibility, and dialogue, it may be that both group identifications have a nuanced relationship with endorsement of each of these components. For example, the unity component of interculturalism, with its focus on commonalities between people within a country (despite their differences), could have a stronger relationship with national identification, similar to assimilation. However, identity flexibility and dialogue could show strong relationships with both ethnic and national identification among minorities, as these components of interculturalism imply generally bringing people and groups together alongside their differences, similar to polyculturalism.

Accordingly, after examining the degree to which ethnic minorities support interculturalism and polyculturalism as new diversity ideologies, we explore how their ethnic and national identification relate to this support, and how these associations compare to the relations between ethnic and national identification with endorsement of assimilation and multiculturalism.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were recruited online by Qualtrics' panel services which maintain a large national database of American adults. The total sample for the study included 418 adult ethnic minority U.S. citizens from around the country. Participants came from various parts of the USA, with the largest proportions living in California (12 %), Florida (7%), Illinois, Texas, and New York (6% each), and the rest dispersed across an additional 38 states. After excluding those who completed the questionnaire abnormally fast (two times faster than the median speed of the sample, see Leiner, 2013), the final sample included 349 participants.[2] The majority self-identified as "Black or African American" ($n = 188$)[3], and substantial portions self-identified as "Asian American" ($n = 63$), "Hispanic" (but not White; $n = 47$), "Multiracial American" ($n = 17$), or "Native American or Alaska Native" ($n = 16$; the remainder were mostly mixed race). The sample was composed primarily of women (73 %), ages ranged from 18 to 73 years ($M = 36.87$, $SD = 14.17$), almost all participants had at least completed high school (98 %; 28 % having high school as their highest level of education and 28 % having completed at least a Bachelor degree), and the median income was in the range of $25,000 to $50,000 per year (29 % of participants within this range, 25 % making less than $15,000 per year, and 12 % making more than $100,000 per year).

### *Measures*

All measures used a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) (see supplementary material for exact item wording).

#### *Assimilation ideology*

Three items taken from Guimond et al. (2014) were used to assess support for assimilation (α = .83), for example, "People who come to the US should change their behavior to be more like Americans".[4]

#### *Multicultural ideology*

Support for multiculturalism was assessed using five items taken from previous work (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012; α = .84), for example, "There are differences between racial and ethnic groups, which are important to recognize".

#### *Polycultural ideology*

Support for polyculturalism was measured using five items taken from previous work (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012; α = ..85), for example, "Different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups influence each other".

#### *Intercultural ideology*

Support for interculturalism was measured using 12 items, divided into the three sub-dimensions and taken from Verkuyten et al. (2020). The overarching factor of interculturalism was reliable (α = .89), as were the four items forming each of the subscales (sense of unity IU, α = .82, for example, "Despite cultural differences, all groups together form American society"; identity flexibility IF, α = .74, for example, "The cultural identity of people is not fixed, but very changeable"; and dialogue ID, α = .89, for example, "Only by really listening to each other, differences can be reconciled").

#### *National identification*

National identification was assessed using four items adapted from previous research (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Phinney & Ong,

[2] Findings are similar when analyses are conducted on the full sample.

[3] We also conducted all analyses on this African American sub-sample. Unless indicated otherwise, interpretation of results was identical.

[4] Four items taken from Hahn et al. (2015) measuring assimilation were also available in the dataset. When using these items in lieu of the reported three items, interpretation of results was the same.

2007; Postmes, Haslam, & Jans, 2013; α = .93), for example, "I identify with America".

*Ethnic identification*

Ethnic identification was measured using the same four items referring to identification with "my ethnic/racial group" instead of the national group (α = .92).

## Results

*Testing factorial structure*

Prior to hypothesis testing, we checked that our measured constructs were empirically distinct from one another. To do so, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with Mplus Version 8.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 1988-2018Muthén & Muthén, 1988-2018) on the total 33 items presented above. Cut-off criteria of fit indices were determined according to Hu and Bentler (1999) and Lai and Green (2016), and model comparisons were made using chi-square difference scores as well as Akaike Information Criteria (AIC).

A model was first examined in which all 33 items loaded on a single factor and model fit was poor $\chi^2(495) = 4420.43$, AIC = 40469.21, CFI = .45, RMSEA = .15, SRMR = .13. A second model including the six factors representing the four diversity ideologies as well as the two identifications was then tested and although model fit was significantly better than the first model, $\Delta\chi^2(15) = 2991.7$, $p < .001$, the fit was still unsatisfactory, and borderline acceptable, $\chi^2(480) = 1428.77$, AIC = 37507.54, CFI = .87, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .07; Indeed, a third model including eight factors representing the three components of interculturalism as well as the three other diversity ideologies and the two identification measures was then tested and the model fit was satisfactory, $\chi^2(467) = 966.80$, AIC = 37071.57, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .06, and was significantly better than the second model, $\Delta\chi^2(13) = 461.97$, $p < .001$. This shows that all diversity ideologies (including interculturalism divided into its three components) and ethnic and national identification loaded on separate factors.

A fourth model which was the same as the third model but which incorporated a supplementary second order factor predicting the three components of interculturalism was finally calculated and the model fit was also satisfactory, $\chi^2(477) = 1043.90$, AIC = 37128.67, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .07, although less so than the previous model, $\Delta\chi^2(10) = 77.11$, $p < .001$. Because the overall alpha for the single, overarching interculturalism scale was good and because the fit of the model including a second order factor was satisfactory, we not only focus our analysis on the three dimensions of interculturalism separately[5] but also show results for interculturalism as a single construct.

*Comparing endorsement of diversity ideologies*

Table 1 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations for all latent variables (including interculturalism as an overarching factor and with its three components). Of particular importance for the first research question, participants generally showed rather favorable attitudes towards pro-diversity ideologies (multiculturalism, polyculturalism, and interculturalism), but less favorable attitudes towards assimilation where the sample mean was below the midpoint of the scale. After identifying relative latent variable means via the effect coding method (see Little, Slegers, & Card, 2006), Wald Chi-square tests showed that support for multiculturalism was marginally stronger than support for polyculturalism, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 5.63$, $p = .018$ (Bonferroni corrected critical $p$-value = .017),[6] and that there was no difference between support for multiculturalism and interculturalism, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 0.77$, $p = .380$, nor between polyculturalism and interculturalism, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 1.54$, $p = .214$. Among the interculturalism's sub-components, dialogue was the most preferred, followed by unity which was supported less than dialogue, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 54.64$, $p < .001$, and finally identity flexibility which was supported less than unity, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 15.60$, $p < .001$.

Correlations show that the pro-diversity ideologies were all strongly positively correlated to each other. Moreover, assimilation stood separately from the rest; its only (weak) positive correlation was with the identity flexibility component of interculturalism. It is also worth noting that national and ethnic identification were positively correlated ($r = .33$), suggesting that the more participants identified with their ethnic group, the more they also tended to identify with the USA.

[5] The factorial structure of only interculturalism was also tested using confirmatory factor analysis. When all 12 items loaded on a single factor, model fit was poor, $\chi^2(54) = 546.80$, AIC = 14099.16, CFI = .76, RMSEA = .16, SRMR = .09. However, a three-factor model distinguishing between interculturalism's components showed good fit, $\chi^2(51) = 155.45$, AIC = 13713.80, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .05; significantly better than the single-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 391.36$, $p < .001$. Finally, a third model in which the three factors were forced to be orthogonal to one another was also examined and the model fit was once again poor, $\chi^2(54) = 458.66$, AIC = 14011.01, CFI = .80, RMSEA = .15, SRMR = .27. This confirms that the three dimensions of interculturalism are conceptually distinct but strongly associated with one another.

[6] When conducting analyses on the African American sub-sample, support for multiculturalism ($M = 5.22$) was significantly stronger than support for polyculturalism ($M = 4.99$; $p < .001$).

**Table 1**
Means (standard deviations) and correlations between identification and diversity ideology variables.

| Variable | *M (SD)* | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AS | 3.57 (1.50) | .02 | .03 | .03 | .08 | .17** | −.11 | .26*** | −.12* |
| MC | 5.23 (0.99) | | .81*** | .70*** | .45*** | .50*** | .67*** | .22*** | .41*** |
| PC | 5.12 (1.03) | | | .81*** | .58*** | .55*** | .77*** | .24*** | .31*** |
| IC | 5.18 (1.05) | | | | | | | .27*** | .38*** |
| IU | 5.10 (1.27) | | | | | .66*** | .63*** | .39*** | .22*** |
| IF | 4.84 (0.99) | | | | | | .69*** | .23*** | .27*** |
| ID | 5.59 (1.16) | | | | | | | .19** | .37*** |
| NatID | 5.08 (1.66) | | | | | | | | .33*** |
| EthID | 5.31 (1.57) | | | | | | | | |

*Note*. AS represents assimilation, MC represents multiculturalism, PC represents polyculturalism, IU represents Sense of Unity dimension of Interculturalism, IF represents Identity Flexibility dimension of Interculturalism, ID represents Dialogue dimension of Interculturalism.

*Examining the relationship between minority identification and diversity ideologies*

To examine whether and how national and ethnic identification are associated with the diversity ideologies, we used structural equation modelling (SEM). National and ethnic identification were included as distinct predictors of each of the diversity ideologies.[7] All were latent variables and when age, gender, education, income and ethnicity were included as control variables, interpretation of results was identical (see Table A1 in supplementary material).

In a first model, we included the four main diversity ideologies as outcomes, with interculturalism as a single construct (see the second CFA model presented above). Regression coefficients showed that both national and ethnic identification were positively associated with interculturalism (respectively $b = .12$, 95 % *CI* [.04, .20], $SE = .04$, $p = .004$; $b = .22$, 95 % *CI* [.13, .31], $SE = .05$, $p < .001$). Results for the other three diversity ideologies were the same as in the final model, reported next.

In a second model, we included the three different components of interculturalism together with the other diversity ideologies as outcomes (see the third CFA model presented above). Standardized regression coefficients, standard errors, and confidence intervals are summarized in Table 2.

National identification was positively associated with assimilation and with polyculturalism, as well as with the sense of unity (IU) and identity flexibility (IF) dimensions of interculturalism. Ethnic identification was negatively associated with assimilation and was positively associated with multiculturalism and with polyculturalism, as well as with the identity flexibility (IF) and dialogue (ID) dimensions of interculturalism.

Comparing the three dimensions of interculturalism and the three other diversity ideologies indicates that dialogue (ID) and multiculturalism showed a similar pattern of relationships with group identifications: National identification was not related to either ideology, in a similar way, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 0.00$, $p = .950$, and ethnic identification was positively related to both, also in a similar way, and Wald $\chi^2(1) = 0.83$, $p = .361$. Furthermore, identity flexibility (IF) and polyculturalism showed a similar pattern of relationships whereby both national and ethnic identification had positive associations that were equally strong, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 0.06$, $p = .804$, and Wald $\chi^2(1) = 1.14$, $p = .286$, respectively. Finally, sense of unity (IU) and assimilation showed a similar positive association with national identification, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 0.00$, $p = .987$. However, whereas ethnic identification was *negatively* associated with assimilation, ethnic identification tended to be positively related ($p = .084$) with the unity dimension of interculturalism, and these associations were significant different from each other, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 15.42$, $p < .001$. In other words, unlike assimilation, the unity dimension of interculturalism did not seem to pit national and ethnic identification against each other among ethnic minorities.

## Discussion

The present study had two overarching goals: (1) to examine levels of endorsement of intercultural and polycultural diversity ideologies compared to the more common approaches of assimilation and multiculturalism with an ethnic minority sample, and (2) to look at how national and ethnic identification among ethnic minorities are associated with endorsement of assimilation, multiculturalism, polyculturalism, and interculturalism ideologies.

With regards to the first research question and consistent with existing research (Verkuyten, 2005; Wolsko et al., 2006), we found that compared to assimilation, ethnic minorities prefer multiculturalism as an approach to managing diversity. Yet, while support for multiculturalism was particularly strong, support for interculturalism was not significantly different, and support for polyculturalism was not far off either (only marginally less supported than multiculturalism).

Nevertheless, when interculturalism was divided into its subdimensions, we did find important nuances in ethnic minority endorsement of this ideology. Specifically, dialogue was most strongly supported, followed by unity, and finally, identity flexibility. It therefore seems that ethnic minorities are most concerned about establishing effective communication with other cultural groups in

[7] Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the model including two dimensions of identity ($\chi^2(19) = 94.16$, AIC = 9129.33, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .11, SRMR = .03) fit the data significantly better than the model in which all eight identity items loaded on one single dimension ($\chi^2(20) = 1091.70$, AIC = 10124.88, CFI = .54, RMSEA = .39, SRMR = .24), $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 997.54$, $p < .001$.

**Table 2**
Standardized regression coefficients (standard errors) and confidence intervals for model including national and ethnic identification predicting six diversity ideologies.

| | National identification | | Ethnic identification | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Diversity ideology | *b (SE)* | 95 % *CI* | *b (SE)* | 95 % *CI* |
| AS | .33*** (.06) | [.22, .45] | −.23*** (.06) | [-.35, -.12] |
| MC | .09 (.06) | [-.02, .21] | .38*** (.06) | [.27, .49] |
| PC | .15* (.06) | [.03, .27] | .26*** (.06) | [.15, .38] |
| IU | .36*** (.06) | [.25, .47] | .10 (.06) | [-.01, .22] |
| IF | .16* (.07) | [.03, .28] | .22** (.06) | [.10, .35] |
| ID | .07 (.06) | [-.05, .19] | .35*** (.06) | [.24, .46] |

*Note*. AS represents assimilation, MC represents multiculturalism, PC represents polyculturalism, IU represents Sense of Unity dimension of Interculturalism, IF represents Identity Flexibility dimension of Interculturalism, ID represents Dialogue dimension of Interculturalism. *b* represents unstandardized regression coefficients, *SE* represents standard error, 95 % *CI* represents 95 % confidence interval.
*** $p < .001$.
** $p < .01$.
* $p < .05$.

society (including majorities) via pro-diversity ideologies, rather than meshing their ethnic identity together with other (e.g., nationally dominant) ones. While establishing social unity and intermixing between identities is also important to them, this is secondary and may complement, rather than undermine, this more foundational interest in intergroup communication. The fact that unity was more strongly supported than identity flexibility, however, may by driven by the idea that unity, within the context of interculturalism, faintly acknowledges the backdrop of differences (and therefore, to some extent, ethnic minority distinctiveness), while identity flexibility explicitly encourages the merging of identities (see below). With that said, our ethnic minority sample largely supported *all* pro-diversity ideologies (including interculturalism's subcomponents; all means were above the midpoint of the scale), and opposition was only shown towards assimilation, the ideology which is less favorable to diversity. This is important to consider when trying to determine which approach is likely to best satisfy the needs and preferences of both minorities and majorities alike.

Results concerning ethnic and national identification (i.e., the second research question) converged with the above interpretations. Indeed, if protecting their distinctive ethnic identity is of importance to minorities (see also Deschamps, 1982; Gale & Staerklé, 2019), ethnic identification would be significantly associated with their endorsement of multiculturalism, which is the case here. Similarly, national identification was positively associated with support for assimilation and ethnic identification was *negatively* associated with support for this diversity ideology. This is because assimilation is focused primarily on superordinate national identification (Guimond et al., 2014), and research shows that conceptions of national identity in the USA seem to coincide with White ethnic identity, thereby excluding minority identities (Devos & Mohamed, 2014; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014b).

But many ethnic minorities not only feel strongly identified with their ethnic group; they can also have high levels of national identification, too. Examining the relationships between national and ethnic identification with support for polyculturalism and interculturalism (as an overarching construct) showed how *both* ethnic and national identification are simultaneously associated with support for these diversity ideologies. This is interesting as both polyculturalism and interculturalism attempt to overcome the respective drawbacks and risks of multiculturalism and assimilation, thereby creating a bridge between the two (Meer et al., 2016; Morris et al., 2015). The result is also consistent with the idea that both of these ideologies prioritize *all* identities to the same degree (because identities are viewed as intermixing; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010, 2012, 2016; Verkuyten et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, when examining relationships between identification and interculturalism divided into its sub-components, nuances became apparent. In particular, results for identity flexibility as a component of interculturalism and polyculturalism were the same. Therefore, the conceptual definitions of polyculturalism and identity flexibility as similarly addressing minority (intermixing) identity dynamics are supported by our data. It is important to remember that polyculturalism and identity flexibility were also both, respectively, the least favored pro-diversity ideologies among our ethnic minority sample (despite that support for polyculturalism was just as strong as support for the composite version of interculturalism), perhaps because they ignore a basic concern for their *distinct* ethnic group membership (Brewer, 1991).

In a similar fashion, the dialogue component of interculturalism overlaps with multiculturalism in that only ethnic identification (not national identification) was positively associated with both. The original political definition of multiculturalism does highlight effective communication between distinct cultural groups as a basic objective (Kymlicka, 2012). Thereby, while groups may be considered to be fixed and distinct, risking essentialism and segregation under multicultural thought (Wilton et al., 2019), this may not be the way ethnic minorities interpret the ideology. Ethnic minorities (particularly those who feel a pronounced sense of attachment to their ethnic group) also seem to place high value on dialogue and intergroup communication.

Finally, results for unity as a component of interculturalism and assimilation were rather similar. Specifically, national identification was the only form of identification that was positively associated with both assimilation and unity. This is unsurprising given their respective emphasis on national cohesion. Nevertheless, unlike assimilation, ethnic identification was not *negatively* associated with unity - the relationship was even marginally *positive*. Therefore, this component of interculturalism (at least in the USA) may serve as a more inclusive approach to establishing social cohesion by avoiding disapproval of minorities who feel strongly connected to their ethnic group.

It therefore appears that the three components of interculturalism manage to grasp identity dynamics inherent to the other three

diversity ideologies, in line with its philosophical underpinnings. In this way, interculturalism, as a conceptual whole, might create a bridge between assimilation, multiculturalism, and polyculturalism. If each of these diversity ideologies has their respective weaknesses, then interculturalism may serve to overcome them, so long as ethnic minorities' need for both inclusion and distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991), and communication, remains intact.

## Limitations and future directions

A strength of the present study was its focus on a sample of ethnic minorities in the USA to examine endorsement of four diversity ideologies and their relation to minority ethnic and national identification. Because the data was correlational, future research could adopt experimental or longitudinal designs to examine and confirm the extent to which national and ethnic identification are antecedents to ethnic minority endorsement of diversity ideologies (see for example Verkuyten, 2009a, from a majority perspective; although in real life, bi-directional and mutual influences are probably the rule rather than the exception). A valuable future direction would also be to examine how colorblindness, as another well-known diversity ideology (see Hahn et al., 2015; Leslie et al., 2020; Whitley & Webster, 2019), may compare to the ideologies examined herein. Moreover, a question that comes out of this study is to what degree interculturalism's components manage to fit into one single, overarching construct among minorities. Verkuyten et al. (2020) found that among three large majority group samples in the USA and the Netherlands, the overarching construct did fit the data just as well as when interculturalism was divided into its three components. Future research should examine to what extent this is (or is not) replicable among (a representative sample of) minority and majority respondents in other contexts within and outside of the USA.

As the present findings are the first to contrast ethnic minorities' endorsement of these four diversity ideologies, as well as the differential relationships with their ethnic and national identification, it is important to replicate and extend these findings to other national contexts. Specifically, as the USA tends to be a melting pot nation with only a moderate score on the Multiculturalism Policy Index (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013), cross-national examination of the research questions explored here may provide greater insight into how the sociocultural norms of the societal context impact on ethnic minorities' experiences with these diversity ideologies. Nevertheless, when thinking of countries with higher scores on the Multiculturalism Policy Index, we imagine that interculturalism, and particularly the components of dialogue and unity, would still be quite strongly supported (see Kymlicka, 2012, for an overview of what constitutes this version of multiculturalism). Moreover, the blurring of group boundaries inherent to polyculturalism and the identity flexibility component of interculturalism may remain secondary to ethnic minorities, as preserving their ethnic identity and distinctiveness may remain a priority regardless of the normative context.

However, future work should also examine if living in a local context with high levels of diversity or superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) influences ethnic minority experiences with these ideologies. It may be that in local contexts of superdiversity (e.g. neighborhoods, schools), where cultural mixing and integration of diverse perspectives is normative in everyday life, ethnic minorities may show greater support for intercultural and polycultural perspectives that encourage such blurring of group boundaries. It may also be that support for intercultural and polycultural perspectives is contingent on the *type* of minority group(s) in question (e.g., native, or "newer" vs. "older" immigrant groups). The present research provides a useful starting point for future exploration into ethnic minorities' support for these diversity ideologies, and how their ethnic and national identification relates to these.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary material related to this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.01.007.

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