RESEARCH ARTICLE

Interculturalism as a strategy to manage diversity: Moving psychological research beyond colorblindness and multiculturalism

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Abstract

The 21st century has highlighted major dilemmas on how to best manage diversity in our increasingly plural societies. Various strategies for managing diversity have been promoted to address this challenge including assimilation, colorblindness, and multiculturalism. However, empirical evidence has revealed that each poses weaknesses for intergroup relations. As a result, policy-makers and political theorists have promoted interculturalism as an alternate strategy that addresses new and emerging realities revolving around superdiversity, cultural fusions, and mixed forms of identity. In the current paper, we explore interculturalism as a pro-diversity ideology that takes a more dynamic view of cultural identity where individuals belonging to different social groups are supported to interact and influence each other leading to new and complex self-understandings. We consider the meaning and conceptualization of interculturalism, its psychological correlates, its implications for intergroup relations, and how minority group members perceive interculturalism. Given that empirical research on interculturalism is in its infancy, we further consider gaps in our understanding of the topic and suggest avenues for future research.

KEYWORDS
colorblindness, diversity, interculturalism, intergroup relations, multiculturalism

1 | INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has witnessed mass migration of people around the world, permitted through advances in technology and globalization. This movement of people has led to increases in ethnic and cultural diversity within a variety of contexts and sectors including neighborhoods and cities, education, business, local and national government. With increases in cultural and ethnic diversity come questions of how to manage societies that are comprised of this diversity in a way that minimizes conflict and hostility between groups and permits all members of society to thrive. Diversity has nuanced implications for pluralistic nations benefiting certain aspects of social life, while also creating new challenges (see Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020a). For example, while multicultural beliefs celebrating diversity have been shown to benefit minority and disadvantaged groups, at least in western nations (but see Mauritius, Malaysia; Ng Tseung Wong & Verkuyten, 2015, 2018), they have also been shown to backfire among the majority and to face resistance particularly when put into practice (Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014; also see Whitley & Webster, 2019).

The current paper explores the literature on diversity ideologies, which represent strategies or beliefs about the ideal ways to manage diversity. While previous reviews on the topic have explored the implications of assimilation, colorblindness, and multiculturalism (three popular approaches for managing diversity), the current paper considers a novel diversity ideology (interculturalism) that has largely been ignored in the psychological literature. Interculturalism is a pro-diversity strategy that places special emphasis on *stimulating intergroup dialog, promoting cultural fusions and identity complexity,* and *developing a sense of substantial commonality alongside differences.* Interculturalism is discussed by policy-makers (Council of Europe, 2008; UNESCO, 2009) and political philosophers (e.g., Cantle, 2016; Zapata-Barrero, 2016) as an alternate strategy to multiculturalism for achieving equal and harmonious relations in diverse communities and societies. While multiculturalism tends to take a more static culturalist view to identity requiring the recognition and affirmation of separate cultural traditions, interculturalism takes a more dynamic culturalist view where people are seen as engaging in both their heritage culture and incorporating multiple other influences into their sense of self. Interculturalism is believed to be a more suitable approach for addressing the complex realities emerging from superdiversity, or the new reality of many nations having an increasing number of people who are transnationally connected, possessing multiple origins, and developing complex senses of self (Vertovec, 2007). Interculturalism, therefore, focuses on the principle that new realities require a more dynamic reflection of identity and diversity. The current paper considers this new strategy in relation to three popular diversity strategies from the literature by situating these diversity ideologies within a conceptual framework that considers (a) the level at which associations and relationships take place in society (i.e., individual vs. group level) and (b) the basis for social cohesion in society (i.e., whether social cohesion emerges through substantive bonds and practices vs. adherence to common legal codes and procedural norms). We then consider the meaning, psychological correlates, and implications of interculturalism for intergroup relations, and conclude by suggesting directions for future work on interculturalism given psychology's limited understanding of the topic.

2 | WHAT ARE THE COMMONLY STUDIED DIVERSITY IDEOLOGIES IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Within the psychological literature, various diversity ideologies have been examined as approaches for managing diversity including: (a) assimilation, which calls for minority groups to give up their cultural origins and embrace the majority groups' culture and substantive way of life (Gordon, 1964); (b) colorblindness, which calls for ignoring group membership and focusing on the uniqueness of each individual; and (c) multiculturalism, which calls for the recognition and celebration of group differences. However, because of differences in conceptualizations, this body of work is not easy to compare and discuss. For example, the concept of multiculturalism is polysemic, making it difficult to pinpoint its exact meaning and implications, with even more variability when considering its meaning across national contexts (Cobb et al., 2020; Meer & Modood, 2012; Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020a; Ward et al., 2018). Figure 1
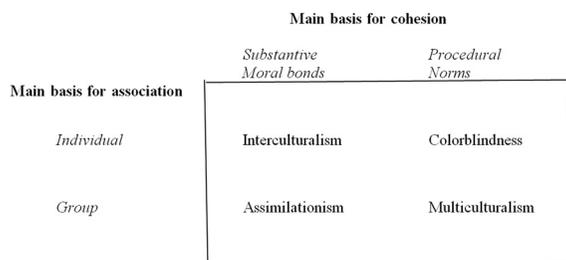
Main basis for cohesion

	Substantive Moral bonds	Procedural Norms
Main basis for association		
Individual	Interculturalism	Colorblindness
Group	Assimilationism	Multiculturalism

FIGURE 1   Four types of diversity ideologies. Adapted from Hartmann and Gerteis (2005)

provides a conceptual framework for some important distinctions between these diversity ideologies. This figure is an adaptation of Hartmann and Gerteis (2005) and uses two dimensions for distinguishing between the various approaches. One dimension refers to the main basis for social cohesion, differentiating between social cohesion emerging through substantive moral bonds and commitments ("thick") versus adherence to procedural rules and regulations ("thin"). In other words, on one end, there is a belief that social cohesion within a plural society is maintained via the content of shared values, worldviews and lifestyles, while the other end suggests that adherence to rules and regulations that guide social interactions and decision making processes is sufficient for a cohesive plural society (Hartmann & Gerteis, 2005). The second dimension concerns the basis of associations in society by reflecting on whether the primary focus is on individuals or social groups in society. Central here is the distinction between a relatively strong liberal focus on individual identities versus a relatively strong communitarian focus on group identities. The combination of these two dimensions leads to four types of diversity ideologies (see Figure 1).

2.1 | Assimilation

Historically, *assimilation* deals with group difference by eliminating it. Assimilation implies that the majority culture provides the moral bonds that are preferable to the minority culture, which are viewed instead as less desirable (Leslie et al., 2020). Assimilation as a social psychological construct has been studied using experimental priming of such a strategy or through measurement of people's endorsement of the ideology using self-reported items such as "*People who come to the country should change their behavior to be more like [Canadians/French/Germans]*" (Guimond et al., 2014; Levin et al., 2012). Adherence to assimilationist ideologies among majority group members are associated with increased prejudice toward minority groups (see meta-analyses by Leslie et al., 2020; Whitley & Webster, 2019), and this effect is especially seen when majority group members are highly identified with their ethnic or racial group (Verkuyten, 2011). Assimilation also predicts decreased situational well-being of ethnic minorities (Verkuyten, 2010) and decreased support among the majority group for policies that benefit ethnic minorities or immigrants (Wolsko et al., 2006; also see Leslie et al., 2020 meta-analysis). Such work suggests that assimilation has negative implications for minority groups in pluralistic nations. However, while the outcomes explored in the psychological literature suggest assimilation is detrimental, other social scientific evidence reveals that assimilation can be beneficial for minority groups in domains such as education, housing, and work (Alba & Nee, 2003; Brubaker, 2001). Evaluation may, therefore, depend on how assimilation is understood, as well as whether one is considering psychological, sociological, political, or economic outcomes for minority groups.

2.2 | Colorblindness

In contrast to assimilation, *colorblindness* is an ideology that emerged from the US civil rights era as a means for achieving racial equality (Plaut, 2010; Yogeeswaran et al., 2018). At its core, colorblindness calls for ignoring (racial, but also ethnic and cultural) group membership and focusing on the uniqueness of each individual in order to achieve social cohesion, equal opportunities, and equality with respect to the law (see Figure 1). Indeed, an assumption under colorblindness in relation to ethnic and cultural groups is that individuals unavoidably differ in their personal wishes and lifestyles, and that it is a "thin" basis of social cohesion through mutual respect for common procedural rules and regulations that bonds these individuals together. Colorblindness has been explored both through experimental priming of the ideology and through measuring endorsement of self-reported items such as "*It is best to judge one another as individuals rather than members of an ethnic group*" (Guimond et al., 2014; Levin et al., 2012). Over the years, however, colorblindness has taken on many meanings, and academic research has sometimes conflated the concept with other ideologies. For example, measures and manipulations of colorblindness have often conflated assimilation, colorblindness, and even meritocracy within the same construct, leading to misunderstandings and confusions over the meaning and implications of such an approach (Guimond et al., 2014; Leslie et al., 2020; Hahn et al., 2015). Given the conflation of colorblindness with other ideologies, two recent meta-analyses disentangled the unique implications of colorblindness through independent coding of available data to create a single conceptual definition of colorblindness and assimilation. These meta-analyses revealed that colorblindness, as defined at the start of this section, was associated with reduced outgroup prejudice and outgroup stereotyping (Leslie et al., 2020; Whitley & Webster, 2019). Yet, colorblindness can also be construed in such a way that it undermines support for policies that redress inequalities (Levy et al., 2005; Yogeeswaran et al., 2018; see Leslie et al., 2020 meta-analysis), reduces organizational trust among ethnic minorities (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), and can promote more unfavorable intergroup interactions because majority group members take on a prevention orientation to try and avoid doing something wrong in their intergroup interactions (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Todd & Galinsky, 2012; Vorauer et al., 2009).

2.3 | Multiculturalism

An alternate approach that is more widely discussed in many spheres including education, psychology, businesses, and government, is *multiculturalism*. At its core, multiculturalism is a group-focused ideology (Figure 1; basis of association dimension) that recognizes and celebrates cultural identities, while also emphasizing procedural rules and formal rights for social cohesion (Figure 1; basis for cohesion dimension) that allow racial, religious, and ethnic groups to maintain their group distinctiveness (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Bloemraad et al., 2008; Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014; Meer & Modood, 2012). Like assimilation and colorblindness, research has examined the implications of multiculturalism through both experimental priming of the ideology and also through measuring self-reported endorsement of items such as: "*We should help ethnic and racial minorities preserve their cultural heritage in [Canada/Netherlands/Germany]*" (Guimond et al., 2014; Levin et al., 2012). Recent meta-analyses reveal that multiculturalism can reduce outgroup prejudice and discrimination (Leslie et al., 2020; Whitley & Webster, 2019). Multiculturalism has also been shown to predict greater psychological engagement and organizational trust among ethnic minorities in the workplace (Plaut et al., 2009; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), and even smaller belongingness and achievement gaps between majority and minority students in schools (Birnbaum et al., 2021; Celeste et al., 2019). Multiculturalism is also related to greater perspective-taking and more positive intergroup interactions (Vorauer et al., 2009; Todd & Galinsky, 2012; but see Vorauer & Sasaki, 2011).

However, multiculturalism is not without negative side effects (e.g., Cobb et al., 2020). For example, it has been shown to increase perceptions of groups as having deep and unchanging properties (perceived essentialism), reifying group differences (Bernardo et al., 2016; Wilton et al., 2019), and increasing stereotypic expectations of minority groups (Gutierrez & Unzueta, 2010). Furthermore, multiculturalism has been shown to elicit resistance from the

majority group as it can increase perceived threats and be seen as excluding the majority group (Morrison et al., 2010; Plaut et al., 2011; Verkuyten, 2009; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014; also see Cobb et al., 2020). Multiculturalism can even increase support for a populist politician like Donald Trump when majority group members are reminded of demographic changes (Osborn et al., 2020) that will soon create a nation where ethnic and racial minorities collectively comprise the majority of the population (but see Alba, 2020). At a societal level, multiculturalism has been discussed as promoting fragmentation, disunity, and resentment between groups by encouraging people to think in terms of separate ethnic and cultural groups that lack shared substantial commitments (Joppke, 2004; Malik, 2015; Sen, 2006). Furthermore, successful implementation of the ideology faces an added barrier because concrete construals of multiculturalism (i.e., the implementation of its principles) have been shown to increase prejudice and social distancing toward minority groups (Mahfud et al., 2018; Rios & Wynn, 2016; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014). Even among minority groups who often prefer multicultural ideologies (Ryan et al., 2010; Hehman et al., 2012; Verkuyten, 2005), multiculturalism has been shown to promote feelings of exclusion from the national identity and a minority spotlight effect (Zou & Cheryan, 2015). Furthermore, multiculturalism can create an illusion of fairness in organizational contexts and undermine claims of racial bias (Gundemir & Galinsky, 2018; Dover et al., 2019).

Given these challenges, and the possible backlash of multiculturalism, polyculturalism has been proposed as an alternative in which cultures are construed as historically plural, interacting systems (Morris et al., 2015). By blurring boundaries between groups, polyculturalism overcomes issues of group essentialism associated with multiculturalism (Bernardo et al., 2016), while still facilitating equality beliefs, comfort with diversity, willingness for intergroup contact and friendships, and support for pro-diversity policies (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). However, due to polyculturalism's emphasis on beliefs surrounding how groups currently influence each other and importantly, *have historically impacted each other*, it lacks a prescriptive, future-oriented component, making it difficult to consider it an "ideological strategy" for managing cultural diversity. In terms of Figure 1, polyculturalism lacks a clear view on the basis of its association (i.e., whether the focus is on groups or individuals) and the basis of social cohesion (i.e., whether cohesion is primarily maintained by shared values and moral beliefs or rather the adherence to general rules and regulations). Therefore, interculturalism attempts to fill in the 4th quadrant of Figure 1 by representing a diversity ideology that involves substantive moral bonds as the basis for social cohesion and an individual focused relational level (described further below).

3 | WHAT IS INTERCULTURALISM?

Similar to the multiple understandings of colorblindness and multiculturalism, interculturalism also has multiple understandings (Barrett, 2013).[1] Here, we focus on a version of interculturalism that is proposed by policy-makers and international organizations including the Council of Europe (2008) and UNESCO (2009).[2] As shown in Figure 1, interculturalism differs from multiculturalism by its relatively stronger focus on the individual as the basis for social associations and on substantive moral bonds as a basis for unity and social cohesion.[3] Interculturalism emphasizes the importance of developing common moral understandings across differences through ongoing dialog and exchange. The focus is on individual members of different groups interacting with each other leading to new and complex self-understandings, and forging substantive and shared commitments. While the "group-ness" of multiculturalism (Figure 1) tends to view people as deeply molded by their specific heritage culture thereby requiring equal possibilities for affirming their distinct group identities, interculturalism emphasizes the importance of dialog, recognizes multiple cultural influences that shape individuals' sense of self, and focuses on the benefits of a shared and unifying sense of commitment and belonging (Meer & Modood, 2012; Meer et al., 2016; Sze & Powell, 2004).[4]

Psychologically, the features of interculturalism, including its focus on dialog, individual identity complexity, and substantive unity, map onto various social psychological theories. For example, an emphasis on dialog as a means to improving intergroup relations would be supported by the large body of research on the benefits of positive contact for prejudice reduction (for reviews, see Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006 meta-analysis).

Such research reveals that positive contact reduces prejudice through reduced anxiety, increased outgroup knowledge, perspective taking, openness to experiences, and cognitive flexibility (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Hodson et al., 2018). Similarly, other research on the benefits of intercultural experience suggests that exposure to cultural fusions can reduce prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination through decreased cognitive closure such as reduced desire for predictability, structure, decisiveness, closed-mindedness, and reduced discomfort with ambiguity (Tadmor et al., 2012).

The focus on acknowledging and *promoting* new mixed and plural forms of identity can also be beneficial because identity complexity and flexibility are associated with reduced prejudice and increased social acceptance (e.g., Miller et al., 2009; Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Sanatkar et al., 2018; Schmid et al., 2009; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012). Indeed, psychological research reveals that low social identity complexity is associated with prejudice toward outgroups by increasing "us-them" boundaries in the absence of cross-cutting categories (e.g., Crisp & Hewstone, 2006). Identity complexity can instead reduce prejudice by weakening the psychological motive for (positive) distinctiveness, by blurring group boundaries, and by providing psychological resources for individuals as they have multiple identities to rely on (Jetten et al., 2012). A focus on new mixed forms of identity also helps undermine essentialist group thinking by promoting a more dynamic view of identity (Verkuyten et al., 2020). And finally, the focus on unity against the backdrop of differences is a reaction to the problems emerging from assimilation's strong push for unity by shedding differences, on the one hand, versus multiculturalism's strong focus on group distinctiveness that can lead to segregation and overlooking of shared values and ideals, on the other. In this way, interculturalism relates to the literature on dual identity and recategorization (for reviews, see Dovidio et al., 2009, 2016), as well as the benefits of superordinate goals for decreasing intergroup conflict (Sherif, 1961). Based on the above social psychological research, interculturalism may be a beneficial approach to intergroup relations by capitalizing on the strengths of earlier diversity ideologies and addressing the limitations of each. In the section that follows, we turn to the emerging empirical research on this new diversity ideology.

4 | IS INTERCULTURALISM EMPIRICALLY DISTINCT FROM OTHER DIVERSITY IDEOLOGIES?

A key question for social psychologists is whether interculturalism is a distinct approach to managing diversity in lay people's eyes. Using three national samples of majority group members, Verkuyten et al. (2020) examined whether a new measure of interculturalism is empirically distinct from multiculturalism, and whether interculturalism has overlap with assimilationist ideologies. Data from two national samples in the Netherlands first revealed that survey questions reflecting multiculturalism and interculturalism indeed allude to empirically distinct constructs. Using confirmatory factor analyses, a 12-item measure of interculturalism with three subscales capturing identity flexibility (e.g., "*The cultural identity of people is not fixed, but very changeable*"), unity (e.g., "*Unity against the backdrop of diversity should be the [American/Dutch] motto*"), and intergroup dialog (e.g., "*In interactions with people who are different, something new and valuable can develop*") were found to be independent from established measures of multiculturalism. However, multiculturalism and interculturalism were highly correlated ($r_s > 0.60$), indicating that both pro-diversity ideologies do have similarities. In the USA, interculturalism and multiculturalism were also established to be empirically distinguishable, but interrelated ideologies.

One concern about interculturalism could be that its emphasis on national unity, dialog between people of different groups, and identity flexibility, allowing for the emergence of new forms of belonging, may be interpreted by majority and minority groups as implying that minority identities would be relegated relatively more to the background. This is why it is important to examine if interculturalism and assimilation are also empirically distinct constructs. Using a national sample of White Americans, interculturalism and assimilation were found to be uncorrelated and this was the case across all three subscales of interculturalism ($-0.03 > rs > 0.03$; Verkuyten et al., 2020). Moreover, using a large sample of racial and ethnic minorities in the USA (predominantly African Americans), Gale et al. (2021) found that en-

dorsement of assimilation is empirically distinct from all three subscales of interculturalism. Taken together, such findings demonstrate that interculturalism, while overlapping with multiculturalism, is an empirically distinct construct in lay people's eyes, and that interculturalism is also entirely independent from assimilation (Gale et al., 2021; Verkuyten et al., 2020; also see Mansouri & Modood, 2020).

5 | HOW IS INTERCULTURALISM RELATED TO VARIOUS KEY INTERGROUP FACTORS?

Given the novelty of interculturalism in the psychological literature, it is also important to examine how interculturalism endorsement relates to various well-established constructs to better understand its nomological network. Using three national samples from the Netherlands and the USA, Verkuyten et al. (2020) examined correlates of interculturalism and various individual difference variables such as social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994), social conformity (a component of right-wing authoritarianism; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2015), perspective-taking (Davis, 1983), as well as intergroup factors such as perceived group essentialism (Haslam & Whelan, 2008), de-provincialization (Pettigrew, 1997), and outgroup prejudice. Across all three studies, interculturalism was found to have a uniquely negative relationship with SDO, social conformity, and outgroup prejudice. It was also found to have a uniquely positive relationship with a less parochial worldview and a willingness to engage in intergroup contact. This occurred even while controlling for the relationship between the same variables with multiculturalism. Moreover, these findings were consistent across both national contexts (Netherlands and USA) indicating that interculturalism has a uniquely beneficial relationship with important intergroup factors in different societies.

Indeed, in the same research, interculturalism was also found to be positively associated with perspective taking, but negatively associated with resistance to change (Oreg, 2003), perceived group essentialism, entitativity, distinctiveness threat, and identity uncertainty (Wagoner et al., 2017), over and above any relationships with multiculturalism and assimilation. The negative associations with group-focused constructs (i.e., group-based essentialism, entitativity, and distinctiveness threat) indicates that interculturalism is more focused on individuals over groups (Figure 1; relational dimension), and the positive associations with perspective taking, contact willingness, and being less parochial highlights the importance of wanting to develop shared substantive commitments (Figure 1: social cohesion dimension). Therefore, these correlates not only demonstrate interculturalism's associations with key intergroup factors, they also clarify its position in our conceptual framework.

6 | WHAT ARE SOME INTERGROUP IMPLICATIONS OF INTERCULTURALISM?

While the above data provide a starting point in understanding how *endorsement* of interculturalism correlates with various individual difference factors (e.g., SDO, social conformity, perspective taking) and intergroup outcomes (e.g., outgroup prejudice, social distancing, parochial worldview), it is unclear whether the institutional *promotion* of interculturalism as a strategy for managing diversity impacts intergroup relations in positive or negative ways. To understand the utility of a diversity ideology in a pluralistic nation, it is important to consider how exposure to such a message impacts on people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Therefore, data from three culturally diverse nations (the USA, New Zealand, and Netherlands) explored this question.

First, across two experiments in the USA, Yogeeswaran and colleagues (2021) developed a new interculturalism prime to parallel a multiculturalism prime widely used in the social psychological literature (i.e., Morrison et al., 2010; Verkuyten, 2010; Vorauer et al., 2009; Wilton et al., 2019; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014). Both primes were of comparable length, had identical format, and introduced the importance of building positive relations between different ethnic groups. However, they diverged in the specific prescriptions they provided for achieving positive intergroup relations. For example, while the multiculturalism prime described the importance of acknowledging the distinct

identities of various cultural groups, the interculturalism prime described the importance of developing connections between groups through meaningful contact and interaction, and facilitating new and mixed forms of identity. Based on Hartmann and Gerteis (2005), the primes also included a diagrammatic representation of each ideology through circles representing different ethnic groups subsumed within a larger circle representing the nation, with the major distinction being that interculturalism involves high levels of interconnections between individuals as members of distinct ethnic groups, while multiculturalism emphasizes intra-ethnic connections. White American participants read this interculturalism (or multiculturalism) prime and reflected on reasons why such an approach would benefit the USA. They then read a list of these reasons allegedly provided by other participants who had previously completed the same task. Subsequently, participants reported their attitudes and willingness to have intergroup contact with members of various ethnic/racial outgroups (i.e., African American, Asian American, and Latinx Americans). In one of the studies, they also completed measures assessing perceived threat to ingroup distinctiveness (Schmid et al., 2009), essentialist beliefs (Roets & Van Hiel, 2011), and the extent to which they believed that various groups were indispensable to the national identity as potential mediators (Verkuyten et al., 2014). Across both studies, interculturalism significantly increased outgroup warmth and willingness to engage in intergroup contact with minority outgroups relative to a no-information condition. This effect was mediated by reductions in essentialist group beliefs, but not by changes in distinctiveness threat or category indispensability. In line with prior research, multiculturalism also reduced outgroup prejudice and increased willingness for intergroup contact relative to the no-information control condition, but not via reduced outgroup essentialism. In one of two studies, interculturalism was significantly better than both the control condition and even the multiculturalism condition at improving the above outcomes (Yogeeswaran et al., 2021).

These effects were then replicated and expanded in a new national context (New Zealand) by examining the impact of interculturalism on implicit attitudes and behaviors. In a controlled lab experiment, participants were randomly assigned to an interculturalism, multiculturalism, or no-information control condition (similar to the earlier studies), after which they completed a self-report measure of attitudes toward Asians, willingness to engage in intergroup contact with Asians, an Implicit Association Task (Greenwald et al., 1998) to assess implicit attitudes toward Asian versus White faces, and a behavioral trust game (Berg et al., 1995) to assess behavioral trust and cooperation with same race versus other race co-players. Data revealed that participants in the interculturalism condition once again showed more positive outgroup attitudes and a greater desire for intergroup contact relative to those in the control condition. Additionally, participants in the interculturalism condition showed less implicit prejudice, and increased behavioral trust and cooperation with outgroup relative to ingroup members in the game (all relative to the control condition). Yet, participants in the interculturalism and multiculturalism conditions did not differ from each other on any of the outcome variables, suggesting that priming interculturalism is no better or worse for intergroup relations than multiculturalism, at least in New Zealand (Yogeeswaran et al., 2021).

In another experimental study using a national sample in the Netherlands, the impact of interculturalism across the political spectrum was examined (Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020b). As the Netherlands has witnessed a significant retreat from multiculturalism (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013; Koopmans, 2013), with even people from the political left seeing such an approach as undermining societal solidarity and promoting segregation (Scheffer, 2011), it may be that multiculturalism is ineffective at improving intergroup relations across the political spectrum. By contrast, interculturalism has become more popular among the political left as it is seen as offering a solution to the "progressive dilemma" (Goodhart, 2013) of balancing the desire for diversity against the desire for social cohesion based on solidarity and substantive commitments. Therefore, reactions to interculturalism in the Netherlands could be moderated by perceivers' political ideology. Verkuyten and Yogeeswaran (2020b) measured political orientation before randomly assigning Dutch majority group members to an interculturalism or multiculturalism prime (similar to the ones described above), or to a no-information control condition. All participants then completed measures of self-reported attitudes toward various immigrant-origin groups (Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans, Surinamese) along with a measure of their willingness to engage in intergroup contact with the same groups. Data revealed that interculturalism increased outgroup warmth and willingness to engage in intergroup contact relative to the no-information control

and multicultural prime only among those on the political left, and not among those in the political center or political right. By contrast, multiculturalism had no impact on either outgroup attitudes or willingness to engage in intergroup contact relative to the control condition across the political spectrum. The lack of effect for multiculturalism is understandable in light of the retreat in support for multiculturalism within the Dutch context where effects found in the past (Verkuyten, 2005) failed to show years later (Verkuyten, 2011). Nevertheless, the above findings suggest that in the Dutch national context, interculturalism offers a promising alternative to multiculturalism for those on the political left who may be more concerned about solving the "progressive dilemma" of balancing the desire for diversity against a desire for substantive solidarity.

7 | HOW DO RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES SEE INTERCULTURALISM?

As previous research suggests that minority groups can show differing levels of support for diversity ideologies relative to the majority group (e.g., Hehman et al., 2012; Ryan et al., 2010), it is important to examine how racial and ethnic minorities see an ideology that takes a more dynamic view of identity like interculturalism. Gale et al. (2021) used a large sample of American ethnic and racial minorities to examine endorsement of three pro-diversity approaches (interculturalism, multiculturalism, polyculturalism) and assimilation. Racial and ethnic minorities showed high levels of support for all three pro-diversity approaches that were empirically distinct in a confirmatory factor analysis. Moreover, there was no difference between support for interculturalism relative to both multiculturalism and polyculturalism. Interestingly, among the three components of interculturalism, racial and ethnic minorities showed greater endorsement for the dialog component of the scale than the unity component of the measure, and the least support for identity flexibility. However, it is worth noting that support for all three subscales were above the midpoint (all subscales >4.8 on a 7-point scale, whereas support for multiculturalism was 5.2 on the same scale). This suggests that racial and ethnic minorities generally support all three pro-diversity approaches including interculturalism. By contrast, assimilation was opposed by racial and ethnic minorities (i.e., endorsement below the midpoint on the scale), and all three pro-diversity approaches were more strongly endorsed relative to assimilation.

How do ethnic minorities perceive these diversity ideologies in relation to their ethnic and national identities? Does endorsement of each of these diversity ideologies coincide with ethnic minority identification with both the nation and their ethnic group? These two identities map nicely onto research on acculturation strategies, which classically examines immigrant/minority ties to their culture of origin and ties to the host/dominant culture (Berry & Sam, 1997; also see Hutnik, 1991). Indeed, while ethnic minorities can be citizens and fellow co-nationals with the majority, they are still faced with the challenge of negotiating between their sense of inclusion in the larger society, and their sense of distinctiveness as a member of ethnic minority communities. Therefore, the degree to which these identities are linked with endorsement of various diversity ideologies is important to explore. Gale et al. (2021) found that national identification was positively associated with support for assimilation (ethnic identification was negatively associated with assimilation), and ethnic identification was positively associated with support for multiculturalism (national identification had no association with multiculturalism). This is consistent with the idea that assimilation prioritizes the recategorization of minorities into a superordinate, national group (Guimond et al., 2014), and that multiculturalism is construed as placing emphasis on minority group distinctiveness. Interestingly, both ethnic *and* national identification were positively associated with support for interculturalism (and also polyculturalism). This result suggests that both identities are prioritized under these ideologies and is consistent with their construal of identities as complex and intertwined. In particular, this also shows that ethnic minorities are likely to support interculturalism regardless of whether they feel strongly identified with the country as a whole, with their ethnic group, or both. Given the limited evidence on this topic, more work is needed; nevertheless, the above data suggests interculturalism may at least not be harmful for ethnic minority groups and can even coincide with both ethnic and national identification among them.

8 | FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Interculturalism has been proposed as an alternative to multiculturalism in political, policy, and philosophical debates in many countries (Cantle, 2016; Kymlicka, 2016; Meer et al., 2016). However, psychology has largely remained outside this conversation even though the field usually provides valuable empirical insight into diversity ideologies and intergroup relations. The research we have discussed suggests that interculturalism is a distinct diversity ideology in lay people's eyes, and is related to positive intergroup outcomes in pluralistic nations. However, this does not mean that interculturalism should replace multiculturalism or that both perspectives are contradictory (Mansouri & Modood, 2020). Research reveals positive associations between endorsement of interculturalism and multiculturalism, and both can be associated with positive intergroup relations. Therefore, both perspectives might be complementary, and future research should examine ways in which the two can be combined to maximize their benefits. For example, the intercultural perspective can intensify dialog, cultural mixing, and the sense of belonging together as a foundation for a democratic plural society, while multiculturalism's focus on rules and regulations that ensure that groups can participate in society in a fair and equitable way can guarantee that interculturalism does not violate the rights of ethnic minority groups. Furthermore, whereas multiculturalism is predominantly concerned with minority identities and rights, interculturalism also recognizes the normative claims of majorities and therefore might alleviate majority group anxieties (Cobb et al., 2020; Taylor, 2012), similar to "all-inclusive multiculturalism" (Plaut et al., 2011; Stevens et al., 2008).

Another potential contribution for interculturalism lies in its ability to respond to our increasingly complex and evolving notions of identity. As plural societies are increasingly made up of hundreds of heterogeneous ethnic, faith, and linguistic groups, with a growing number of people who have a mixed origin and multiple identities that are typically not considered in multicultural ideology (Cantle, 2016), interculturalism provides a more adequate perspective for dealing with these realities emerging from superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007). With many more people transnationally connected, possessing multiple origins, and forging new and complex identities through interactions with people from various cultural groups, interculturalism may be suited for addressing this new social reality. Interculturalism can also be especially suited for local and institutional contexts trying to create opportunities for dialog and intermingling. However, for many people, ethnic, racial, or faith identities continue to be a central part of their sense of self, and minority members typically face disadvantages and social exclusion in many domains of life, evidenced in particular at the aggregate, macro level. Multiculturalism may indeed be more responsive to this reality. Both approaches may, therefore, serve complementary purposes and offer benefits to different social challenges, a topic of future exploration.

Future work on interculturalism would also benefit from some of the following considerations. First, a focus on interculturalism might increase societal support for multicultural initiatives because it provides a sense of unity and individual level interaction out of which an appreciation of diversity can emerge. This is similar to the argument that engagement in interdisciplinary work teams can lead to a better understanding and appreciation of disciplinary perspectives. Yet, the reverse can also be argued, whereby multiculturalism (recognition of disciplinary perspectives) may be a precondition for the beneficial effects of interculturalism (interdisciplinary work team). Feeling recognized and confident in one's group identity might be necessary for the willingness to share ideas and assumptions, and to develop a shared sense of belonging. Future research should examine these possible relations between these two perspectives on dealing with cultural diversity.

Second, future research would benefit from considering the efficacy of interculturalism on intergroup relations in high versus low conflict situations. Previous research has shown that multiculturalism can increase outgroup hostility in conflict situations (regardless of whether the conflict is based on diverging viewpoints or interpersonal rejection) because of the increased focus on group difference and group-level thinking emerging from the ideology (Vorauer & Sasaki, 2011). Future work would, therefore, benefit from examining the impact of interculturalism in such contexts, given its more dynamic view of identity.

Third, future work would also benefit from exploring how individual differences in people's beliefs, attitudes, and identifications moderate the impact of interculturalism on intergroup outcomes. For example, as interculturalism in-

volves a more dynamic view of identity and the facilitation of cultural mixing and fusion, it may be especially threatening to people high in essentialist or entitative beliefs about social groups who tend to view identity as static, fixed, and immutable. Similarly, interculturalism may be especially ineffective among both majority and minority group members who are high in racial/ethnic identification as such an approach may be perceived as undermining the distinctiveness of one's social identity and thinking in terms of group differences.

Fourth, with only one study directly examining interculturalism from minority group perspectives, it is critical to explore how interculturalism relates to minority and immigrant adjustment and well-being in culturally diverse nations, a topic that has been extensively considered in the context of multiculturalism and assimilation (e.g., Verkuyten, 2010, 2011).

And finally, much like what research on multiculturalism suggests (see Guimond et al., 2014; Ng Tseung Wong & Verkuyten, 2015), interculturalism may have different implications depending on the cultural and national context in which it is defined and examined. It may be, for example, that interculturalism is most successful at improving intergroup relations in countries where a previous institutional or normative emphasis on groups has proved problematic (i.e., where there is a discursive backlash against multiculturalism), or in which policies are already relatively favorable toward the integration of minorities (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). While some authors suggest interculturalism reflects a change in discourse and labeling compared to multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2016; Meer & Modood, 2012), its emphasis on the emergence and synthesis of new, mixed forms of identity, may be particularly promising in countries characterized by a liberal emphasis on individuals (rather than emphasizing groups), without adopting a colorblind approach for managing diversity. Future research should examine these questions using, for example, interdisciplinary approaches (e.g., policy information alongside individual perceptions and outcomes) combined with cross-national methodologies.

The present work provides an important starting point for exploring a relatively new diversity ideology by going beyond the existing social psychological research on multiculturalism, colorblindness, and assimilation. We hope that our work will stimulate researchers to further examine the antecedents and consequences of interculturalism, and when and why interculturalism has beneficial or detrimental implications for intergroup relations in our increasingly diverse societies.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Interculturalism has taken on different meanings across varying national contexts including the Quebec version that is a response to Canadian multiculturalism (Bouchard, 2011), the Latin American version that rejects state forms of multiculturalism through the lens of colonialism (Solano-Campos, 2016), and the more widely discussed European version (see Meer et al., 2016).

[2] Interculturalism is considered by some as merely a minor upgrade from multiculturalism (e.g., Kymlicka, 2016; Meer & Modood, 2012), while others argue for interculturalism as a separate diversity approach (e.g., Cantle, 2012; Zapata-Barrero, 2016).

[3] The notion of "liberal multiculturalism" does exist in political philosophy, suggesting multiculturalism emerged out of liberal theory (and its emphasis on the individual; see Kymlicka, 1995). Nevertheless, such ideas are both supported and contested (see also Barry, 2001), and the ideology of multiculturalism most commonly referred to in psychological research has a particularly group-oriented connotation.

[4] A less discussed distinction between interculturalism and multiculturalism is that interculturalism explicitly allows for the means to criticize and censure culture when cultural or religious practices are seen as violating individual rights and human freedoms (e.g., women's rights, sexual freedoms, etc.; see Meer & Modood, 2012; Meer et al., 2016).

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