Entangled identities and acculturation:

comparing majority and minority adolescents' multiple identity profiles in Belgium

Corresponding author/ author 1:

Maene Charlotte

Department of sociology, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

Charlotte Maene, Department of Sociology, Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 41, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium. Email: charlotte.maene@ugent.be

Author 2

Van Rossem Ronan

Department of sociology, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

Author 3

Stevens Peter

Department of sociology, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

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Abstract

This study considers recent criticism levelled at Berry's acculturation model by (1) taking into account more complex expressions of belonging and by (2) testing the importance of regionalism (or the distinction between national and regional (/subnational) contexts) in understanding acculturation patterns. Data of the School, Identity and Society-survey, which contains information on 3510 adolescents from 64 schools selected from the three regions is employed to test specific hypotheses for the Belgian case. Three multiple identity profiles are selected for adolescents from migrant families, and four multiple identity profiles for adolescents from non-migrant families. The findings show that multiple identification for adolescents from migrant families is more often a conflicting than integrated experience. This incompatibility is not present for adolescents from non-migrant families. Small but meaningful variations of these multiple identity profiles occur among the three regions. In Brussels adolescents have a higher chance to be in the integrated identity profile.

Keywords: multiple identity; acculturation; Berry; integration; latent profile analysis

Introduction

During adolescence young people develop feelings and conceptions of belonging to particular social groups (Erikson, 1960; Bronfenbrenner, 1992). This identity formation process does not take place in a vacuum. Adolescents' identity formation is not only affected by their family background but also by their peers and the larger social context in which they grow up (Pfafferott & Brown, 2006; Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014). Recent debates have questioned the applicability of Berry's (1997) theoretical framework for understanding acculturation in more contemporary, 'super-diverse' contexts (Vertovec, 2019); where cultural adaptation relates to both majority and minority groups and to more complicated, multiple forms of belonging. This paper builds on acculturation research in two ways. First, it considers recent criticism levelled at Berry's acculturation model and particularly how it can take into account more complex expressions of belonging. Second, it tests the importance of regionalism (or the distinction

between national and regional (/subnational) contexts) in understanding acculturation patterns for both people with and without migration background.

Berry's framework describes four related acculturation strategies that conceptualize the different ways newcomer migrants relate to two dimensions: a) the (host) national context; and b) their heritage-cultural identity. Importantly, Berry's framework (1997) does not address adequately how these strategies are embedded in the context of a plural society, i.e. a society where allegiances are heterogeneous for both residents with and without migration background (Schinkel, 2018). In order to understand how migrant residents belong to a society, it is equally necessary to understand how native residents belong to that same plural society (Schwartz, Vignoles, Brown & Zagefka, 2014).

As this proposition is theoretically fundamental in our thinking about acculturation and cultural identity, it is no longer sufficient to approach national identification as the mere counterpart of a cultural-heritage identification. Cultural identification is multiple – both for residents with(/out) migration background – as it relates also to different important ethno-political categories such as religion and regional differences that historically shaped the present-day acculturation strategies of all residents in a nation. Hence, our first research question is: what are the multiple cultural identity patterns of adolescents from (non-) migrant families in a national context where different national, regional and religious identities can be meaningful to adolescents (RQ1)?

This research question is answered by employing a recently developed person-centred data-driven approach (i.e. 'Latent Profile Analysis' or LPA, see Oberski, 2016; Howard & Hoffman, 2018). LPA inductively creates profiles, that divides adolescents for which all forms of cultural identity are (in)compatible to profiles with more nuanced configurations of cultural identity forms. An important advantage of LPA is that it shows within-group variations for each form of cultural identity and simultaneously shows how it is associated with other cultural

identities. Subsequently, it is possible to use these profiles to test for variation in antecedents and outcomes.

Indeed, an important follow-up question concerns what kinds of societal dynamics are related to these different cultural identity patterns. This study builds on research that focuses on the antecedents of acculturation more generally by introducing the importance of regionalism/regions (Paasi, 2009) as political contexts that can considerably differ in their cultural diversity and political climate. Although the significance of regionalism for identity formation has been widely applied in the field of political sciences (e.g. Börzel & Risse, 2019; Zimmerbauer, 2017), it has been almost absent from the research tradition of acculturation (exc. Vinokurov, Trickett & Birman; 2017). Therefore, we also investigate how adolescents' place of residence is informative for variation in their multiple cultural identification. This results in our second research question: what is the role of adolescents' place of residence in understanding different cultural identity profiles (RQ2)?

The general hypothesis of this study is that although meaningful variation occurs in adolescents' multiple cultural identity profiles, adolescents' regional disposition within a nation state is linked to how particular profiles develop. The proposed research questions are investigated for the Belgian case which leads to the formulation of particular hypotheses about the role of regional context in shaping adolescents' multi-dimensional identity configurations (see below).

Berry's acculturation framework

Acculturation refers to changes in culture patterns of different groups due to continued contact in a plural society (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936). Acculturation manifests itself in three domains: cultural practices; cultural values ; and cultural identification (Schwartz et. al., 2014). The focus of this contribution is on cultural identification. It concerns the extent to which people

self-identity with specific cultural groups (Ozer et. al., 2017). We turn to Berry's (1997) acculturation model that has been used extensively by previous researchers to study multiple cultural identities (e.g. Berry et. al., 2006; Maehler, Zabal & Hanke, 2019).

Berry developed his framework to study how newcomer migrants adapt to a host society. In Berry's model (1997), two dimensions take a central place. The first dimension involves 'cultural maintenance', the importance of cultural (heritage) identity, while the second dimension concerns whether different cultural groups desire involvement in the host society. Their combination results in a typology that presents four acculturation strategies. These strategies, from the standpoint of cultural groups that migrated are: a) integration (people involved in both their heritage and host society's identity); b) assimilation (people mainly involved in the host society's identity and less with their heritage identity); c) separation (people only involved in their heritage identity and not the host society); and d) marginalization (people who are not involved in either one) (Ozer et. al., 2017).

Studies have found considerable variation in minority adolescents' acculturations but also discovered biculturalism or integration to be the most common (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008; Pfafferot & Brown, 2006). However, somewhat in contradiction to these findings, Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) conclude that ethnic and religious group membership for minority adolescents is 'not a matter of degree' but that there is rather a clear cut difference between being 'in' or being 'out'. Finally, while these studies investigate acculturation patterns amongst minority adolescents, research that focuses on how members of the majority group acculturate are underdeveloped (e.g. Lefringhausen, Ferenczi, Marshall & Kunst, 2021; Matera, Picchiarini, Olsson & Brown, 2020). These studies however do not focus on the role of cultural identification and were also conducted on adult samples.

Acculturation is an ecological process (Ward & Geeraert, 2016) that is influenced by family, work, school and socio-political climate. This socio-political context remains too often

equated to the nation-state as a whole. Yet, not only can cultural policies within nations differ considerably (Jaworsky, Levitt, Cadge, Hejtmarek & Curran, 2012), a nation state can also be internally divided along ethno cultural lines (Medeiros, Gauvin & Chhim, 2020). This is overlooked in research on acculturation for both adolescents and adults. Therefore, it is necessary to expand Berry's ideas in order to appropriately study acculturation in nation-states that are culturally heterogeneous.

Towards a more nuanced perspective in acculturation research

Scholars increasingly consider acculturation (integration) research – such as Berry's conceptual model – as too rigid and urge researchers to adopt/develop more nuanced perspectives (see Schinkel, 2018; Wimmer, 2013; Ward, 2008). Berry contends that "as a result of immigration, many societies become culturally plural. That is, people of many cultural backgrounds come to live together in a diverse society" (Berry, 1997, p. 8-9). A conceptual framework built around 'acculturation' such as Berry's appears to assume that 'a society' became 'plural' due to immigration, in the absence of which it would constitute an ethnically and culturally homogeneous people. However, nation states have rarely been homogenous entities comprising 'a people', but rather an ever-shifting multifaceted group (Schinkel, 2018).

A first challenge to the alleged homogeneity of the nation state is the acknowledgment that migration is not a new phenomenon. Various cultural backgrounds are present through – not only newcomer migrants but also – residents from migrant families. Specifically, cultural heritage identification remains important in migrant families and its significance is passed on from generation to generation. For decades already, 'second and third' generation residents are 'enculturating' into their genealogical society of origin (Ferguson, Costigan, Clarke & Ge, 2016). Thus, the concept of plural society needs to take into account the importance of heritage cultural identities.

A second challenge to the alleged homogeneity of the nation-state stems from the acknowledgement of its regions. The importance of regions and the regional identities that are generated through social practices between the region and its broader context are essential in capturing the dynamic of the nation state nowadays and the political power they perform on their residents (Paasi, 2013); i.e. their acculturation strategies. Indeed, it might be argued that although the same 'ethno political categories' are de facto available to all inhabitants of a nation state, they are not equally accessible or desirable to all – because of distinct socio-historical processes at work within a nation and depending on the region in which inhabitants live. Recently, European scholars have shown that regionalism is a social construct that needs to be considered in research, particularly with regard to Spain (Coller, Cordero, Enchavannen, 2017), Belgium (Dodeigne & Niessen, 2018), Austria (Barth-Scalmani, Kuprian, Mazalh-Wallnig, 2017), Finland (Paasi, 2013), and the UK (Morisi, 2018).

A third challenge to the alleged homogeneity of the nation state stems from the acknowledgement of religious diversity. The secularization hypothesis posits that the importance of religion – for public policy and for the individual – decreases with the advancement of society into (post)modernity (Gorski & Altinordu 2008; Inglehart, 2008; Jakobsen & Pellegrini, 2008). Yet, this idea has been challenged by different scholars who show the importance of religion (e.g. Christianity in a European context) on public (debate) and multicultural policies (Zemni, 2011; van den Brandt, 2017). Within the public debate, the religion of Islam is seen as a threat to liberal and secular values (van den Brandt, 2017) and to Christianity (Krzyzanowski, 2018). Religious belonging is a salient social identification. Thus, the concept of plural society also needs to take into account the importance of religious identification.

We conclude that the concept of cultural identity in the context of a plural society refers to a combination of national, regional, religious and heritage belonging[1].

The Belgian context

A language border divides the north (Flanders – Flemish community – 23.5% population of foreign descent [Statistics Belgium, 2019]) and the south (Wallonia – Francophone community – 33.6% population of foreign descent). At the heart of Belgium there is Brussels – the bilingual capital region (Brussels-Capital Region – 74.3% population of foreign descent). These sub nations organize cultural and economic life to a large extent independently from each other. In everyday life, people living in the north and south come barely into contact with one another. Although the Belgian nation is represented as a civic nation that is open to cultural diversity, in Flanders the maintenance of (native) people's cultural heritage is defended in its regional policy (Billiet, Maddens & Beerten, 2003; Van Praag et.al., 2019). In Wallonia and Brussels, overall, the civic discourse that relates to Belgium as a whole is the most common. Flanders also has a strong nationalist and separatist movement (Beyer, 2014, Kesteloot, 1993).

Yet, in all regions dual identification with the region and the Belgian nation is very common and both identities are considered compatible (Billiet, Maddens & Beerten, 2003; Billiet, Maddens & Frognier, 2006). For adolescents from migrant families, however, research suggests that variation occurs in how these identities are compatible or conflicting (Fleishmann & Phalet, 2016; Driezen, Verschraegen & Clycq, 2021). For example, although these adolescents more strongly relate to their ethnic heritage identity than to the national identity (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2018), distinct patterns have been found both in Flanders and the

[1] We are aware that other identities – e.g. city or transnational identities – might also be important in different contexts. However, the identities on which we focus are both the result of a thorough literature review and of a qualitative research phase that preceded the development of a theoretical framework and survey instrument on which this study is based.

Walloon region that correspond with Berry's acculturation model (e.g. Baysu, Phalet & Brown, 2011; e.g. Verhoeven, 2006).

Overall, research seems to suggest that the multiple identification of adolescents from migrant families is more complex than that of adolescents from non-migrant families. We expect first that – with regard to the (in)compatibility of these different cultural identities – for adolescents from non-migrant families the analysis will point towards profiles in which the association between the national and regional identity is compatible; these adolescents will have an integrated identity in various extents (hypothesis 1a). For students from migrant families, however, internal variation in the (in)compatibility of national, regional and heritage identity will occur; we expect that there will be profiles in which the identities go together positively while there will also be profiles where this is not the case (hypothesis 1b).

Although the majority of people without migration background have dual identification, the Belgian national identity is generally more endorsed in Brussels and Wallonia (Billiet, Maddens & Frognier, 2006). Research consistently finds that a regional identity has more support in Flanders than in the Walloon region (Maddens, Beerten & Billiet, 1998; Counet, Matagne, Verjans, 2016). Moreover, the Flemish regional identity is associated with more negative feelings towards migration than in the Walloon region where the relationship is reversed (Billiet, Maddens & Beerten, 2003). Recent research has also found a considerable "Flemish identity gap" (Clycq, Driezen & Verschraegen, 2020, p. 1) between native Flemish adolescents and adolescents with a Moroccan background, while identification with the Belgian national identity seems less problematic for Moroccan adolescents (Driezen, Verschraegen & Clycq, 2021). For Brussels, it seems that adolescents from migrant families endorse to a greater extent both their heritage and Belgian identity – albeit rather in a pragmatic way (Jacobs, 2008; Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2002). Thus, with regard to the role of regionalism – we also expect that for adolescents from non-migrant families – profiles that more strongly endorse a regional

identity will be more common in Flanders, while profiles that more strongly endorse the Belgian national identity will be more common in Brussels and Wallonia (hypothesis 2a). Moreover, it is expected that profiles in which heritage and subnational/regional identity negatively enforce each other will be more common in Flanders compared to the other regions for adolescents from migrant families (hypothesis 2b). In Brussels, due to its super-diverse context and role as capital city, we expect that there will be the highest endorsement for an integrated identity profile for adolescents from migrant families (hypothesis 2c).

Besides these ethno-political identity struggles, there is the ambiguous position of religion/life philosophy within Belgian society. Overall, adolescents from non-migrant families are less religious than adolescents from migrant families (Gündör, Bornstein & Phalet, 2012). Although it remains unclear to what extent these adolescents relate to non-confessional philosophical identities such as atheism. The religious identification of adolescents from migrant families is well documented; strong religious identification seems to be conflicting with national identification and associated with strong belonging to heritage identities – especially in high threat situations (e.g. Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007; Fleischmann & Phalet, 2018; Gündör, Bornstein & Phalet, 2012).

In Belgium, a historical tension exists between secular liberalism and Roman Catholicism. Correspondingly, this tension is also present in secondary education with the majority of the schools being private Roman Catholic schools and the other being non-confessional state schools. Only in the latter can adolescents choose to follow religious education in their own confession (Franken, 2017). The importance of non-confessional or religious belonging is more salient in Flanders where the Roman Catholic church historically has a strong position and Islam has been framed as a political threat to both Christianity and secularism (Zemni, 2011); while Wallonia is more influenced by the French notion of laïcité which refers to a type of secularism that places religion in the private sphere (Beyen, 2012;

Kesteloot, 1993). Therefore, we expect that profiles with a moderate to strong religious identification/life philosophical belonging will be more common in Flanders compared to the other two regions and this both for adolescents from (non-) migrant families (hypothesis 3).

Methods

Sample

The data for this study is drawn from the SIS-dataset (or the School, Identity and Society-survey; Maene, Thijs & Stevens, 2021). A multistage sampling frame was applied to generate a dataset that would be suited to studying two types of educational diversity that are significant for the Belgian context; the sample had to capture both the cultural diversity and educational diversity (in terms of 'track variety') present within the overall Belgian educational system.

In total 64 schools took part in the study. These schools were all situated in urban centres. Initially, the goal was to have an equal representation of the Belgian regions and educational systems. However, due to a more hesitant (colour-blind) approach to research that focuses on ethnicity in Wallonia (Van Praag et. al. 2019), it was more difficult to convince Walloon schools to participate. Seven schools were situated in the Walloon region, 29 schools in Flanders and 28 in the Brussel Capital Region (21 Francophone schools). For this study, the information of 3510 adolescents (52.1% females; M_{age} = 15, see also table 1) in their third year of secondary school is used.

Table 1: Division of students by region and origin.

	Students from migrant families	Students from non-migrant families
Brussel Capital	989	277
Wallonia	204	151
Flanders	955	934
Sample total	2148	1362

The data collection took place from September to December 2017. Participating secondary schools distributed an information letter in Dutch and/or French to all students in the third year

(M_{age} = 15) and their parents, informing them about the research theme and the anonymous and voluntary participation of the students. This letter gave parents the option to withhold consent for their children. In the Brussels (bilingual) Capital Region more parents (8%) withheld permission than in Flanders (Flemish-speaking region) (6%) or Wallonia (French-speaking region) (6%). Of the students with parental consent, 80% participated by completing questionnaires in their classroom.

The measurement of cultural identity

To measure social identity belonging, we turned to the centrality dimension of the multidimensional model of racial identity (MMRI; Sellers, Shelton, Rowley and Chavous, 1998). It is defined as the "extent to which a person normatively defines him or herself with regard to race" (Sellers et. al., 1998, p. 25). It can be compared with the notion of 'connectedness' as used by Altschul, Oserman and Bybee (2006) or the 'affirmation and belonging' of the multigroup ethnic identity measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992).

The three items used to measure 'centrality' are: 1) when I introduce myself, I would definitely say I belong to this group; 2) I have a strong sense of belonging to this group; and 3) I see myself as a member of this group (see Sellers et. al., 1998). Making use of an item response scale, this measure allows for a hierarchical ordering of different identities according to a person's own self-concept. The general items of the 'centrality' scale were adapted to measure Belgian national identification, regional identification, religious/philosophical identification and – only for adolescents from migrant families – heritage identification[2]. The Cronbach

[2] An extensive qualitative and piloting phase preceded the quantitative survey. This phase revealed that native Belgian students could not describe their 'heritage' identity as being different from their national or regional identity. Consequently, native Belgian students could skip these questions in the survey.

alphas of each identity construct range from sufficient (min. $\alpha = 0.754$) to very high (max. $\alpha = 0.913$), showing a consistent measurement (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Research design and analytical strategy

Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) is used to test hypothesis 1 and answer RQ1 that investigates the meaningful identity patterns of Belgian adolescents. LPA is a statistical technique that aims at identifying hidden groups within data based on continuous variables (Oberski, 2016). It is underpinned by a person-centred approach, which allows multiple subpopulations in the data to be estimated according to different parametrizations (in terms of group average, standard error and correlations among the continuous variables) (Howard & Hoffman, 2018; Morin, Gagné & Bujacz, 2016). The selected technique counters the limitations associated with the widely used variable-centred approaches in ethnic and racial studies (e.g. Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007), that draw conclusions on multiple identities by using one parametrization to describe an entire (internally heterogeneous) group of people. LPA also allows for more complexity than a K-means cluster analysis and ultimately leads to a more accurate and precise representation of the real world (Vermunt, 2011; Magidson & Vermunt, 2002).

We employed the 'mclust' package (version 5) in R (Scrucca, Fop, Murphy and Raftery, 2016). With 'mclust', 14 different models with different parametrizations can be estimated in a multivariate setting (Rosenberg, Beymer, Anderson & Schmidt. 2018). To select, first, the parametrization of the model (i.e. which version of the covariance matrix describes the data best) and second, the number of mixture components (i.e. profiles), the Integrated Complete-data Likelihood criterion (ICL) (Biernacki, Celeux, Govaert & Langrognet, 2006) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) (Fraley & Raftery, 1998) are used. The rule of thumb is that values of the BIC/ICL closer to zero indicate a better statistical fit of the model. However,

researchers also stress that the conceptual interpretation of the model should be taken into account when deciding the preferred solution (Bray, Foti, Thompson & Willis, 2014; Howard & Hoffman, 2018). Moreover, the conceptual interpretation of the model and an additional likelihood ratio test (LRT) were also used to select the appropriate number of profiles. LRT generates a p-value to compare increases in fit by sequentially adding profiles.

To interpret the selected profiles, the average of each identity scale within the profile is considered, together with the latent profile membership proportions (MP) (in table: 'latent profile membership proportions' & 'within profile means'). These are compared to the overall average for both students from migrant and non-migrant families separately (in table: 'overall scale average'). This approach is similar to the one put forward by Howard and Hoffman (2018).

However, while person-centred approaches are suited to study variations within a population, they are not eminently suited to study relationships between different theoretical concepts. Therefore, for hypothesis 2 and 3, we present a cross tabulation regarding the relationship between adolescents place of residence and their cultural identity profiles. This allows to answer our second research question regarding the role of regionalism.

Results

Latent Profile Analysis for adolescents from non-migrant families

According to the BIC criterion, models with seven components or more with varying averages and variances would be preferred (see models VEV and VEI in Scrucca et.al. 2016). A plot of the BIC traces of all possible parametrizations showed however that all BIC values increased up to four components and then increased more slowly. Since our aim was to select a well-defined number of clusters that could be interpreted theoretically and be used for follow-up analysis, we searched for an optimal solution taking the ICL criterion, the LRT test and the BIC

criterion into account. This was necessary since only taking the BIC criterion into account can lead to an overestimation of the number of mixture components (Biernacki, et. al., 2006). The models for which the BIC and ICL overlapped with acceptable to good values, were the four-component models EEE, EEV and VEI (see Scrucca et. al., 2016). To determine for which of these models the four component model was the most appropriate solution, LRT bootstrapping was performed. For the EEE model (i.e. varying averages but equal (co)variances for each component), no improvement in statistical fit appeared by adding a fifth component. Overall, the EEE four-component model indicates good statistical and parsimonious fit (see table 2) and was selected for interpretation. Analysing the covariance structure of this parametrization more closely, we observed that all cultural identities were positively correlated with each other. This suggests that for students from non-migrant families multiple identification is not conflicting within their self-image. Based on these statistical fit indices, it is possible to confirm hypothesis 1a.

Table 2: Students from non-migrant families – Model-fit indices – Latent profile analysis

N° profiles	**LL**	**P**	**BIC**	**ICL**	**LRTs**
1	-5169.123	9	-10403.20	-10403.20	-
2	-5155.113	13	-10403.20	-10938.28	<0.001
3	-5127.488	17	-10377.66	-11373.75	<0.001
4	**-5026.136**	**21**	**-10203.80**	**-10673.13**	**<0.001**
5	-5026.063	25	-10232.54	-11181.22	0.468

Note; N = 1362, P = number of parameters estimated, BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion, ICL = Integrated complete-data likelihood criterion, LRTs = likelihood ratio test.

Within the first profile (Table 3 – 36% of the sample – 'cultural identity apathy'), students have a moderate ('neutral') score on each of the identity scales; they do not strongly belong to any of these cultural identities, nor do they distance themselves from them. However, these scores are significantly lower than if we were to approach the students from non-migrant families as a whole. Therefore, these students are referred to as 'apathetical' or indifferent towards the regional and national identity.

Table 3: Students from non-migrant families – Results of the latent profile analysis

		Profiles students from non-migrant families			
Variables		1 Cultural identity apathy	2 Marginalization	3 Belgian nationalist belonging	4 Strong integration
	Latent profile membership proportions	0.36	0.04	0.07	0.51
	Overall scale average	Within-profile item means			
Religious/Philosophical identity belonging	3.0	2.7	3.2	2.8	3.2
Regional identity belonging	3.6	3.2	2.6	2.5	4.1
National identity belonging	3.8	3.1	1.7	4.2	4.4

Note: n = 1362; All the profile averages were tested to be significantly different from the overall sample mean at p <0.001

The second profile ('marginalization') is also characterized by significantly lower regional and national belonging, of which the scores on the national belonging scale also

indicate a distancing from national belonging. It is the smallest group (only 4 per cent chance of group membership) and their distancing from national belonging is what sets them apart from the first profile. In accordance with Berry, who intended his acculturation model for dominant residents as well, this profile could refer to the concept of marginalization, since it shows a clear disconnection to the overall Belgian society and indifferent affiliations to the other cultural identities in the model.

The third profile for students from non-migrant families ('Belgian nationalist belonging') is almost equally small as the second profile, but shows a very distinct pattern. Whereas the national belonging in the second profile is very low, the national belonging in the third profile is very high. This stands in contrast with the significantly lower regional and religious/philosophical belonging.

In the fourth and biggest group ('strong integration' – 51 per cent of group membership), students have a strong belonging to both the national and the regional identifications, with a neutral stance towards the religious/philosophical identification. This resembles Berry's concept of integration.

Latent Profile Analysis for students from migrant families

For the data that included the students from migrant families, both the BIC and ICL criterion pointed at the same parametrization of the model with groups equal in shape but with varying averages and (co)variances as the best fit for the data (see the VEV-model [Scrucca et. al. 2016]). This clearly indicates that differences in the correlations between the cultural identities are important to be taken into account, next to differences in averages. This allows to confirm hypothesis 1b that shows that multiple cultural identification for students from migrant families is more nuanced with identities positively enforcing each other while other might be in conflict. Subsequently, we investigated which number of mixture components would be selected. The LRT showed – along with the BIC and ICL in this case – that adding profiles results in better

statistical fit (see table 4). This is not uncommon in LPA analysis (Howard & Hoffman, 2018). We turned to the theoretical interpretations of a range from a one-component to a five-component model, to select the best all-in-all number of components. We focused on the three and five component model as the changes in ICL indicated that both models have distinct profiles if compared with their preceding model. After comparing the three and the five component model conceptually, we concluded they were not fundamentally different from each other (i.e. only partial significant differences in the profiles' averages and none of the new profiles added new information in relation to the correlations between the cultural identities that were already present in the three component model). In light of the theoretical clarity that could be gained from continuing with a more parsimonious model, the selected solution was a three component model.

Table 4: Students from migrant families – Model-fit indices – Latent profile analysis

N° profiles	**LL**	**P**	**BIC**	**ICL**	**LRTs**
1	-11349.18	14	-22805.78	-22805.00	-
2	-10878.46	26	-21956.41	-22564.83	<0.001
3	**-10687.65**	**38**	**-21666.85**	**-22238.10**	**<0.001**
4	-10488.84	50	-21361.56	-22293.73	<0.001
5	-10263.76	62	-21003.20	-21529.11	<0.001

Note; N = 2148, P = number of parameters estimated, BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion, ICL = Integrated complete-data likelihood criterion, LRTs = likelihood ratio test.

Students from migrant families in the first profile ('assimilation') have a significantly lower belonging to their heritage and religious/philosophical identity (see also table 5). Both means are around the midpoint of the scale which indicates a more neutral stance towards these identities. There are negative covariances between the heritage identity of these youngsters and their regional and national identity. Higher belonging to the heritage identity leads to lower belonging to the regional and national identity and vice versa. The overall multiple identity image that appears is a divided one. Based on these findings, and in accordance with Berry's acculturation framework, some similarity with the assimilation strategy appears; since these

students do not 'opt' for strong cultural maintenance. To be precise, there is no attachment to any of the collective identities in the model, which also relates to the 'marginalization strategy'. There is neither clear sympathy nor apathy for any collective group membership. What is surprising about this result is that this profile corresponds to half of the sample.

Table 5: Students from migrant families – Results of the latent profile analysis

		Profiles students from migrant families		
Variables		1 Assimilation	2 Separation	3 Integration
	Latent profile membership proportions	0.49	0.25	0.25
	Overall scale average	Within-profile means		
Heritage identity belonging	4.1	$3.6_{b, c}$	5_{b}	4.3_{a}
Religious/Philosophical identity belonging	4	3.4	4.7_{c}	4.6_{a}
Regional identity belonging	3.1	$3.1^{*}{}_{c}$	2.6_{c}	3.6_{a}
National identity belonging	2.9	$3^{a}{}_{b}$	2.5_{b}	3.2_{a}

Note: n = 2148; All the profile-averages were tested to be significantly different from the overall sample mean at $p < 0.001$; $^{*}p > 0.05$. Subscript $_{b}$ and $_{c}$ indicate negative covariances among the identity scales, subscript $_{a}$ indicate all positive covariances among the identity scales.

The second profile ('separation') pertains to students who feel a very strong belonging to their heritage and religious/philosophical identity while feeling a significantly weaker belonging to the regional and national Belgian identity. The latter cultural identities drop below the midpoint of the scales, which shows a clear indication that some of these students are distancing themselves from these collective identities and corresponding societal groups. Again, we observe negative covariances between the heritage-national and the regional-religious/philosophical identities. Thus, similar to the first profile, the organization of multiple cultural identity is divided. In accordance with Berry's model, we connect this to the separation strategy. Rather than a choice, these students might feel that group membership to the dominant

cultural identities is denied. Therefore ‘separation’ and ‘segregation’ cannot be clearly discerned. This profile comprises one-fourth of the sample.

Finally, the students in the third profile (‘integration’), have a significantly higher belonging to all four cultural identities when compared with the overall averages. These students have a strong attachment to their religious/philosophical and heritage identity and a moderate affiliation with the regional and Belgian national identity. Another important difference with the other profiles is that all identities have positive covariances, which shows that these identities reinforce each other in a positive way rather than a conflicting way. Therefore – connecting this to Berry’s acculturation framework – the image of an integrated and multi-layered cultural identity appears in this group. This profile also represents one-fourth of the sample.

The role of socio-political context in understanding multiple cultural identification

Students from non-migrant families (table 6) have the highest chance of being in the strong integration pattern and have the lowest chance of being in the marginalization pattern. In the Walloon region, there is a higher chance to be in the Belgian nationalist profile than in Flanders. Although we do not find evidence for the expected distinction in the role of regional identity for the Flemish and Walloon adolescents from non-migrant families, we do find evidence for the different importance of Belgian national belonging between the two regions. Therefore, we cannot fully confirm hypothesis 2a.

Table 6: Cross tabulation multiple identity profiles by place of residence

Profiles	**Place of residence**		
	Flanders	Brussels	Wallonia
Adolescents from migrant families			
Assimilation	46.4 %	49.1 %	50.5 %
Separation	31.3 %	20.1 %	33.8 %
Integration	22.3 %	30.7 %	15.7 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %
Adolescents from non-migrant families			
Cultural identity apathy	38 %	35.4 %	27.8 %
Marginalization	3.2 %	5.4 %	4.6 %
Belgian nationalist belonging	3.4 %	6.1 %	25.2 %
Strong integration	55.4 %	53.1 %	42.4 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Note: Students from migrant families: $\chi^2 = 50.913$ (df = 4), $p < 0.001$. – Cramers' V = 0.109, $p < 0.001$ - Students from non-migrant families: $\chi^2 = 107.125$ (df = 6), $p < 0.001$ – Cramers' V = 0.198, $p < 0.001$

For adolescents from migrant families (table 6), there is the highest chance to be in the assimilation profile in every region. What is most striking is that students from migrant families have the least likely chance to be in the integration pattern if they live in Flanders or the Walloon region. As we also expected to find regional differences, we cannot confirm hypothesis 2b. The chance to be in the integration pattern is significantly higher in Brussels which shows that a different dynamic is present in the capital region. Students in Brussels have the smallest chance of being in the separation profile. This confirms hypothesis 2c. We did not find any differences in the importance of religious/philosophical identification among the regions and therefore do not confirm hypothesis 3.

Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to further elaborate the role of socio-political contexts in acculturation research. Research has mainly focused on individual and social antecedents of adolescents'

acculturation strategies, but the specific role of societal context remains understudied. This study fills this gap in two ways. First, it considers recent criticism levelled at Berry's acculturation model and particularly how it can take into account more complex expressions of belonging that are typical for nowadays plural societies. Second, it tests the importance of regionalism (or the distinction between national and regional (/subnational) contexts) in understanding acculturation patterns for both adolescents from migrant and non-migrant families. This translated itself in specifics hypotheses for the Belgian case.

Fifty per cent of the adolescents from migrant families have an 'assimilated' multiple cultural identity. This contradicts the general assumption that the majority of these adolescents have a strong belonging to their heritage identity (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012). Not only have these youngsters a lower belonging to their religious/philosophical and heritage identity, but they are also negatively associated with the national and regional identity. This is also the case for adolescents in the separation profile. This indicates that 75 per cent of the adolescents from migrant families in this study have cultural identities that are conflicting or incompatible. These numbers clearly show that forming an integrated multiple identity is not evident. This high number is reason for concern as recent research on multiple cultural identity has shown that adolescents with an integrated multiple identity show better psychological adjustment than their peers with other (conflicting) identity configurations (Schotte, Stanat, Edele, 2018); they also indicate to experience less discrimination (Cheon et. al. 2020).

For adolescents from non-migrant families, high belonging to the regional identity goes hand in hand with high belonging to the national identity. This is especially the case for Flanders and Brussels. In Wallonia, 1 out of 5 more strongly belongs to Belgium than to their religious/philosophical and regional identity. This was partially unexpected. One explanation for the absence of strong regionalism among these adolescents is that they are not yet politically engaged in society and therefore not yet influenced as much by identity politics. It would be

interesting to investigate how these multiple identity configurations change over time, as these adolescents move into adulthood. On the other hand, future research could also take into account the multidimensionality of identification and look into adolescents' sense of (sub) national pride next to their (sub) national belonging (e.g. Stevens, 2016 for the case of Cyprus).

The cross-sectional design of this study limits a full understanding of how these multiple cultural identity profiles developed. Ideally, information about these identities in early adolescents and their transition into adulthood would help to test for antecedents and consequences. Generally, longitudinal research finds that adolescents' identity progresses/matures during adolescence (Meeus et. al. 2010), while adults' social identity does not change drastically anymore (Meeus, 2018). However, the majority of these longitudinal studies seem to focus on the testing of general identity developmental models for personal or ethnic identity. Longitudinal research that measures the development of multiple identity profiles seems to be lacking.

The empirical results of this study build upon and ultimately further elaborate Berry's conceptual model, insofar as they insightfully connect the acculturation strategies of adolescents from (non-) migrant families. They show that differentiation in how adolescents belong and feel part of a nation is normal and not only relevant for adolescents from migrant families. In other words, we cannot talk about acculturation of 'migrants' without knowing how other citizens behave as members of that society. This makes us wonder what the specific dynamics are that shape these distinct ways of belonging for all these adolescents. We argue for greater focus on meso- and macro- factors which might be relevant to understand this variation. It might be fruitful to look in the direction of political election results, diversity rates, political discourse and cultural differences that are passed on in the educational system, such as the way in which schools position themselves or relate to the societal context. Another important question that these results raise regards the ramifications of multiple cultural

identification. In this case, scholars could look in the direction of intercultural competences (e.g. awareness of racism, intercultural communication skills) and intergroup relations (e.g. prejudice, stereotypes).

Overall, this research succeeds in giving a more accurate image of the ways in which adolescents belong to meaningful cultural identities: an image that takes into account criticisms that were directed towards acculturation research. This study accurately tests and eventually undermines previous findings on the belongingness of certain social groups and shows how acculturation research should take into account more adequate forms of multiple cultural identification in the study of the essence, causes, and consequences of acculturation in society.

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