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Developmental trajectories of ethnic and national identities in adolescents from migrant families: The role of social identification with family and classmates

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**Developmental Trajectories of Ethnic and National Identities in Adolescents from Migrant Families: The Role of Social Identification with Family and Classmates**

**Abstract**

Given that adolescents from migrant families live within at least two cultural contexts (i.e., the heritage and the destination cultures), they generally must negotiate and construct ethnic and national identities. Accordingly, the present three-wave longitudinal study was designed to identify distinct developmental trajectories of ethnic and national identities among adolescents from migrant families ( $n=244$ , 56.6% female;  $M_{\text{age}}=14.90$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}}=0.84$  at Time 1). Multivariate latent class growth analyses indicated that participants could be classified into one of four groups based on their identity profiles: ethnic-oriented identity, national-oriented identity, dual identity, and marginalized identity. Further, social identification with family and classmates was examined as a predictor of memberships in these distinct identity profiles. Results of multinomial logistic regression analysis indicated that greater social identification with family increased the probability of being classified into the ethnic-oriented and dual identity profiles rather than into the marginalized identity profile, whereas greater social identification with classmates increased the likelihood of being classified into either national-oriented or dual identity profiles rather than into the marginalized identity profile. These findings provide novel insights into the roles of families and peers as influential socializing agents during the negotiation of ethnic and national identities among immigrant youth.

*Keywords:* ethnic identity, national identity, dual identity, social identification, latent class growth analysis

## Introduction

Contemporary societies are becoming ethnically and culturally diverse due to increasing rates of international migration (International Organization for Migration, 2019). Such diversity poses complex identity challenges (Crocetti et al., 2011), especially for adolescents from migrant families (i.e., adolescents who are born outside the destination country or with at least one parent born outside the destination country; European Commission, 2020). These youth often must cope not only with normative developmental tasks, but also with acculturative tasks arising from living within two or more cultural contexts, represented by the heritage-cultural community and destination society (Berry, 1997, 2017; Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012). Thus, adolescents from migrant families need to negotiate and form their ethnic and national identities (i.e., cultural identity) at the same time (Berry et al., 2006; Phinney et al., 2001). Broadly, ethnic and national identities refer to one's sense of belongingness to the heritage-cultural community and to the destination society, respectively. These identity dimensions generally involve attitudes and behaviors stemming from feelings of affection, commitment and pride associated with belonging to these groups (Jugert, Pink, et al., 2020; Phinney, 1990, Phinney et al., 2001).

Herein, two questions are of utmost importance to better understand the development of ethnic and national identities during adolescence: "*How do adolescents from migrant families develop both ethnic and national identities simultaneously?*" and "*Which factors predict the development of these identities?*". To address these core questions, in the current longitudinal study, we sought to examine the development of ethnic and national identities and, by adopting a person-centered approach (Bergman et al., 2003), to identify distinct profiles based on how adolescents construct their cultural identities over time. Finally, we investigated the roots of membership in these different identity profiles in terms of social identifications (i.e., sense of emotional commitments to the respective social groups;

Ellemers et al., 1999) with proximal groups central to the adolescent experience (i.e., family and classmates).

### **Developmental Trajectories of Ethnic and National Identities in Adolescence**

Adolescence is a transitional stage of life marked by rapid and consistent development in various psychosocial domains (Meeus, 2019). More precisely, adolescence is characterized by increased autonomy and independence, as well as more sophisticated social-cognitive abilities in areas such as abstract thinking, introspection, and metacognition (Hughes et al., 2016; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). As a result, adolescents can develop more articulated and complex views of themselves and of others (e.g., Albarello et al., 2018, 2020; Crocetti et al., 2018, 2022). Forming personal identity represents a core developmental task of adolescence, as young people have various options to find meaningful commitments in multiple life domains (Crocetti, 2017, 2018; Meeus, 2019).

For adolescents from migrant families, the task of identity development becomes even more challenging because it interacts with acculturative tasks related to negotiating multiple – and sometimes even conflictual – values, practices, and identities associated with one’s heritage-cultural community and with the destination society (Crocetti et al., 2011; Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2018). Herein, the normative transition from junior to senior high school that occurs in early-to-middle adolescence might specifically trigger these negotiations. In fact, during this transitional period, adolescents need to learn how to navigate new ethnic-socialization dynamics that arise from potential increases in the school’s ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as changes in typical interactions with staff and peers in the school environment (French et al., 2000; Hughes et al., 2016). For instance, ethnic identity exploration among immigrant adolescents often increases across the transition to ethnically and culturally more diverse senior high schools in the U.S. (French et al., 2006). When considering these potential effects of normative school transitions in light of adolescents’

advanced social-cognitive abilities, early-to-middle adolescence can be considered the period in which youth from migrant families begin to think extensively about the meaning of their group memberships and their sense of belonging to the heritage-cultural community and to their destination society. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to increase our understanding regarding the development of ethnic and national identities, especially among early-to-middle adolescents living outside of North America, where the majority of cultural identity work has been conducted.

Herein, acculturation theories (e.g., Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997; Navas et al., 2005) emphasize that both retention of one's heritage culture and acquisition of one's destination culture represent essential components of adolescents' cultural identities (Schwartz et al., 2015, 2018). In this respect, the seminal bidimensional acculturation model (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2017) theorizes that different acculturation strategies can be defined based on the different combinations of identification (high versus low) with the heritage-cultural community and with the destination society. Adolescents from migrant families are likely to define themselves according to their roles, responsibilities, and positions within their heritage-cultural communities and within the destination society. As such, these youth might develop both ethnic and national identities (for an example, see Berry et al., 2006). Along those lines, advances in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) also underscore the importance of identifications with different groups (e.g., ethnic and national groups) as a core component of developing multiple identities, especially in adolescence (Martiny et al., 2017; Verkuyten et al., 2012, 2019).

Consistent with acculturation and social identity theories, the combination of ethnic and national identities might give rise to four identity profiles: *ethnic-oriented identity* (i.e., high ethnic identity and low national identity), *national-oriented identity* (i.e., high national identity and low ethnic identity), *dual identity* (i.e., high ethnic and national identities),

and *marginalized identity* (i.e., low ethnic and national identities).<sup>i</sup> Prior studies have provided some preliminary evidence for such an expectation; indeed, the bulk of cross-sectional studies have fully (e.g., Baysu et al., 2011) or partially (Cheon et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2018) indicated that adolescents can be classified into these distinct identity profiles. Beyond providing preliminary evidence on the replicability of these identity profiles in the European context, Baysu et al. (2011) found that adolescents in the dual identity profile are more sensitive to threats – when they perceived greater discrimination or ostracism in school, they reported lower school success compared to migrant youth who primarily endorsed one identity component (i.e., national-oriented or ethnic-oriented identity profiles). In contrast, youth in the dual identity profile reported higher success in low-threat contexts. Thus, the benefits of forming dual identity can be neutralized in the presence of high levels of perceived threats in one’s immediate context (Baysu & Phalet, 2019). Nonetheless, the dual identity profile often emerges as the most common cultural identity configuration among youth (e.g., Berry et al. 2006; Jugert, Pink, et al., 2020), and it has been linked with an array of positive psychological and sociocultural outcomes, such as high self-esteem and life satisfaction (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

Whereas some studies have highlighted the importance of adolescents from migrant families forming both ethnic and national identities to meet the developmental-acculturative challenges they face, extant longitudinal research examining how both ethnic and national identities *simultaneously* develop across time is relatively scarce. For instance, Schwartz et al. (2015) distinguished between (a) higher and increasing ethnic and national identities (i.e., increasing identity profile) and (b) stable ethnic and national identities (i.e., stable identity profile) among Hispanic adolescents in the United States (U.S.). Jugert, Pink, et al. (2020), in a longitudinal study with immigrant adolescents in Germany, found that, at different time points, participants could be classified into different (i.e., separated, integrated, medium-

ethnic, and low-ethnic) identity profiles and examined the over-time stability of these profiles. They found substantial instability in profile memberships across time and pinpointed this longitudinal heterogeneity as originating from difficulties remaining in the integrated profile (i.e., dual identity) over time. Building upon these findings, in their recent study with Muslim adolescents from four countries in Western Europe (England, Germany, The Netherlands, and Sweden), Spiegler, Wölfer, and Hewstone (2019) identified three distinct dual identity profiles (i.e., dual identity, separated to dual identity, assimilated to dual identity) and an additional ethnic-oriented identity profile. They also found these profiles to be differently related to physical well-being, internalizing symptoms, and adjustment difficulties (e.g., delinquent behaviors, lack of intergroup contact).

Although consistent profiles of ethnic and national identities have been documented in cross-sectional studies (e.g., Baysu et al., 2011), it is crucially important to provide further longitudinal evidence not only to validate these identity profiles over time and in another cultural context, but also to determine the potential factors influencing adolescents' memberships in these profiles. Taken together, in the current longitudinal study, we sought to identify meaningful developmental profiles of ethnic and national identities among adolescents from migrant families, as well as to examine psychosocial factors that could potentially predict membership in each of these developmental profiles.

### **Social Identification with Proximal Groups as Predictors of Developmental Trajectories of Ethnic and National Identities**

In adolescence, developmental and acculturative changes co-occur and are closely embedded in primary socialization contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Titzmann & Lee, 2018). Among these contexts, family and peers, including classmates, are particularly crucial to adolescents' psychosocial development. However, especially between early and middle adolescence, parental influence decreases while peer influence becomes more



prominent (De Goede et al., 2009). Although peers become a relatively more salient group in the lives of adolescents (Albarello et al., 2018; Brown & Larson, 2009), supportive interactions within and across both family and peer contexts nonetheless help adolescents to form more stable personal and cultural identities (Branje et al., 2021; Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012). Along this line, a recent study (Karataş et al., 2020) found that acculturation orientations among adolescents from migrant families were related both to acculturation orientations of their parents and to acculturation preferences of their classmates. Hence, one might conclude that the processes of negotiating ethnic and national identities are often embedded in family and peer contexts and, thus, might depend upon adolescents' sense of emotional commitment to these groups.

Indeed, the advanced social-cognitive abilities that come on line during adolescence enable young people to develop a better understanding regarding the social norms (Abrams & Rutland, 2008) within family and peer groups (Vietze et al., 2019; Wang & Benner, 2016; Wang et al., 2015). In this respect, adolescents may be able to diversify the meaning of their multiple group memberships that may affect their self-definitions in both the least (e.g., personal identity; Albarello et al., 2018) and the most abstract levels (e.g., human identity; Albarello et al., 2021) of self-categorization (Turner et al., 1987). Recently, Albarello et al. (2021) highlighted this fundamental developmental trajectory by indicating how adolescents' social identification develops from identification with proximal groups (e.g., classmates) to identification with superordinate, and thus, more abstract groups (e.g., humanity). In this regard, it might be possible to trace the roots of ethnic and national identities to adolescents' experiences with groups that are most relevant within their daily lives. Hence, social identification with family and classmates might be considered as "the primary engines of development" (Bronfenner & Morris, 2006, p. 798) of ethnic and national identities among

adolescents from migrant families (Jugert, Leszczensky, et al., 2020; Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2010; Vietze et al., 2019).

As the primary socialization context for adolescents (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), family members can guide youth to position themselves vis-à-vis their heritage-cultural community as well as the destination society (Karataş et al., 2020). In line with intergenerational transmission processes (Degner & Dalege, 2013), parents, acting as role models for their children, can socialize youth toward some degree of belongingness to the ethnic community and to the destination society (e.g., Dimitrova et al., 2015; Sabatier, 2008; Verkuyten et al., 2012). However, parents usually encourage their children to develop stronger ethnic identities, more so than national identities, through ethnic-socialization practices, including the transmission of explicit and implicit ethnic socialization messages regarding beliefs and values related to the family's ethnic community (Hughes et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2013). Extant literature indicates that ethnic identity development among adolescents from migrant families is shaped by certain parental ethnic-socialization practices (e.g., Gartner et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2013). More specifically, a recent study with Turkish adolescents in European contexts (Spiegler, Thijs, et al., 2019) indicated that mothers' acculturative experiences (i.e., homesickness) may strengthen the adolescents' ethnic identity while weakening their national identity. This evidence suggests that adolescents from migrant families may perceive their families as the roots of their ethnic identity. As a result, high levels of social identification with the family might promote ethnic identity development among immigrant-origin youth.

Beyond the fundamental role of family, peer groups serve as another key socialization agent that might influence how adolescents from migrant families navigate between the heritage-cultural community and the destination society (Karataş et al., 2020, 2021; Vietze et al., 2019). Notably, peer socialization might orient youth toward both the heritage and

destination cultures (Wang et al., 2015). Although migrant-descent adolescents' peer socialization experiences towards mainstream culture often serve to enhance the development of national identity and lessen the development of ethnic identity, peers may also socialize youth toward their ethnic identity (Vietze et al., 2019). Within this diversified set of experiences with peers, classmates (who are also peers) may play key roles. In fact, interactions with classmates (as an essential reference group during adolescence; Albarello et al., 2021) within the school context might represent core peer socialization experiences towards the mainstream destination culture.

Notably, Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) might also provide an alternative conceptualization. The central tenet of this theory holds that bringing different group members into a context (e.g., classrooms) whereby they might interact under optimal conditions (i.e., equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authorities; Allport, 1954) leads to various beneficial outcomes (e.g., prejudice reduction; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In this respect, experiencing, or even the opportunity to experience, positive contact (e.g., warm and respectful interactions) with classmates in relatively structured school settings where most of the optimal contact conditions are promoted (Karataş et al., 2023; Tropp et al., 2022) could enhance the development of a higher sense of belongingness to the destination society (e.g., Agirdag et al., 2011; van Vemde et al., 2021). Indeed, prior studies have found strong associations between youth's cross-ethnic friendships (as a strong form of positive contact; Davies et al., 2011) and national identity development within school settings (e.g., Munniksmä et al., 2015). Given that perceived cultural distance between groups may be reduced as adolescents experience more positive contact (Agirdag et al., 2011; Vezzali & Giovannini, 2012), youth might be able to develop a shared sense of belongingness to *one* common group (Dovidio et al., 2007). In schools, such a group is generally represented as national identity (Motti-Stefanidi et al.,

2012), where all adolescents are educated about the history, geography, emblems and symbolic imagery of that nation (Barrett, 2007). In light of these considerations, social identification with classmates could facilitate the development of national identity more so than ethnic identity.

### **The Present Study**

In line with the theoretical background and empirical work reviewed above, the purpose of this study was twofold. First, we aimed to identify different identity profiles based on developmental trajectories of adolescents' ethnic and national identities across time. In line with acculturation (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 2006) and social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) theories, we hypothesized that adolescents from migrant families would be classified into one of four latent growth trajectory classes (i.e., ethnic-oriented identity, national-oriented identity, dual identity, and marginalized identity; *Hypothesis 1a*). To cross-validate these identity profiles, we examined whether adolescents classified into distinct developmental profiles would also differ in their self-definitions and their feelings about being "at home" (i.e., in the destination country, in their father's/mother's country, in both countries, or in neither country). We expected that adolescents who define themselves by referring to their parents' ethnic group, to the destination society, and to both groups would appear in the ethnic-oriented, national-oriented, and dual identity profiles, respectively (*Hypothesis 1b*). Similarly, adolescents who reported their sense of being "at home" in their father's/mother's country, in the destination country, in both countries, and in neither country would be classified into the corresponding identity profiles (i.e., ethnic-oriented, national-oriented, dual, and marginalized identities, respectively; *Hypothesis 1c*).

Moreover, in the light of the existing literature highlighting the fundamental developmental trajectory of adolescents' social identifications from concrete proximal groups to more abstract groups (Albarello et al., 2021), it might be possible for adolescents from

migrant families to form their ethnic and national identities based on socialization experiences with the members of proximal groups (i.e., family and classmates). In this respect, the second aim of the current study was to examine whether adolescents' social identifications with their families and classmates predict memberships in profiles defined by levels of ethnic and national identity over time. Given the importance of parental ethnic socialization vis-à-vis ethnic identity in adolescence (Hughes et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2013), we hypothesized that high identification with one's family would increase the likelihood of being classified into the ethnic-oriented identity profile (*Hypothesis 2a*). Considering the impact of adolescents' socialization (e.g., Vietze et al., 2019) and intergroup contact experiences within the school context (e.g., Agirdag et al., 2011; Munniksma et al., 2015) on developing national identities among adolescents from migrant families, we expected that high identification with classmates would increase the probability of being classified into the national-oriented identity profile (*Hypothesis 2b*). Given that developing dual identity incorporates both ethnic and national identities (Phinney et al., 2001; Spiegler, Wölfer, & Hewstone, 2019), we also hypothesized that high social identification with both one's family and classmates would accordingly increase the likelihood of developing a dual identity (*Hypothesis 2c*). In testing these hypotheses, we selected the marginalized identity profile as a reference group, as it is the group that is likely to be most at risk, as adolescents would likely miss meaningful connections with their ethnic and national groups (Berry et al., 2006; Sam & Berry, 2010; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008).

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants in this study were drawn from a larger longitudinal research project Developing Inclusive Identities in Adolescence. Adolescents attending seven different high schools (i.e., lyceum, technical, and vocational high schools) located in small (about 25,000

inhabitants), medium (about 97,000 inhabitants), and large (about 150,000 inhabitants) cities in the North-East of Italy agreed to participate in this study at three different time points.

Adolescents were in their first year of secondary high schools at T1 and in their second year at T2 and T3. In order to have a sample large enough to guarantee statistical power, more than one thousand participants were involved in the study, which was conducted in the Italian region (Emilia-Romagna) with the highest percentage of adolescents from migrant families in schools (Ministro dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca [Italian Ministry of Education, University, and Research], 2018). In this way, we estimated that it was possible to reach a subsample of at least 200 adolescents from migrant families (Little, 2013).

The final longitudinal sample included 244 adolescents from migrant families (56.6% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 14.90$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 0.84$ , age range: 14–17 years at T1) who participated at least in two (out of three) time points of the data collection (for the sample attrition analyses, see Supplemental Material that can be retrieved from <https://osf.io/hrzkd/>). All participants were recruited from multi-ethnic classrooms; the average percentage of adolescents from migrant families in these classes was 27.4% (range 5%-80% across classes). The average value of Simpson's index of ethnic diversity<sup>ii</sup> was .45 (range: .10-.84), indicating moderate diversity across classes. These data suggest that adolescents experienced ethnic and cultural diversity in their classes, but native Italians were still the main group in almost all classes.

The majority of participants from migrant families (74.6%) were second-generation immigrants (born in Italy), whereas the remaining participants were first-generation immigrants who had been living in Italy for an average of 7.53 years ( $SD = 5.11$ ; range: 6 months–15.5 years) at T1. Among the first-generation migrants, 67.7% were born in other European countries, with Romanians, Ukrainians, and Albanians as the most highly represented groups. The rest of the first-generation migrants were born in Africa (17.7%), Asia (8.1%), and North, Central, and South America (6.5%). Among second-generation

immigrant adolescents, most parents migrated from other European countries (40.6% and 49.5% of fathers and mothers, respectively), with Albania being the most frequent. The remaining parents migrated from Africa (20.6% and 19.2% of fathers and mothers, respectively), with Moroccans as the largest group; Asia (2.8% and 2.7% of fathers and mothers, respectively), with Chinese being the largest group; North, Central, and South America (3.9% of fathers, 6.6% of mothers), with U.S. nationals and Argentines as the largest groups; and the Middle East (1.1% of fathers, 0.5% of the mothers) as the smallest group represented by Syrian and Iranian parents. With regard to reasons for migration, the majority of participants reported that their parents had migrated to improve their family's economic situation (35.2% and 29.5% of fathers and mothers, respectively), for family reunification (7.8% and 23.4% of fathers and mothers, respectively), other reasons (e.g., to study, to escape war; 3.6% and 6.9% of fathers and mothers, respectively), or did not answer this question (53.4% and 40.2% of fathers and mothers, respectively).

With regard to family structure, the majority of the participants (77.5%) reported that they came from two-parent families, 20.1% indicated that their parents were separated or divorced, and the others (2.4%) specified other family situations (e.g., one deceased parent). Fathers' educational levels were as follows: 45.7% held less than a high school diploma, 41.1% held a high school diploma, and 13.2% held a university degree. Mothers' educational levels were as follows: 30% held less than a high school diploma, 48.9% held a high school diploma, and 21.1% held a university degree. Overall, the sample characteristics of this study reflect the overall socio-demographical features of the adolescents from migrant families in Italy (ISTAT, 2020; United Nations, 2019).

To examine the distribution of missing values in the dataset, we used Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR). The findings yielded a normed  $\chi^2$  ( $\chi^2/df$ ) of 1.05, indicating that data were very likely missing at random. Therefore, all participants in the final

longitudinal sample ( $n = 244$ ) were included in the analyses, and missing data were handled using the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML; Kelloway, 2015) estimator in *Mplus* 8.6 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017).

### **Procedure**

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna (Italy). We obtained permissions from school principals so that we could administer the study questionnaire during regular class hours at each time point. After we obtained permission from principals, we provided students with oral and written information about the study asked them and their parents to sign informed assent and consent forms, respectively. Data collection consisted of three time points with a six-month interval between successive waves. At each time point, the school principals informed teachers (through written and a digital communications) about the project and the scheduled data collection time. The teachers could stay in or leave the classroom during the questionnaire administration. The data collections at T1 (May 2019) and T2 (November 2019) were completed through a paper-and-pencil questionnaire administered in the classrooms during school hours, whereas the data collection at T3 (May 2020) was completed via an online version of the same questionnaire due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>iii</sup> Participants completed the questionnaire in about 30-40 minutes at each time point. For both versions of the questionnaire (i.e., paper-and-pencil and online), each participant generated a unique code through which the participant's responses could be associated across the three waves while ensuring participant privacy. Participation in this longitudinal study was voluntary, and students were able to choose not to complete the questionnaire at each time point.

### **Measures**

At each wave, participants completed a questionnaire including measures of acculturation, intergroup contact, identity, and psychosocial adjustment. The present article



focuses on measures of ethnic and national identities, social identification with proximal groups, and adolescents' self-definitions as well as sense of being "at home" within their heritage and/or destination cultural contexts. Cronbach's alphas of study measures across the three time points are displayed in Table 1. A copy of these measures can be accessed via the following link: <https://osf.io/k5j6v>

***Ethnic and National Identities.*** Both variables were measured using the Identification Scale, developed in Italian based on the previous scales (i.e., Brown et al., 1986; Cameron, 2004) by Mancini (2006). This scale consists of six items to which participants respond on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). Items were repeated twice to measure ethnic and national identities, separately. Higher scores indicate a greater sense of belongingness to ethnic and national groups (i.e., ethnic and national identities). Sample items are the following: "How much do you feel belonging to the ethnic group of your parents?" (Ethnic identity); and "How much do you feel Italian?" (National identity). Two separate confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) with one latent factor (ethnic/national identity) and three observed indicators obtained with the parceling technique showed that the factor loadings ranged from .900 to .960 and from .748 to .947 for ethnic and national identities at T1, respectively.

***Social Identification with Proximal Groups.*** Social identifications with family and with classmates were assessed using the Group Identification Scale (for English and Italian versions, see Thomas et al., 2017). This measure consists of six items scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*completely false*) to 5 (*completely true*). Each item was presented twice to assess social identifications with family and with classmates. Higher scores indicate a higher social identification with the respective groups. A sample item is: "Being a member of my family [classmates' group] is important to who I am". Two separate CFAs with one latent factor (social identification with family/classmates) and three observed

indicators obtained with the parceling technique indicated that the factor loadings ranged from .780 to .834 for social identification with family and from .831 to .887 for social identification with classmates.

*Adolescents' Self-Definitions.* Participants were asked to provide an answer to an open-ended question regarding their cultural self-definitions (i.e., “How would you define yourself?”) at T1. The obtained self-definitions were coded into three categories: self-definitions as Italian (31.6%), self-definitions referring to the ethnic group of their parents (24.6%), and self-definitions referring to both national and ethnic groups (i.e., dual definition; 40.2%). The remaining participants either provided other descriptions that could not be coded in the above categories (e.g., citizen of the world; 1.6%) or did not provide an answer (2%) to this question.

*Adolescents' Feelings About Being “At Home”.* Additional questions regarding adolescents' sense of being “at home” (i.e., “If your mother [father] was born in another country, in which country do you feel more ‘at home’?”) were asked to participants at T1. They could express their sense of being “at home” by choosing any of the following options with respect to each parent, separately: in the destination country (i.e., Italy; 36.5% and 43% for fathers and mothers, respectively), in both countries (25.8% for fathers and 31.1% for mothers), in the parents' country (9.8% for fathers; 11.9% for mothers), or in neither country (0.8% for fathers; 0.4% for mothers). The remainder of the sample (25% and 13.1% for fathers and mothers, respectively) did not answer this question because only one parent was born abroad. A small number of participants (2.1% and 0.5% for fathers and mothers, respectively) did not provide an answer to this question.

## Results

In this section, the findings are presented within separate section for preliminary and main analyses. All analyses scripts of the current research can be found at the following link:

<https://osf.io/2ka84>

### **Preliminary Analyses**

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations.* Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations<sup>iv</sup> among study variables are displayed in Table 1. Significant and negative correlation between ethnic and national identities emerged at T1; however, no significant relationships were detected at T2 or T3. Furthermore, rank-order stability was high for both ethnic (.745 and .711 for T1-T2 and T2-T3, respectively;  $p_s < .001$ ) and national (.739 and .768 for T1-T2 and T2-T3, respectively;  $p_s < .001$ ) identities. Stability coefficients with values above .60 suggest a high degree of continuity (e.g., Mroczek, 2007).

*Longitudinal Measurement Invariance.* Hierarchical levels of longitudinal measurement invariance were tested in *Mplus* using the maximum likelihood estimator with robust standard errors (MLR, Satorra & Bentler, 2001). As displayed in Table S1 in the Supplemental Material, the findings highlighted the presence of all levels (i.e., configural, metric, and scalar; van de Schoot et al., 2012) of measurement invariance. Therefore, we proceeded with observed variables in analyzing mean-level changes in ethnic and national identities (Little, 2013).

### **Main Analyses**

*Multivariate Latent Growth Curve.* Multivariate Latent Growth Curve analysis was conducted (Duncan & Duncan, 2009; Duncan et al., 2006) to model mean-level changes in ethnic and national identities. Results of the Multivariate Latent Growth Curve analyses were evaluated using the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), with values higher than .90 demonstrating an acceptable fit, and values higher than .95 suggesting excellent fit; and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Root Mean

Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), with values below .08 indicating acceptable fit and values lower than .05 demonstrating excellent fit (Byrne, 2012). We also examined the 90% Confidence Interval (CI) for the RMSEA, with an upper bound for the CI below .10 (Chen et al., 2008) considered as indicative of acceptable fit.

Results indicated that the linear growth model fit the data very well (Table 2). As illustrated in Figure 1, adolescents reported similar but intermediate initial levels of both ethnic and national identities. However, levels of ethnic identity significantly decreased over time, whereas levels of national identity remained fairly stable from T1 to T3 (Table 2). Additionally, the ethnic and national identity intercepts were significantly and negatively interrelated ( $p = .010$ ), whereas the slope terms were not significantly interrelated ( $p = .239$ ).

***Multivariate Latent Class Growth Analyses.*** Multivariate Latent Class Growth analysis was performed to identify meaningful developmental trajectory profiles of ethnic and national identity (Reinecke, 2006; see also Nelemans et al., 2014, for an example). To this end, models with different number of classes (i.e., profiles) were compared according to multiple criteria (Jung & Wickrama, 2008; Nylund et al., 2007; Reinecke, 2006): the Sample-Size Adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (SSA-BIC), with lower values representing an improvement in model fit; entropy, with values above .75 indicative of good classification accuracy; and the significance ( $p < .05$ ) of the adjusted Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test (adj. LMR-LRT; Lo et al., 2001) suggesting that a model with an additional group fits data better compared to the model without this additional group. Furthermore, criteria related to parsimony, theoretical meaningfulness, and the size of each class (i.e., at least 5% of the total sample) were also closely taken into account when comparing the different class solutions.

Findings from Multivariate Latent Class Growth analyses for one- to five-class solutions are displayed in Table 3. The 4-class solution provided the most favorable model fit

and classification accuracy, as indicated by the SSA-BIC and entropy values (i.e., the SSA-BIC and entropy values for the 4-class solution were lower and higher, respectively, compared to those for the 3-class solution). Although the adjusted LMR-LRT value was not statistically significant (adj. LMR-LRT = 51.541,  $p = .31$ ), the 4-class solution was fully in line with theoretical expectations and included sufficient sample sizes in each class. Thus, albeit the 3-class solution was more parsimonious, the fourth class that emerged in the 4-class solution was theoretically meaningful and in line with the hypotheses. Given all of these considerations, the 4-class solution was chosen as the best fitting one.

As displayed in Figure 2 (see also Table 4), adolescents in Class 1 (22%) reported low initial levels of national identity that remained stable across time, as well as high initial levels of ethnic identity with a small but significant decrease over time. In contrast, participants in Class 2 (22%) indicated the reverse pattern by demonstrating high initial rates of national identity combined with low initial level of ethnic identity, which remained fairly stable across time. Therefore, Classes 1 and 2 are labeled as “*ethnic-oriented identity*” and “*national-oriented identity*”. Class 3 (47%) was characterized by high initial levels of both ethnic and national identities with a slight significant decrease in ethnic identity across time. We labeled this class as “*dual identity*”. Finally, adolescents in Class 4 (9%) reported low initial levels of both ethnic and national identities, and these levels remained stable across time. We labeled this fourth class as “*marginalized identity*”.<sup>v</sup>

**Cross-Validation Analyses.** To cross-validate these identity profiles, we examined whether adolescents classified into distinct identity trajectories (i.e., ethnic-oriented identity, national-oriented identity, dual identity, and marginalized identity) also differ in terms of their self-definitions (i.e., referring to their parents’ ethnic group, the destination country, or both) and their feelings about being “at home” (i.e., in their fathers’/mothers’ country, in the destination country, in both countries, or in neither country). As displayed in Table 5, ethnic

and national identity profiles were mostly consistent with adolescents' self-definitions ( $\chi^2(6) = 85.115, p < .001$ , Cramér's  $V = .426$ ). A further examination of differences between observed and expected values (i.e., standardized residuals) indicated that, among members of the ethnic-oriented identity profile, adolescents who defined themselves by referring to the destination country were underrepresented, and adolescents who defined themselves referring to the country of origin were overrepresented. In contrast, adolescents who defined themselves as Italian were overrepresented, and those who define themselves by referring to their country of origin were underrepresented, within the national-oriented identity profile. However, adolescents' dual self-definitions did not significantly differ across the identity profiles.

For adolescents' sense of being "at home", our findings also indicated statistically significant differences across the identity profiles, ( $\chi^2(9) = 61.927, p < .001$ , Cramér's  $V = .341$  for fathers;  $\chi^2(9) = 89.461, p < .001$ , Cramér's  $V = .376$  for mothers). Within the ethnic-oriented identity profile, adolescents who feel "at home" in the destination country were underrepresented, and those who feel "at home" in their parents' countries of origin were overrepresented. The reverse pattern emerged for the national-oriented identity profile. Finally, adolescents who characterized their sense of being "at home" by referring to both countries and those who did not feel "at home" in either country (only for mothers) were overrepresented in the dual identity and marginalized identity profiles, respectively.<sup>vi</sup>

***Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis.*** To investigate how adolescents' social identifications with their families and classmates at T1 may have predicted identity profile memberships, we conducted a multinomial logistic regression analysis using *Mplus*. The marginalized identity profile was chosen as the reference category. Findings (Table 6) indicated that social identification with family at T1 increased the likelihood of being classified in the ethnic-oriented identity profile rather than the marginalized identity profile

(OR [95% CI] = 3.791 [1.582, 9.085],  $p < .01$ ). On the other hand, social identification with classmates at T1 increased the probability of being classified into the national-oriented identity profile rather than the marginalized identity profile (OR [95% CI] = 3.187 [1.677, 6.056],  $p < .001$ ). Finally, social identification with both groups increased the likelihood of being in the dual identity profile rather than the marginalized identity profile (OR [95% CI] = 2.678 [1.293, 5.549],  $p < .01$  and OR [95% CI] = 2.711 [1.604, 4.581],  $p < .001$ , for social identification with family and classmates, respectively).<sup>vii</sup>

### Discussion

This study provides novel evidence on how adolescents from migrant families form their own ethnic and national identities over time by identifying distinct developmental trajectories. Furthermore, our study extends the understanding of fundamental developmental trajectories of social identification (Albarello et al., 2021) by showing how social identification with the most proximal groups affects sense of belongingness to ethnic and national groups among adolescents from migrant families.

### Developmental Trajectories of Ethnic and National Identities

The first aim of our study was to identify distinct developmental trajectories of ethnic and national identities among adolescents from migrant families. Consistent with our expectations (cf. *Hypothesis 1a*), we extracted four meaningful identity profiles labeled as ethnic-oriented identity, national-oriented identity, dual identity, and marginalized identity. As expected, *all* of these identity profiles can be conceptually mapped onto Berry's (1997, 2017) acculturation orientations (i.e., separation, assimilation, integration, and marginalization). These findings provide longitudinal support to augment previous cross-sectional findings (e.g., Baysu et al., 2011; Fleischmann & Verkuyten, 2016). In this respect, the present study provides longitudinal evidence to support Berry's (2017) bidimensional acculturation model within the identity domain (Schwartz et al., 2010, 2015). In other words,

illustrating the simultaneous and continuous development of ethnic and national identities provides additional insights into how adolescents from migrant families come to better understand which cultural groups to which they perceive themselves as belonging (Jensen et al., 2003), which in turn facilitates their acculturation processes in other domains such as practices and values (Lee et al., 2020).

Building upon these identity profiles, and consistent with our expectations (cf. *Hypotheses 1b and 1c*), adolescents who primarily endorse one identity component (i.e., national-oriented or ethnic-oriented identities) provided similar statements in terms of their self-identification and where they felt most “at home.” More specifically, participants classified into the ethnic-oriented identity profile tended to self-identify themselves in terms of their parents’ ethnic group and felt more “at home” in their parents’ country. On the other hand, adolescents classified into the national-oriented identity profile primarily defined themselves in terms of, and reported feeling most “at home” in, the destination country (Jugert, Pink, et al., 2020). In addition to cross-validating these identity profiles, these findings also suggest possible disadvantages of developing either ethnic-oriented or national-oriented identity profiles because adolescents’ sense of feeling “at home” can be conceptualized as one of the essential outcomes of social inclusivity. As such, adolescents in these identity profiles might face greater degrees of difficulty, compared to their peers who were classified into the dual identity profile, in terms of considering their roles, responsibilities, and positions within both of their cultural groups (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

In our findings, dual identity emerged as the profile with the largest number of participants, as has been the case in the vast majority of previous studies conducted in a variety of countries (e.g., Baysu et al., 2011; Fleischmann & Verkuyen, 2016; Jugert, Pink, et al., 2020; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008; but also see Stoessel et al., 2014, for an exception).



Even though more than half of the adolescents within this identity profile (57.1%, see Table 5) defined themselves by referring to both their parents' ethnic group and the destination society, the correspondence between their dual definitions (i.e., self-definitions referring to both the ethnic group of parents and the destination country) and dual identity profile did not reach significance (cf. *Hypothesis 1b*). Nevertheless, the high overlap between dual identifiers and adolescents classified into the dual identity profile might be regarded as an indication of cross-validation. Furthermore, youth in the dual identity profile indeed specified both countries (i.e., parents' country and destination country) vis-à-vis their feelings about being "at home" (cf. *Hypothesis 1c*). Such a result is aligned with the conceptualization of bicultural identity integration, indicating that adolescents from migrant families in this particular identity profile usually tend to perceive both heritage and destination cultures to be mutually inclusive and coherent (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).

Herein, it is interesting to consider the significant longitudinal decline of ethnic identity detected in both the ethnic-oriented and dual identity profiles. Such a specific pattern can be interpreted in light of adolescents' ongoing and increasing interactions with their mainstream Italian peers. In fact, adolescents' frequent interactions with native Italian peers, most likely in the form of peer mainstream socialization experiences (Vietze et al., 2019), could have decreased the development of ethnic identity (Huang & Stormshak, 2011). Another potential explanation can be linked to intergroup perspectives within acculturation research (Karataş et al., 2020), which emphasize the interplay between the acculturation orientations of adolescents from migrant families and the acculturation preferences of their host-national peers. Indeed, in the Italian context, native adolescents usually report that their migrant peers should seek a way of being assimilated into the Italian majority culture (Mancini & Bottura, 2014). Hence, living in a cultural context where adolescents from migrant families are expected to assimilate to the destination culture could have relatively

decreased the sense of belonging to the heritage-cultural community. In contrast, the development of national identity may be encouraged in such assimilationist environments (Ward & Geeraert, 2016), as the negative links between baseline levels of ethnic and national identities might suggest. In this sense, future longitudinal studies with multi-informant designs are needed to disentangle how acculturation attitudes of non-immigrant adolescents can drive the developmental trajectories of ethnic and national identities among adolescents from migrant families.

Finally, the marginalized identity profile included a relatively small group of adolescents who scored low over time on both ethnic and national identities. Somewhat in line with our expectations (cf. *Hypothesis 1c*), participants in this particular identity profile consisted primarily of adolescents whose feelings of being “at home” did not involve their parents’ countries of origin or the destination country. These findings suggest that these adolescents might have experienced some difficulties (e.g., high perceived prejudice and discrimination; Cheon et al., 2020; Crocetti et al., 2021) that may have led them not to identify with their heritage or destination countries. Such lack of identification may represent a form of cultural identity confusion (Berry et al., 2006). It might be further triggered by experiencing relatively greater acculturative stress fueled by the perceived pressure to maintain and adopt components of both one’s heritage and destination cultures (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). Notably, cultural identity confusion could be intertwined with confusion in personal identities as well (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2021; Meca et al., 2017). Therefore, youth in the marginalized identity profile may be at high risk of experiencing difficulties in the formation of their self and personality.

### **The Roles of Social Identification with Family and Classmates**

In accordance with the second purpose of this study, our findings provide evidence as to how identifying with proximal groups (i.e., families and classmates) drives the

developmental trajectories of ethnic and national identities among adolescents from migrant families. As expected (cf. *Hypothesis 2a*), our findings initially indicated that a high level of social identification with family increased the probability of being classified into the ethnic-oriented identity profile. In other words, the more adolescents identified with their family, the more likely they were to identify more strongly with their families' cultural heritage over time. These findings are in line with previous studies suggesting that families socialize their youth toward their heritage culture by transmitting ingroup values and behaviors (Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001), socialization practices (Hughes et al., 2006, 2009), and intergroup attitudes (Dagner & Dalege, 2013). It should be emphasized that heritage-cultural transmission across generations is strongly linked with heritage-cultural retention (Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001), and that intergenerational transmission of ethnic identity is stronger than intergenerational transmission of national identity in migrant families (e.g., Spiegler, Thijs, et al., 2019). As a result, adolescents from migrant families might perceive their families as the "anchors" of their heritage culture. As such, one's sense of belonging to their family's ethnic group would be expected to develop more strongly if one identifies strongly with one's family members.

In line with our expectations (cf. *Hypothesis 2b*) derived from prior work (e.g., Munniksma et al., 2015), the current findings also suggest that social identification with classmates may increase the probability of being classified into the national-oriented identity profile. That is, the more adolescents identified themselves with their classmates, the more strongly they identified with the destination cultural context over time. Such findings may advance previous knowledge (e.g., Agirdag et al., 2011) by specifying that migrant-descent adolescents might tend to perceive their classmates (as a group) as the reference group for the development of national identity. Indeed, if ethnic and cultural diversity in school contexts is distributed heterogeneously, school contexts might provide opportunities for social

integration and peer acceptance through positive interactions amongst students (Agirdag et al., 2011; Juvonen, 2018) that might pave the way for greater emotional commitments with classmates as being transmitters of destination culture more so than heritage culture. Such an explanation is likely plausible considering that native Italian adolescents were the largest cultural group in most heterogeneous classes included in this study.

At this point, consistent with our assumptions and hypotheses, Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) might provide an explanation for how adolescents' social identification with their classmates, as a group, may be related to the development of national identity by suggesting that schools can provide facilitative conditions for positive intergroup contact. As such, adolescents might experience more positive contact and subsequent beneficial outcomes such as decreased intergroup anxiety, bias, and prejudice as well as increased intergroup empathy and tolerance (e.g., Hayward et al., 2017; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008). These positive intergroup relations within school settings could increase the perceived permeability of group boundaries (Tausch et al., 2015), which in turn may help migrant-descent youth to develop stronger national identities (Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008) through high social identification with the entire group of classmates and with the school as a whole.

Although our findings indicated that social identification with classmates predicted the likelihood of being classified into the national identity profile, a more nuanced pattern of associations between experiences with classmates and acculturation processes could be at play. For instance, a longitudinal study conducted in Greece (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2018) suggested that immigrant youth's acculturation into the destination culture can also be considered as a prerequisite for acceptance by host-national classmates. Taking the earlier argument stemming from Intergroup Contact Theory together with this evidence, exploring in-depth the roles of social identification with classmates and peer acceptance (i.e., emotional

and behavioral facets of being a member of a group of classmates) might be essential to gaining deeper insights into the developmental trajectories of ethnic and national identities among immigrant youth. Along these lines, one might explore whether social identification with classmates may represent a mediating mechanism between adolescents' positive interactions in school and the development of national identity (Munniksma et al., 2015; Leszczensky, 2013), where national identity development would likely facilitate acceptance from host-national peers.

Moreover, the current findings suggest that stronger social identification with family and classmates increased the probability of being classified into the dual identity profile (cf. *Hypothesis 2c*). In other words, social identification with both groups might enhance the development of corresponding identities, and thus the development of dual identity. Considering that dual identity is generally linked with the most beneficial psychosocial adjustment outcomes (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013), our findings underscore that positive relations with family and peers can foster positive youth adaptation by enhancing the development of articulated cultural identities. The present findings also suggest that adolescents from migrant families might benefit from a variety of cultural resources provided by the members of various proximal groups, and that “the combination of multiple cultural resources may lead to even more favorable outcomes” (Wang & Benner, 2016, p. 606) despite its potential acculturative and developmental challenges (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012; Noack, 2021).

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Despite its novel contributions derived from a solid theoretical background and robust longitudinal methods, the current study should be considered in light of at least three important shortcomings that might be addressed in future research. First, we sought to capture the developmental trajectories of ethnic and national identities from a theoretical

perspective that focuses on the *content* of one's identity (for a similar approach, see Spiegler, Wölfer & Hewstone, 2019), but the identity literature has also focused on the *processes* through which a particular identity is constructed (e.g., exploration, resolution, affirmation; Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2010; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2020). To more accurately capture the dynamic processes underlying the formation of ethnic and national identities during adolescent years, future studies might explore the developmental trajectories of both identities by adopting an integrative approach consisting of both content aspects and processes of ethnic and national identities (e.g., McLean et al., 2016).

Second, in the present study, we focused on the development of ethnic and national identities in early-to-middle adolescents using assessments spaced six months apart. Such a focus is appropriate for studying identity development in a phase in which changes occur, often within the framework of adolescents' experiences within one academic year (e.g., Albarello et al., 2018; Negru-Subtirica et al., 2015, 2017; Pop et al., 2016). Given that cultural identities represent ongoing endeavors into adulthood (Maehler et al., 2019), it is nonetheless essential to integrate multiple levels of analysis, from short-term day-to-day dynamics to long-term processes over multiple years (i.e., micro- and macro-level time scales; De Ruiter & Gmelin, 2021) to monitor developmental processes over the transitions to emerging adulthood and into adulthood. Accordingly, future longer-term longitudinal research with daily assessments should examine how emerging, middle, and older adults from migrant families continue to construct their ethnic and national identities.

Finally, adolescents in this study were recruited from different multi-ethnic schools in the region of Emilia-Romagna, which is home to Italy's highest proportion of students from migrant families (Ministro dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca [Italian Ministry of Education, University, and Research], 2018). Nevertheless, most participants in our study (74.6%) were second-generation migrant adolescents (born in Italy but with at least one

parent born abroad). In this respect, investigating the developmental trajectories of both identities in samples consisting primarily of foreign-born adolescents would further shed light on how youth who recently arrived in Italy would negotiate and form their ethnic and national identities (see Schwartz et al., 2015, for an example in the U.S. context).

### **Implications**

Despite these and other shortcomings, the present study provides important evidence regarding how adolescents from migrant families negotiate ethnic and national identities by identifying distinct identity profiles (i.e., ethnic-oriented identity, national-oriented identity, dual identity, and marginalized identity), as well as the links of these profiles with adolescents' social identification with their families and classmates. Given these key contributions, it is essential to highlight some possible practical implications of our results to foster adolescents' social inclusion. In line with considerable evidence highlighting the beneficial effects of developing a dual identity (e.g., Berry et al., 2006), it is of great importance to encourage development and delivery of school-based intervention programs to enhance the simultaneous development of ethnic and national identities (e.g., Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018). Considering our findings highlighting the key roles of social identification with families and classmates in driving the development of both identities, it may be essential to incorporate both intergroup and intergenerational perspectives (Karataş et al., 2020, 2021) within these intervention programs. Indeed, such programs, including parent-adolescent interactions and activities conducted at school (for at least some of the intervention delivery period), may diminish perceived ethnic anxiety and threat by enhancing harmonious interactions in secure school settings that could, in turn, maximize the beneficial effects of developing dual identities within and outside the school context (Baysu & Phalet, 2019). As such, it might be possible to promote and support the implementation of a multicultural context where adolescents' and their parents' multiple identities are valued and supported.

From a methodological point of view, in this study, we adopted a person-centered approach and provided longitudinal empirical evidence in support of the seminal bidimensional model of acculturation (Berry, 1997). Our empirical solution was also cross-validated by relating memberships in specific empirically derived profiles to adolescents' responses to open questions regarding their self-definitions and to their explicit indications of the country in which they most felt at home. Although these findings were robust, it is worth acknowledging that adopting such a typological approach has been questioned in the personality research due to the potential problems concerning the replicability and coverage of personality types as well as sensitivity to informants (e.g., Freudenstein et al., 2019; McCrae et al., 2006; Rammstedt et al., 2004). Thus, future longitudinal work endorsing both variable-centered and person-centered approaches (Ashton & Lee, 2009; Crocetti et al., 2012) might further refine our understanding of how adolescents from migrant families can negotiate their identities by navigating into both their heritage-cultural communities and the destination society.

## **Conclusion**

The present study provides novel insights into how adolescents from migrant families can successfully address key developmental and acculturative tasks by highlighting distinct and meaningful identity profiles based on the developmental trajectories of ethnic and national identities and how social identification with proximal groups (i.e., family and classmates) might predict memberships in these cultural identity profiles. In this sense, greater social identification with family increased the probability of developing both ethnic-oriented and dual identity as compared to marginalized identity, whereas greater social identification with classmates increased the possibility to have appeared in either national-oriented or dual identity profiles in comparison with the marginalized identity profile. Taken together, the present findings provide novel evidence regarding the dynamic and interactive



nature of identity development and its potential consequences for youth adjustment by suggesting that adolescents from migrant families (re)categorize themselves based on their meaningful commitments to significant others belonging to groups that socialize them toward one's heritage and destination societies (Eckstein & Crocetti, 2021; Motti-Stefanidi, 2021). As such, our findings also call for further longitudinal research regarding how adolescents' social identification with other proximal groups (e.g., close friends, teachers) might shape the simultaneous development of ethnic and national identities among migrant-descent individuals across different stages of life.

### **Data Availability Statement**

Study materials, analyses codes, and outputs are publicly available and can be retrieved from: <https://osf.io/kpm5f>. The datasets generated and/or analyzed for the current study are not publicly available due to ethical restrictions (i.e., participants did not agree for their data to be shared publicly) but are available from the corresponding author on a reasonable request.

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## Tables

Table 1

*Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients ( $\alpha$ ), and Bivariate Correlations between Study Variables*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i><math>\alpha</math></i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
1. Ethnic Identity T1	3.514	1.090	.948	–							
2. National Identity T1	3.488	0.920	.886	–.220**	–						
3. Ethnic Identity T2	3.403	1.095	.953	.745***	–.183*	–					
4. National Identity T2	3.500	0.928	.905	–.115	.739***	–.102	–				
5. Ethnic Identity T3	3.195	1.031	.946	.658***	–.014	.711***	.008	–			
6. National Identity T3	3.476	0.868	.912	–.102	.701***	–.097	.768***	.072	–		
7. Social Identification with Family T1	3.848	0.778	.847	.361***	.165*	.309***	.128	.200*	.161*	–	
8. Social Identification with Classmates T1	3.186	0.878	.890	.035	.420***	.078	.456***	.088	.353***	.319***	–

*Note.* T = Time; \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 2***Multivariate Latent Growth Curve Analysis*

	Growth Factors		Model fit					
	Intercept $M (\sigma^2)$	Slope $M (\sigma^2)$	$\chi^2$	$df$	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]
<b>Ethnic Identity</b>	3.479*** (1.141***)	-0.129*** (0.148*)	9.631	7	.994	.987	.031	.039 [.000, .094]
<b>National Identity</b>	3.497*** (0.706***)	-0.027 (0.079*)						

*Note.*  $\chi_{SB}^2$  = Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square;  $df$  = degrees of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA [90% CI] = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation and 90% Confidence Interval.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 3***Class Solutions Resulting from Multivariate Latent Class Growth Analyses*

Solution	SSA-BIC	Entropy	Adj. LMR-LRT	1	2	3	4	5
1-class solution	3373.035	-	-	100%				
2-class solution	3117.242	.847	258.041***	69%	31%			
3-class solution	2969.545	.800	153.740***	43%	31%	26%		
<b>4-class solution</b>	<b>2927.766</b>	<b>.814</b>	<b>51.541</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>9%</b>	
5-class solution	2889.715	.778	47.943	31%	22%	20%	19%	8%

*Note.* SSA-BIC = Sample-Size Adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion; Adj. LMR-LRT = Adjusted Lo–Mendell–Rubin Likelihood Ratio Test. The chosen class solution is indicated in bold. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4***Parameter Estimates for Intercept and Slope Factors in Multivariate Latent Class Growth Analysis*

	Ethnic Identity		National Identity	
	Intercept <i>M</i>	Slope <i>M</i>	Intercept <i>M</i>	Slope <i>M</i>
Ethnic Oriented (22%)	4.369 <sup>***</sup>	-.322 <sup>***</sup>	2.390 <sup>***</sup>	.043
National Oriented (22%)	2.109 <sup>***</sup>	.013	3.997 <sup>***</sup>	-.039
Dual Identity (47%)	4.002 <sup>***</sup>	-.163 <sup>**</sup>	3.962 <sup>***</sup>	-.039
Marginalized Identity (9%)	2.458 <sup>***</sup>	.029	2.642 <sup>***</sup>	-.047

*Note.* \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$



**Table 5***Distribution of Participants across the Four Identity Profiles by Their Self-Definitions and Feelings About Being “At Home”*

	<b>Identity Profiles</b>			
	Ethnic-oriented identity (%)	National-oriented identity (%)	Dual identity (%)	Marginalized identity (%)
<b>Adolescents’ Self-Definitions</b>				
Self-definitions as Italian	<b>0.0(-)</b>	<b>48.1(+)</b>	44.1	7.8
Self-definitions referring to parents’ ethnic group	<b>51.7(+)</b>	<b>1.7(-)</b>	33.3	13.3
Dual Definition	20.4	14.3	57.1	8.2
<b>Adolescents’ Feelings About Being “At Home”</b>				
In the destination country (F/M)	<b>11.2(-)/7.6(-)</b>	<b>32.6(+)/40.0(+)</b>	41.6/41.0	14.6/11.4
In the parents’ country (F/M)	<b>66.7(+)/65.6(+)</b>	<b>0.0(-)/0.0 (-)</b>	29.2/31.0	4.1/3.4
In neither country (F/M)	50.0/0.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0	50.0/ <b>100(+)</b>
In both countries (F/M)	25.4/26.3	<b>3.2(-)/2.6(-)</b>	<b>65.1(+)/63.2(+)</b>	6.3/7.9

*Note.* F = Indicates the observed values for father in the left side of the slash mark; M = Indicates the observed values for mother in the right side of the slash mark; Observed values displayed in bold are significantly different from expected values (i.e., standardized residuals  $\geq |2|$ ): (+) represents that the observed value is higher than the expected value, whereas (-) indicates that the observed value is lower than the expected value.

**Table 6***Results of Multinomial Logistic Regression*

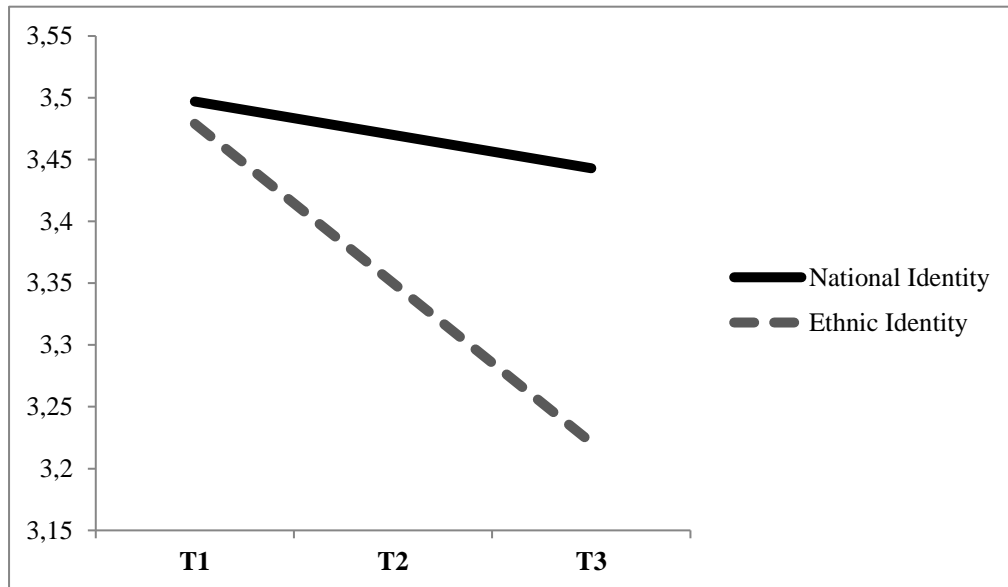
	Ethnic-oriented identity vs. Marginalized identity		National-oriented identity vs. Marginalized identity		Dual identity vs. Marginalized identity	
	<i>B</i>	OR	<i>B</i>	OR	<i>B</i>	OR
	(SE)	[95% CI]	(SE)	[95% CI]	(SE)	[95% CI]
Social identification with family at T1	1.333** (0.446)	3.791 [1.582, 9.085]	0.223 (0.379)	1.250 [0.594, 2.629]	0.985** (0.372)	2.678 [1.293, 5.549]
Social identification with classmates at T1	0.038 (0.289)	1.038 [0.590, 1.829]	1.159*** (0.327)	3.187 [1.677, 6.056]	0.997*** (0.268)	2.711 [1.604, 4.581]

*Note.* SE = Standard Error; OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval; Reference profile was defined as marginalized identity, and thus, all ORs are in reference to the marginalized identity profile. \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Figures

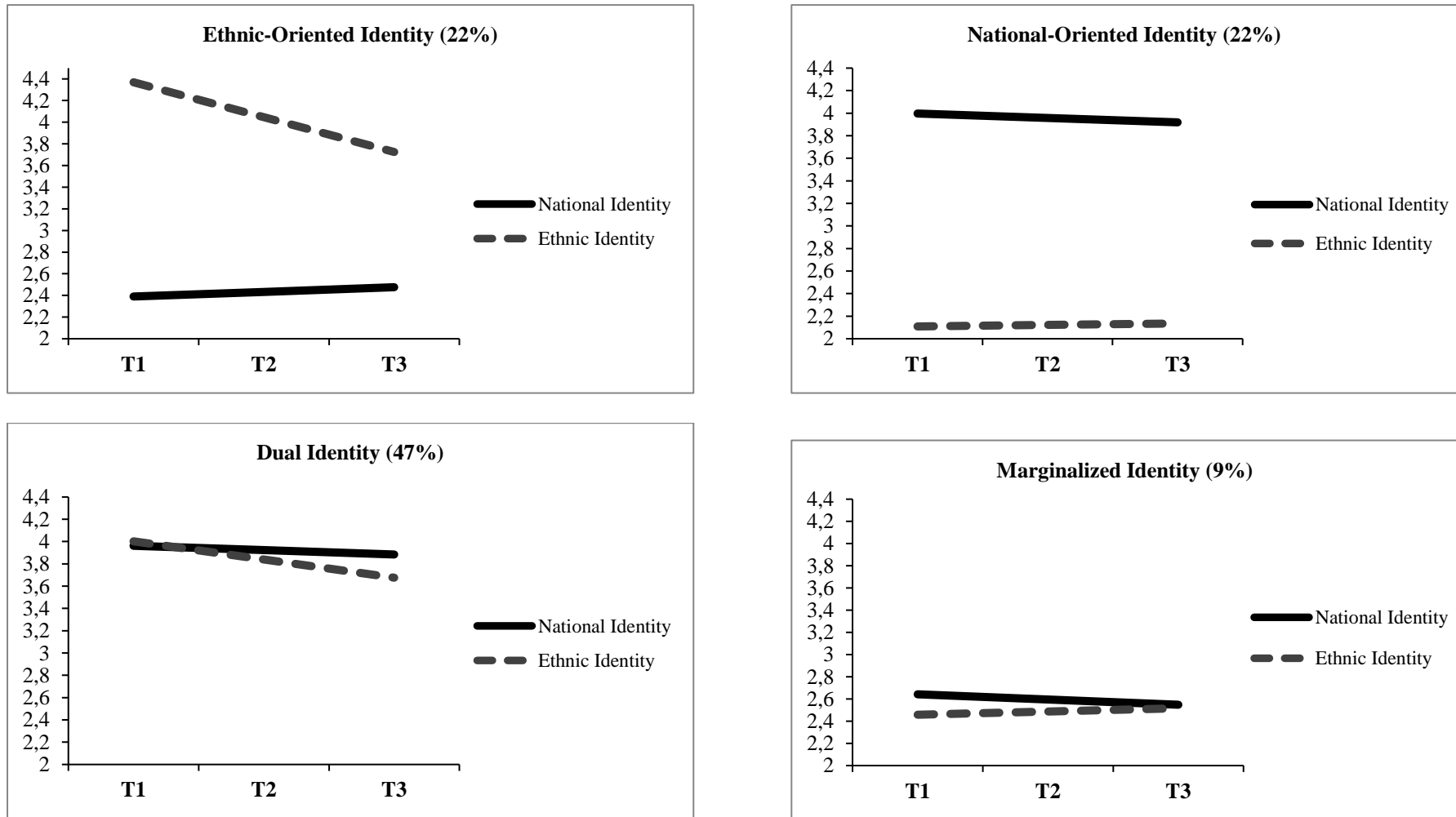
Figure 1

*Estimated Growth of Ethnic and National Identities*



**Figure 2**

*Developmental trajectories of identity classes extracted with Multivariate Latent Class Growth Analysis*



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<sup>i</sup> In prior studies, the last identity profile has also been named “disengagement” (Zhang et al., 2018), “undifferentiated” (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008), and “individualized” (see Study 1 in Fleischmann & Verkuyten, 2016).

<sup>ii</sup> Simpson’s index of diversity (Simpson, 1949; see, e.g., Munniksma et al., 2017) considers not only the number of different ethnic groups but also the size of each ethnic group in each class. While calculating this index, we identified the numbers of cultures represented in each class based on the information regarding the adolescents’ and their parents’ birth countries. If adolescents were born in a country other than Italy (i.e., first-generation immigrants), adolescents’ birth countries were also considered in addition to their parents’ birth countries. However, if adolescents were born in Italy (i.e., second-generation immigrants), only parents’ birth countries were considered. When one parent was born in Italy, the birth country of foreign-born parents was considered only. In all cases, mixed cultures were recoded with separate labels. For instance, if one was born in Greece and one’s mother and father were born in different countries (e.g., Italy and Albania, respectively), a new label was created for this specific participant (e.g., Greece-Albania). The estimation of Simpson’s index of diversity might vary between 0 to 1, and higher scores can be interpreted as indicators of higher diversity in a specific context.

<sup>iii</sup> To collect data via online platforms, the necessary modifications in the previous ethical approval were also carried out, and the updated version of the ethical approval was obtained before initiating the data collection at T3.

<sup>iv</sup> Intraclass correlations were also calculated since the participants were nested in classrooms. The results demonstrated low between-group variance with the values calculated as 0.047 for ethnic identity and 0.088 for national identity at T1; 0.000 for ethnic identity and 0.076 for national identity at T2; and 0.035 and 0.085 at T3 for ethnic and national identities, respectively. Similarly, low intraclass correlation coefficients were documented for social identification with family (ICC = 0.031) and classmates (ICC = 0.000) at T1.

<sup>v</sup> For purposes of comparison, we reported the results related to the 3-class solution in the Supplemental Material.

<sup>vi</sup> Ancillary multinomial logistic regression analysis indicated that demographic variables (i.e., being first- or second-generation immigrants, adolescents with one or both parents being born outside of Italy, one or both parents being from European and non-European countries, and residency in small and medium or large cities) did not significantly influence the likelihood of being classified into the different identity profiles.

<sup>vii</sup> Further analyses including the interaction term (social identification with family x social identification with classmates) over and above the separate effects of social identification with family and classmates showed that the interaction between social identifications with family and classmates was not statistically significant. Similarly, the findings remained stable when the indicators of school diversity (i.e., Simpson’s index of diversity) were controlled for.