

Van Bochove, M., J. Burgers, A. Geurts, W. de Koster, & J. van der Waal (2015). Questioning ethnic identity: Interviewer effects in research about immigrants' self-definition and feelings of belonging. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1-15, DOI: 10.1177/0022022115576961.

Questioning Ethnic Identity:

Interviewer Effects in Research about Immigrants' Self-Definition and Feelings of Belonging

Marianne van Bochove, Jack Burgers, Amber Geurts, Willem de Koster, and Jeroen van der Waal¹

Abstract

Although studies on ethnicity-of-interviewer effects demonstrate that the interviewer's ethnic background influences respondents' answers, they often do not take the multi-faceted nature and context-dependency of ethnic identifications into account. We aim to contribute to the literature in two respects. First, we discern two aspects of ethnic identification – defining oneself as *being* ethnic and expressing *feelings* of belonging to ethnic groups – of which the latter is expected to be more sensitive to interviewer effects. Second, we compare three, instead of two, interview situations – being interviewed by 1) a majority member, 2) a co-ethnic, and 3) a non-co-ethnic minority member – as to empirically scrutinize the scope of interviewer effects while disentangling whether they are *cross-ethnically accommodating* (respondents stress their

¹ Corresponding Author: Marianne van Bochove, Institute of Health Policy & Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam, P.O. Box 1738, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Email: vanbochove@bmg.eur.nl.

similarities with the non-co-ethnic interviewer) or *ethnically affirming* (respondents emphasize their own ethnic identity). Our hypotheses are tested on a sample of 225 Surinamese, Turkish, and Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands. As expected, no interviewer effects occur regarding *being* ethnic. Regarding *feeling* ethnic, however, respondents' identifications in the interviewer situation with a majority member *vis-a-vis* those in both other situations reveal an accommodating interviewer effect.

Keywords

Ethnic identity, Cross-ethnic accommodation, Ethnic affirmation, Intergroup relations, Interviewer effects

Introduction

Research on interviewer effects – i.e., the effects that characteristics of interviewers have on the answers respondents give – has resulted in the general conclusion that although these effects are usually rather small or even insignificant (Cotter, Cohen, & Coulter, 1982; Schaeffer, 1980; Tucker, 1983; Welch, Comer, & Steinman, 1973), they are important when it comes to questions regarding ethnicity. The ethnic background of interviewers has proven to be of influence when members of ethnic minority groups are asked about sensitive topics, such as political opinions (Davis, 1997), alcohol consumption (Dotinga, Van den Eijnden, Bosveld, & Garretsen, 2005), and, particularly, ethnic identification (Barreto, Spears, Ellemers, & Shahinper, 2003; Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Existing research generally has two limitations, which we aim to overcome in this article. The first is that in most conceptualizations, the multilayered nature of identification is not taken into account. The second is that the research design usually does not do full justice to the context-dependency of identifications.

It is generally accepted that attitudinal questions are more subject to interviewer effects than behavioral questions for which there is a verifiable answer (Groves & Magilavy, 1986; Molenaar, 1991). However, this distinction does not suffice: the different aspects of attitudes or identifications deserve more attention. We distinguish between a *being* and a *feeling* component of ethnic identity (cf. Phinney, 1992; Verkuyten, 2005; Verkuyten & De Wolf, 2002). We hypothesize that ethnicity-of-interviewer effects particularly occur if the more flexible aspect of identity is addressed (*feeling*), while they are less pronounced if respondents are asked to describe their ethnic identity (*being*).

In assessing ethnicity-of-interviewer effects on both the being and feeling aspect of ethnic identity, we scrutinize whether these effects should be understood according to the *cross-ethnic-accommodation* hypothesis or the competing *ethnic-affirmation* hypothesis. The cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis denotes that respondents will accommodate their ethnic identity to what they perceive as the norm when facing a non-co-ethnic interviewer. The ethnic-affirmation hypothesis suggests that respondents who belong to a minority population will accentuate the differences between themselves and the majority population, because their ethnic background becomes more distinctive in the interview situation with a non-co-ethnic.

In testing these hypotheses, one should acknowledge that contemporary western societies are characterized by “superdiversity” (Vertovec, 2007). Whereas research on ethnicity-of-interviewer effects typically only distinguishes between interviewers of the majority population and interviewers from the same minority group as the respondents, we will discern an additional situation: interviews conducted by a non-co-ethnic minority member. In doing so, our research design reflects the multi-ethnic context of respondents’ daily lives better than others. We test our ideas using multi-level analyses on a sample of 225 immigrants of Surinamese, Turkish, and

Moroccan origin in the Netherlands, who were interviewed for a project on transnationalism and urban citizenship (cf. Van Bochove, Rusinovic, & Engbersen, 2010).

In short, our approach differs from the dominant one with respect to 1) our dependent variables (two different aspects of identification) and 2) our main independent variable (the interviewer-respondent combination). Before presenting the hypotheses inspired by our approach, we will elaborate on the relevant literature on interviewer effects and the construction of ethnic identity. After explaining our research design and testing these hypotheses, we present our conclusions and their implications for future research.

Scrutinizing Ethnicity-of-Interviewer Effects

Research on ethnicity-of-interviewer effects – we use this term to refer to studies on the effects of both ethnicity and race – usually concentrates on methodological issues. Most scholars focus on technical debates about various methods of data collection, rather than on theoretical debates on the construction of ethnic identity. We aim to contribute to the latter debate. Our approach pays attention to the multiplicity and context-dependency of ethnic identifications. Below, we discuss three features of research on ethnicity-of-interviewer effects: the interviewer-respondent combination, the questions posed, and the effects found. Our approach particularly differs from the one most commonly applied regarding the first two features.

Interviewer-Respondent Combination

From the 1940s onwards, ethnicity-of-interviewer effects related to race and ethnicity have been studied extensively, particularly in American social science. Most of the early studies assessed whether black and white respondents give different answers to black and white interviewers (e.g., Hatchett & Schuman, 1975; Hyman, Cobb, Feldman, Hart, & Stember, 1954). In addition to this

classic design based on racial background, scholars have examined interviewer effects in research involving both Hispanic and Anglo-American respondents and interviewers (e.g., Reese, Danielson, Shoemaker, Chang, & Hsu, 1986). More recently, interviewer effects have been studied regarding members of ethnic minority groups in European countries (e.g., Barreto et al., 2003; Dotinga et al., 2005).

Here, we focus on ethnicity-of-interviewer effects in interviews with members of three ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands; those of Surinamese, Turkish, and Moroccan origin. Similar to existing studies, we examine the differences between respondents interviewed by members of the majority population (i.e., native Dutch) and those interviewed by co-ethnics. In addition to this conventional approach, we include a third combination: minority members interviewed by a member of another minority group. In doing so, we acknowledge that ethnic identities are not constructed in an environment that only consists of co-ethnics and “whites,” but of a variety of ethnic groups to which respondents may feel more or less related (cf. Davis, Couper, Janz, Caldwell, & Resnicow, 2010, p. 20). Although still a simplification of “super-diverse” reality (Vertovec, 2007), this approach better acknowledges the relational and context-dependent nature of identifications (cf. Berger & Berger, 1972; Nederveen Pieterse, 2007), in order to scrutinize the scope of the hypothesized ethnicity-of-interviewer effects.

Concepts and Questions

Existing research not only deals with ethnic practices, such as reading homeland newspapers (Reese et al., 1986), and sensitive behavior, such as alcohol consumption (Dotinga et al., 2005), but also focuses on ethnic identification, often conceptualized as the extent to which members of minority populations report that they belong to their own ethnic group and/or the majority population (Barreto et al., 2003). Although it is generally acknowledged that identification is

more subject to interviewer effects than practices (Groves & Magilavy, 1986; Molenaar, 1991), so far, there has not been much debate about the fact that some aspects of ethnic identification might be affected more than others. More specifically, the multidimensional nature of ethnic identification has not been fully recognized in this field. Following Verkuyten (2005, p. 198) – who draws on the work of Fishman (1980) and Phinney (1990; 1992) – we discern a *being* component from a *feeling* component in ethnic identification. The being component – also called self-definition or self-labeling (Phinney, 1990) – refers to “...the ethnic label that one uses for oneself” (Phinney, 1992, p. 158). Being ethnic is often experienced as a kinship phenomenon (Verkuyten, 2005), but does not simply coincide with one’s objective group membership. As Phinney (1992, p. 158) claims, it should be “...distinguished from one’s ethnicity (objective group membership as determined by parents’ ethnic heritage) and, in fact, may differ from ethnicity.”

Ethnic identity as a self-definition should be distinguished from ethnic identity as a feeling of belonging, because individuals who use a given ethnic label may vary widely in their sense of belonging to their ethnic group. While being ethnic can be measured by asking respondents what ethnic label they use for themselves, feeling ethnic is addressed with questions about ethnic pride and feelings of belonging to a certain group (Phinney, 1992). Questionnaire items referring to being and feeling ethnic are, however, often used without distinction in current research. Baretto et al. (2003, p. 305), for instance, asked their respondents to what extent they consider themselves as a Turk/Iranian/member of Dutch society (being component), and to what extent they are pleased to be a Turk/Iranian/member of Dutch society (feeling component), without discussing possible differences in sensitivity to interviewer effects. Other scholars commonly focus only on one of the two dimensions (e.g., Marin, Triandis, Betancourt, & Kashinma, 1983).

In this paper, we include questions on both the being and the feeling component of ethnic identification, and systematically compare them. Based on theories of identity construction, we expect the being dimension of ethnic identity to be less prone to ethnicity-of-interviewer effects than the feeling component. While the being component is considered in categorical terms instead of a dimension of variation, respondents may take different positions in various contexts regarding the feeling component (Verkuyten, 2005, p. 198; Verkuyten & De Wolf, 2002, p. 393). Therefore, the feeling component is likely to be easier to manipulate and more context-dependent than the being component.

Effects and Interpretations

A final feature of research on ethnicity-of-interviewer effects concerns the effects that are found and how they are interpreted. The dominant finding is that respondents stress similarities with the out-group interviewer, which is interpreted as strategic behavior or impression management (cf. Baretto et al., 2003). Members of ethnic minority groups, interviewed by a member of the majority population, are believed to “...avoid offending an interviewer, particularly in ethnicity-related questions” (Molenaar, 1991, p. 169) and to attempt to “...appear more like the ethnic group represented by the interviewer” (Reese et al., 1986, p. 578).

Yang and Bond (1980) found a different type of interviewer effect and offer an alternative explanation. Their study revealed that bilingual Chinese who were asked to fill out a survey in English responded in a more “Chinese way” than those who were asked to answer in Chinese. According to the authors, this should not to be explained as a strategic move, but as the result of ethnic identity construction. They explain the observed “ethnic affirmation” effect by arguing that an individual’s ethnicity will become “...a more prominent part of his or her self-concept as his or her ethnicity becomes distinctive in the social environment” (Yang & Bond, 1980, p. 421).

Later, this atypical finding was further scrutinized. Bond and Yang (1982, p. 182) concluded that on interview items which respondents indicated as important, they emphasized their “Chineseness,” while the less important an item was to them and the lower their commitment to the value it expressed, the more likely they were to show “cross-ethnic accommodation,” stressing their similarities with the assumed Anglo-Saxon public.² The research of Bond and Yang is relevant for our approach, not only because they engage in the literature on ethnic identity formation, but also because they show that interviewer effects may differ according to the aspect of identity that is addressed.

We will examine whether Surinamese, Turkish, and Moroccan respondents report ethnic identifications as predicted by the cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis or as predicted by the ethnic-affirmation hypothesis. The latter hypothesis predicts that respondents will stress their own ethnic identity more strongly if interviewed by a native Dutch or a non-co-ethnic minority interviewer than if they are interviewed by a co-ethnic, because being confronted with someone of another ethnicity might make the respondent more aware of her/his distinctive ethnic features. The cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis predicts that our respondents – all members of ethnic minorities – will stress their similarities with the native Dutch ethnicity more strongly in case of a native Dutch interviewer than in case of a co-ethnic interviewer, as they consider the Dutch ethnicity as the norm. As we discern a third interview situation – being interviewed by a member of another minority group than the respondents belong to – we are, furthermore, able to scrutinize whether that norm pertains to a hegemonic discourse of “Dutchness” (cf. Gerritsen &

² Bond and Yang (1982) draw a distinction between “ethnic affirmation” and “cross-cultural accommodation.”

However, it might be confusing to use the term “ethnic” when minority members stress their similarities with co-ethnics, while using the term “cultural” when they stress similarities across ethnic lines. We therefore use the terms “ethnic affirmation” and “cross-ethnic accommodation.”

Maier, 2012). If so, the cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis suggests that identification with the native Dutch identity will also be stronger if a minority member is interviewed by a member of another ethnic minority group than when interviewed by a co-ethnic.

Other than most studies, ours will not interpret cross-ethnic accommodation as a self-evident case of strategic behavior. As Davis and Silver (2003, p. 34) argue, “...social desirability is only *believed* to underlie interviewer effects on attitudinal questions” (emphasis in original). Similar to what Bond and Yang (1982) conclude, interviewer effects might be a “natural” phenomenon, resulting from the fact that identities are context-dependent. A Turkish respondent, for example, might genuinely feel more Dutch (accommodation) or Turkish (affirmation) when facing a Dutch interviewer than when facing a co-ethnic. Based on our data however, we are not able to assess how cross-ethnic accommodation should be interpreted. In the concluding section, we present suggestions to disentangle this issue in future research.

Figure 1 recapitulates our approach regarding the interviewer-respondent combination, the dimensions of ethnic identity, and the expected effects.

Figure 1. Characteristics of our research design

Interviewer	Questions	Effect
Co-ethnic		
Non-co-ethnic minority population	<i>Being</i> ethnic identity	Cross-ethnic accommodation
Majority population	<i>Feeling</i> ethnic identity	Ethnic affirmation

Hypotheses

Being versus Feeling Ethnic

In sum, we discern between the being component of ethnic identity (i.e., the ethnic label that people apply to themselves) and the feeling component of ethnic identity (i.e., the extent to which people exhibit feelings of belonging towards ethnic groups). Whereas the former is a categorical term that is hard to manipulate based on social context, the latter is more fluid and potentially context-dependent (cf. Phinney, 1992; Verkuyten, 2005; Verkuyten & De Wolf, 2002). We therefore expect *ethnicity-of-interviewer effects to be stronger in case of questions about the feeling component of identity than in case of the being component (Hypothesis 1)*.

Cross-Ethnic Accommodation versus Ethnic Affirmation

If ethnicity-of-interviewer effects occur, there are at least two possible explanations: the cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis and the ethnic-affirmation hypothesis.

The *cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis* suggests that respondents accommodate their ethnic identity to what they perceive as the norm in the interview situation. Here, *respondents will report being and feeling less “Dutch” to a co-ethnic interviewer than to a native Dutch interviewer (Hypothesis 2a)*, and if the native Dutch ethnic identity operates as a hegemonic social norm, *respondents will report being and feeling less “Dutch” to a co-ethnic interviewer than to a non-co-ethnic minority interviewer (Hypothesis 2b)*.

According to the *ethnic-affirmation hypothesis*, respondents of a minority population emphasize differences between themselves and the majority population because their ethnic background becomes more distinctive in interaction with people of other ethnicities. Therefore *respondents will report being and feeling less “ethnic” to a co-ethnic interviewer than to a native Dutch interviewer (Hypothesis 2c)*, and for non-co-ethnic minority interviewers (with whom they

would also experience more ethnic differences than in interactions with co-ethnics), this means that *respondents will report being and feeling less “ethnic” to a co-ethnic interviewer than to a non-co-ethnic minority interviewer (Hypothesis 2d)*

Method

Data

We will test our hypotheses using data based on 225 interviews conducted between 2007 and 2008 among immigrants of Surinamese, Turkish, and Moroccan origin in Rotterdam. With about 600,000 inhabitants, Rotterdam is the second-largest city of the Netherlands, and one of the most diverse: about 48 percent of its inhabitants are first- or second-generation immigrants (COS, 2011). The ethnic groups included in this research are the city’s three largest minority groups: in 2011, 8.7 percent of Rotterdam’s population was of Surinamese origin, 7.8 percent of Turkish origin, and 6.5 percent of Moroccan origin (O+S, 2011).

Our analyses are based on face-to-face interviews. An advantage is that, because of the physical presence of the interviewer, interviewer effects are here most likely to occur (for interviewer effects in telephone interviews and written questionnaires see: Barreto et al., 2003; Cotter, Cohen, & Coulter, 1982; Yang & Bond, 1980). Because the interviewer and the respondent faced each other for about 30 minutes before questions about ethnic identification were posed (earlier questions dealt with work, family situation, and living environment), we expect the interviewer to be a “significant other” who may influence what respondents report about their ethnic identity.

The interviews were not conducted with the goal of testing ethnicity-of-interviewer effects in mind, but for the *Transnationalism and Urban Citizenship* project, which focused on socioeconomically successful migrants (cf. Van Bochove et al., 2010). Because these highly

educated migrants spoke Dutch fluently, interviews were carried out in Dutch. Therefore, differences in ethnic identity cannot be attributed to differences in language proficiency. That *all* interviews were in Dutch (instead of only those conducted by a Dutch interviewer) prevents interviewer effects driven by ethnic cues in language from disrupting the analyses. The survey consisted of closed and open-ended questions; here we will only use the first. The advantage of this dataset is that it contains interviews with a substantial number of migrants addressing different aspects of ethnic identities. A drawback is that the three interview situations (i.e., being interviewed by 1) a native Dutch, 2) a co-ethnic, or 3) a non-co-ethnic minority interviewer) were not distributed evenly over the three respondent groups. This was caused by the fact that the interview team included more Turkish and Moroccan interviewers than Surinamese ones.

The interviewers recruited respondents mainly through snowball sampling, but were not allowed to interview people they knew in person. Two project coordinators – who also conducted many interviews themselves – organized regular meetings with the interviewers to supervise their selection of respondents. There was a maximum of three referrals per respondent. Many interviewers recruited respondents from a specific ethnic group. Surinamese respondents, for instance, were often interviewed by a native Dutch interviewer, while many Turkish and Moroccan respondents faced a co-ethnic interviewer.

Research Variables

Independent variables. The respondents of different ethnic backgrounds were interviewed by twelve interviewers, with a native Dutch (3), Turkish (3), Moroccan (3), Surinamese (1), Croatian (1), or Indonesian (1) background. The respondents were not asked what they thought the ethnic background of the interviewer was. Following Davis and Silver (2003: 39), we rely on the interviewer's self-identification as Turkish, Indonesian, Croatian, etc., instead of on respondents'

perceptions. Interviewers were between 20 and 30 years old and (except for the project coordinators) Bachelor or Master students. There were two male Turkish interviewers; all other interviewers were females. Table 1 shows the frequencies of the three interviewer-respondent combinations based on ethnic background. Correspondingly, we created three dummy variables: 1) a Dutch interviewer, 2) a co-ethnic interviewer, and 3) a non-co ethnic minority member interviewer.

Table 1. Frequencies different interviewer-respondent combinations.

	Total	Surinamese respondent	Turkish respondent	Moroccan respondent
Native Dutch interviewer	66 (29.3%)	29	9	28
Co-ethnic interviewer	92 (40.9%)	10	48	34
Non-co-ethnic minority member interviewer	67 (29.8%)	36	18	13
N	225			

Dependent variables. The being component of ethnic identity was measured by asking respondents how they would *describe* themselves and the feeling component by the question what they *feel* themselves to be in the first place. For both questions, the answer categories were: 1) Dutch, 2) Resident of Rotterdam (in Dutch: “*Rotterdammer*”), 3) Surinamese/Turkish/Moroccan (the answer option varied according to the respondents’ own ethnic background), 4) Surinamese-Dutch/Turkish-Dutch/Moroccan-Dutch, 5) Dutch-Surinamese/Dutch-Turkish/Dutch-Moroccan, 6) Non-native (in Dutch: “*Allochtoon*”), 7) Christian, 8) Muslim, 9) Hindu, 10) European, 11) World citizen, 12) Other, namely.... Because we are mainly interested in the question whether the respondents describe themselves as, or feel, “Dutch” or “ethnic,” it would seem reasonable to look only at the respondents who chose these options (option 1 or 3). However, only very few respondents described themselves as “Dutch” (2.2% for being, 5.8% for feeling), while many of them described themselves as “ethnic” (10.2

and 34.7%, respectively) or “hyphenated” (42.7% and 16.4%, respectively). The “hyphenated” description can be deduced from option 4 (“Surinamese-Dutch,” etc.) and option 5 (“Dutch-Surinamese,” etc.). To do justice to the fact that many respondents reported having a dual (being or feeling) identity, we distinguish among four categories: “Dutch” (options 1 and 2),³ “own ethnic group” (option 3), “mixed” (options 4 and 5),⁴ and “other” (all other options).

Control variables. In investigating the effect of the ethnicity of the interviewer, it is important to control for other variables that differ from one interview situation to another (Barreto et al., 2003; Rhodes, 1994). In this study, ethnicity (dummy variables based on the country of birth of the respondents’ parents: Surinam, Turkey, or Morocco), gender (men coded 1, women coded 2), age (in years), educational level (in three categories), being born in the Netherlands (dummy variable), and length of stay in the Netherlands (in years, with scores equal to age for respondents born in the Netherlands) are controlled for.

Statistical Analyses

The data have a nested structure: respondents are nested within interviewers. We will assess the impact of a phenomenon on a higher level of aggregation (interviewer characteristics) on those

³ We have included “*Rotterdammer*” in the category “Dutch” because it entails identification with a Dutch city. This is necessary as the number of respondents in this category would be too small if we only included respondents who chose option 1. Note, however, that identification with the multi-ethnic city of Rotterdam might also entail an ethnic component. This means that we use conservative tests: if we were able to run analyses without categorizing “*Rotterdammer*” as Dutch, the effects would most likely be stronger.

⁴ During the interviews, many respondents asked the interviewers what the difference was between, for instance, feeling like a “Dutch-Turkish” and a “Turkish-Dutch.” Because there are no strong arguments to distinguish between “Dutch-ethnic” and “ethnic-Dutch,” in this paper, we classify both as “mixed.”

on a lower level of aggregation (answers from individual respondents) and therefore need multi-level modeling (Hox, 1994; Hox, De Leeuw, & Kreft, 1991). This enables us to determine whether the variance in the dependent variables – being ethnic and feeling ethnic – exists at both the level of individuals (respondents) and at the interviewer level. Variance at the interviewer level is, of course, a necessary condition for ethnicity-of-interviewer effects to exist. Considering that the dependent variables are both categorical, we will apply two series of multi-level multinomial logistic regression models for determining whether the ethnicity of the interviewers explains respondents' ethnic identifications, while controlling for various respondent characteristics.

Results

Exploring Differences among the Three Interviewer-Respondent Combinations

Before conducting multi-level regression analyses, we first explore the structure of the data. Table 2 shows the frequency of the answers given regarding the two components of ethnic identity for each of the three interview situations: being interviewed by a Dutch, co-ethnic, or non-co-ethnic minority interviewer. The results suggest that substantial variation exists among the different interviewer-respondent combinations when it comes to the feeling component of identity. For example, respondents interviewed by a Dutch interviewer say they primarily feel to be Dutch more often than those interviewed by a non-Dutch interviewer. However, for the being component of ethnic identity, the variation between the different combinations is far less pronounced.

Table 2. Answers given to questions about two aspects of ethnic identity, by ethnicity of the interviewer, percentages.

	<i>Dutch interviewer (N=66)</i>	<i>Co-ethnic interviewer (N=92)</i>	<i>Non-co-ethnic minority member interviewer (N=67)</i>
<i>Being ethnic identity</i>			
Describes oneself as Dutch	7.6	10.9	9.0
Describes oneself as ethnic	3.0	13.0	13.4
Describes oneself as mixed	48.5	35.9	46.3
Describes oneself as other	40.9	40.2	31.3
<i>Feeling ethnic identity</i>			
Feels Dutch	27.3	5.4	15.2
Feels ethnic	19.7	41.3	40.9
Feels mixed	21.2	10.9	19.7
Feels other	31.8	42.4	24.2

From Table 2, two preliminary conclusions can be drawn. First, the two components of ethnic identity seem to be differently affected by the ethnic background of the interviewer. Second, there seems to be a cross-ethnic-accommodation effect in the case of feeling ethnic: the respondents report feeling “Dutch” more often to a native Dutch interviewer than to a co-ethnic or non-co-ethnic minority member interviewer. To assess whether these findings are robust, a more rigorous analysis is needed in which we control for various respondent background characteristics. We test our formal hypotheses using multi-level multinomial logistic regression analyses, reported in Tables 3 (being) and 4 (feeling) respectively.

Being Component of Ethnic Identity

The null model of Table 3 demonstrates that there is no meaningful variance at the interviewer-level for the being component of ethnic identity. As such, it does not surprise that – after adding individual-level control variables in Model 1 – Model 2 shows that none of the interviewer-level variables significantly affects the dependent variable. As expected, the being aspect of ethnic

identity appears quite robust. No matter by whom they are interviewed, respondents give the same answer when asked about their ethnic self-definition. Because no significant effects of the interviewer's ethnicity exist, the question whether we are dealing with cross-ethnic accommodation or ethnic affirmation is irrelevant.

Feeling Component of Ethnic Identity

We expected that the feeling component of ethnic identity would be more prone to interviewer effects than the being component. We have seen that there was no significant interviewer effect in case of the being component. How about the feeling component?

Table 4 focuses on what respondents feel what their primary ethnic identity is. The null model shows that there is much more variance at the interviewer level than in the analyses focusing on the being aspect. Model 1 includes controls for various respondent characteristics and Model 2 demonstrates that, in addition to these individual-level effects,⁵ there are significant effects of the interviewer's ethnicity. These results confirm Hypothesis 1: ethnicity-of-interviewer effects only occur for the feeling component of identity.

Closer scrutiny is needed to test the remaining hypotheses. First, we discuss hypotheses 2a and 2c, pertaining to the effect of being interviewed by a native Dutch instead of a co-ethnic interviewer. There is no ethnicity-of-interviewer effect for feeling "mixed" *vis-à-vis* feeling "Dutch." But in the case of feeling "other," such an effect does exist: compared to respondents who were interviewed by a co-ethnic, those interviewed by a Dutch native less often report that

⁵ The individual-level controls indicate that, unsurprisingly, a longer stay in the Netherlands is associated with a greater likelihood of feeling "Dutch" instead of "ethnic." In addition, respondents' age is positively associated with feeling "ethnic" or "other" instead of "Dutch," which suggests that older respondents are more strongly attached to their ethnic background, possibly because of a longer stay in the country of origin.

Table 3. Multilevel multinomial logistic regression analyses. Dependent variable: Being component of ethnic identity (“Being Dutch” is reference category; log-odds presented, standard errors between brackets; N = 211 respondents nested within 12 interviewers; adaptive quadrature).

	<i>Null model</i>			<i>Model 1</i>			<i>Model 2</i>		
<i>Individual-level variables (respondent characteristics)</i>	<i>Being ethnic</i>	<i>Being mixed</i>	<i>Being Other</i>	<i>Being ethnic</i>	<i>Being mixed</i>	<i>Being other</i>	<i>Being Ethnic</i>	<i>Being mixed</i>	<i>Being other</i>
Constant	0.05 (0.31)	1.44*** (0.24)	1.32*** (0.25)	4.08 (3.88)	4.92 (3.46)	2.23 (3.59)	3.73 (3.91)	5.06 (3.51)	2.52 (3.62)
Surinamese	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Turkish				0.75 (0.82)	-0.10 (0.64)	0.70 (0.66)	0.86 (0.92)	0.27 (0.72)	0.95 (0.73)
Moroccan				0.42 (0.82)	-0.29 (0.62)	0.72 (0.63)	0.63 (0.90)	-0.13 (0.67)	0.78 (0.68)
Education				-1.58 (1.11)	-1.37 (1.04)	-0.42 (1.08)	-1.57 (1.12)	-1.39 (1.05)	-0.46 (1.09)
Income				-0.04 (0.21)	-0.15 (0.17)	-0.13 (0.17)	-0.03 (0.22)	-0.20 (0.17)	-0.16 (0.17)
Length of stay				-0.06 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)
Born in the Netherlands				0.38 (0.80)	0.78 (0.63)	0.46 (0.63)	0.27 (0.82)	0.83 (0.64)	0.52 (0.64)
Age				0.04 (0.05)	0.09* (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	0.04 (0.06)	0.08 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)
Female				0.31 (0.65)	-0.28 (0.51)	-0.39 (0.52)	0.30 (0.66)	-0.33 (0.52)	-0.43 (0.52)
<i>Interviewer-level variables</i>									
Co-ethnic interviewer							Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Non-co-ethnic minority member interviewer							0.44 (0.81)	0.69 (0.68)	0.35 (0.69)
Dutch interviewer							-0.77 (1.04)	1.01 (0.72)	0.79 (0.71)
Variance interviewer level		0.00			0.00			0.00	
Log-likelihood		-252.63			-239.85			-236.02	

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05

Table 4. Multilevel multinomial logistic regression analyses. Dependent variable: Feeling component of ethnic identity (“Feeling Dutch” is reference category; log-odds presented, standard errors between brackets; N = 210 respondents nested within 12 interviewers; adaptive quadrature).

	<i>Null model</i>			<i>Model 1</i>			<i>Model 2</i>		
<i>Individual-level variables (respondent characteristics)</i>	<i>Feeling ethnic</i>	<i>Feeling mixed</i>	<i>Feeling other</i>	<i>Feeling ethnic</i>	<i>Feeling mixed</i>	<i>Feeling other</i>	<i>Feeling ethnic</i>	<i>Feeling mixed</i>	<i>Feeling other</i>
Constant	1.08** (0.35)	0.27 (0.37)	0.97** (0.35)	1.75 (2.13)	-2.81 (2.79)	-5.71* (2.82)	2.19 (2.17)	-2.74 (2.83)	-4.78 (2.81)
Surinamese	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Turkish				-0.05 (0.65)	0.09 (0.74)	0.84 (0.71)	-0.39 (0.64)	0.71 (0.71)	0.78 (0.67)
Moroccan				-0.20 (0.62)	0.46 (0.70)	1.52* (0.64)	-0.45 (0.63)	0.67 (0.67)	1.34* (0.62)
Education				-0.34 (0.50)	0.82 (0.73)	1.58* (0.76)	-0.44 (0.53)	0.88 (0.72)	1.46 (0.77)
Income				-0.03 (0.15)	-0.16 (0.18)	-0.10 (0.16)	0.04 (0.16)	-0.24 (0.19)	-0.08 (0.16)
Length of stay				-0.11* (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.11* (0.05)	-0.03 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)
Born in the Netherlands				0.63 (0.60)	0.75 (0.68)	1.37* (0.62)	0.49 (0.61)	0.67 (0.67)	1.22* (0.61)
Age				0.08* (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.10** (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	0.08* (0.04)
Female				0.46 (0.48)	0.03 (0.54)	0.18 (0.49)	0.38 (0.48)	-0.13 (0.53)	0.11 (0.48)
<i>Interviewer-level variables</i>									
Co-ethnic interviewer							Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Non-co-ethnic minority member interviewer							-1.32 (0.68)	0.29 (0.80)	-1.32 (0.71)
Dutch interviewer							-2.90*** (0.73)	-0.26 (0.78)	-1.65* (0.68)
Variance interviewer level		0.54			0.57			0.00	
Log-likelihood		-274.45			-253.53			-240.09	

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05

they feel “other” instead of “Dutch.” This is what one would expect based on the cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis. With respect to the distinction of feeling “ethnic” *vis-à-vis* feeling “Dutch,” Table 4 also shows ethnicity-of-interviewer effects reflecting the cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis. Respondents who were interviewed by native Dutch report less often feeling “ethnic” instead of “Dutch,” than those interviewed by a co-ethnic, which means that Hypothesis 2a, deduced from the cross-ethnic-accommodation theory, is corroborated. The hypothesis deduced from the competing ethnic-affirmation theory (Hypothesis 2c) is rejected.

There are no significant differences between those interviewed by a co-ethnic and those interviewed by a non-co-ethnic minority interviewer, which means that hypotheses 2b and 2d have to be rejected. Our results do not reflect ethnic affirmation (central to Hypothesis 2d) and offer no evidence that “native Dutchness” operates as a hegemonic social norm in the interview situations (reflected in Hypothesis 2b), as those interviewed by a co-ethnic do not significantly differ from those who were interviewed by a member of another ethnic minority. Towards members of other minorities, respondents do not seem to feel the urge to accommodate towards a dominant societal norm.

Conclusion and Discussion

Main Findings

Our analyses result in two main findings. One is that distinguishing among different components of ethnic identity is important because there are different interviewer effects pertaining to these components. Ethnicity-of-interviewer effects do not exist when respondents are asked to label themselves in ethnic terms, but do exist when they are asked to what extent they feel they belong to a certain ethnic group. Our second main finding is that, in case of ethnic minority members in

the Netherlands, ethnicity-of-interviewer effects are in line with the cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis, and not with the ethnic-affirmation hypothesis.

Considering the first finding: whereas research on ethnic identity formation often discerns between self-definition (*being* ethnic) and feelings of belonging (*feeling* ethnic) (Phinney, 1992; Verkuyten, 2005; Verkuyten & De Wolf, 2002), these different dimensions of ethnic identity were not taken into account in research on ethnicity-of-interviewer effects. Our findings confirm that the being component of ethnic identity is more robust than the feeling component. When asked to describe themselves, answers given by members of ethnic minority groups do not vary across the different interview situations.

In the case of the feeling component, however, we found that when asked what they feel their primary self-identity is, answers given differ significantly across interviewer-respondent combinations as predicted by the cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis. This is the second main finding, which can be further elaborated upon because we acknowledged the context-dependency of ethnic identity.

Contrary to research based on comparing two interviewer-respondent combinations, we added the situation of a minority group respondent being interviewed by an interviewer from a different ethnic minority group. Such a research design does more justice to how ethnic identity is constructed in everyday situations, particularly in highly diverse urban environments. Our results suggest that respondents do not report differently towards non-co-ethnic minority interviewers than towards co-ethnics. To both, they report to a similar extent that they have feelings of belonging towards their own ethnic group or towards the native Dutch. This indicates that if the cross-ethnic accommodation that was found is the result of strategic behavior, ethnic-minority members merely seem to feel the urge to do so when the interviewer is native Dutch. They are accommodating to native Dutch, but not to a societal norm of “native Dutchness” that

has become quite salient in the Netherlands from the early 2000s onwards (cf. Gerritsen & Maier, 2012).

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

We incorporated well-accepted theoretical notions on ethnic identity construction into research on ethnicity-of-interviewer effects. However, our study has some limitations, particularly concerning our data. Our findings also raise further questions for future research.

First, the interviewers and respondents in our research were not distributed randomly, which has the disadvantage that some interviewer-respondent combinations occurred more often than others. Moreover, because respondents were mainly recruited through snowball sampling, they are not representative for the population of middle-class minority members in Rotterdam. Future research should decide how far our findings travel beyond the specific case assessed.

Second, because we focused on highly-educated minority members the generalizability of our results is limited. While there is no theoretical reason to expect that results would be different across educational levels regarding being ethnic (no interviewer effects), it could be the case that effects on feeling ethnic differ. Because of their relatively marginalized position, less-educated minority members might, for instance, be more dissatisfied in Dutch society, and therefore not stress similarities (cross-ethnic accommodation), but rather differences (ethnic affirmation) with a native Dutch interviewer. Future research should include minority members with varying educational levels in order to explore the moderating role of education.

Third, because we focused on highly-educated minority members, our sample includes minority members who are fluent in Dutch and we carried out *all* interviews in Dutch. This had the advantage of ruling out interviewer effects driven by ethnic cues in language used. The practical implication of our approach is that the ethnic divide between interviewer situations with

a co-ethnic and those with a native Dutch interviewer is smaller than when the interviewees would have been interviewed in respondents' mother tongue by a co-ethnic and in Dutch by a native Dutch. This signals that the corroboration of the cross-ethnic-accommodation hypothesis occurred on the basis of a least-likely case, and that the interviewer effects found would, consequently, most likely have been even more pronounced in a less strict test. Future research is needed to determine whether and to what extent this is the case.

Fourth, our data were collected in a specific socio-political context, which might be relevant for the effects we found. The fact that we found evidence for cross-ethnic accommodation, and not for ethnic affirmation, may be specific for countries where the cultural climate entails an emphasis for ethnic minorities to assimilate. This is the case in a number of European countries, such as the Netherlands (Gerritsen & Maier, 2012; De Koster, Achterberg, Van der Waal, Van Bohemen, & Kemmers, 2014), and within the Netherlands particularly in the city of Rotterdam (cf. Van Bochove et al., 2010). It would therefore be interesting for future research to focus on cities or countries where ethnic minorities are less pressed to assimilate, or on minority groups whose presence and culture are not so debated.

Fifth, our findings suggest that cross-ethnic accommodation is not by definition an example of impression management, as is often claimed (Barreto et al., 2003; Reese et al. 1986). In case of impression management, we would expect minority members to *describe* themselves as more Dutch to a Dutch interviewer, instead of only reporting that they *feel* more Dutch. We have, however, not directly tested whether interviewer effects are the result of socially desirable answers. Whether impression management really is the mechanism at work could be assessed in research that includes a measure of respondents' need for social approval (for an application in more general research on interviewer effects, see Reinecke & Schmidt, 1993). The key hypothesis would be that the extent to which ethnic minority members report a "Dutch" instead

of an “ethnic minority” identity when interviewed by a native Dutch interviewer instead of an ethnic minority interviewer is stronger among respondents with a greater need for social approval. If such an interaction effect were found, it would provide support for the assumption that it is impression management that underlies cross-ethnic accommodation.

Our final recommendation concerns the question of whether interviewers and respondents should be matched on the basis of their ethnic background. In many cases (cf. Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008), researchers opt for ethnically matching the interviewer with the respondent, in order to rule out “false” answers. In other cases, there may be theoretical reasons to match specific interviewers with interviewees, for instance when the interview situation is used as an experimental situation to assess ethnocentrism or authoritarianism (cf. Stenner, 2005). Yet, there can be good reasons for *not* matching interviewers and respondents in terms of ethnicity at an *individual* level, but only see to it that the ethnic composition of the set of interviewers is about the same as that of the sample of respondents. After that, interviewers should be randomly assigned to respondents. Multiple interview situations would do justice to the characteristics of the social reality from which the respondents are sampled. When a sample has to be representative for a population in a given research design, one should consider using a random sample of interviewers as well. More importantly: multiple interview situations provide the opportunity to assess, instead of assume, interviewer effects, which then can be taken aboard as a variable in the analysis.

References

- Barreto, M., Spears, R., Ellemers, N., & Shahinper, K. (2003). Who wants to know? The effect of audience on identity expression among minority group members. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 42, 299-318.
- Berger, P., & Berger, B. (1972). *Sociology: A biographical approach*. New York: Basic Books Publishers.
- Bond, M. H., & Yang, K.S. (1982). Ethnic affirmation versus cross-cultural accommodation: The variable impact of questionnaire language on Chinese bilinguals from Hong Kong. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 13, 169-185.
- COS (2011). *Bevolking van Rotterdam naar etniciteit (CBS-definitie), op 1-1-2001 t/m 2011*. www.rotterdam.nl.
- Cotter, P.R., Cohen, J., & Coulter, P.B. (1982). Race-of-interviewer effects in telephone interviews. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 46, 278-284.
- Davis, D. W. (1997). The direction of race of interviewer effects among African-Americans: Donning the black mask. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41, 309-322.
- Davis, R.E., Couper, M.P., Janz, N.K., Caldwell, C.H., & Resnicow, K. (2010). Interviewer effects in public health surveys. *Health Education Research*, 25, 14-26.
- Davis, D.W., & Silver, B.D. (2003). Stereotype threat and race of interviewer effects in a survey on political knowledge. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47, 33-45.
- De Koster, W., Achterberg, P., Van der Waal, J., Van Bohemen, S., & Kemmers, R. (2014). Progressiveness and the new right: The electoral relevance of culturally progressive values in the Netherlands. *West European Politics*, 37, 584-604.
- Dotinga, A., Van den Eijnden, R.J.J.M., Bosveld, W., & Garretsen, H.F.L. (2005).

- The effect of data collection mode and ethnicity of interviewer on response rates and self-reported alcohol use among Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands: An experimental study. *Alcohol & Alcoholism*, 40, 242-248.
- Entzinger, H., & Dourleijn, E. (2008). *De lat steeds hoger: De leefwereld van jongeren in een multi-etnische stad*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Ethier, K.A., & Deaux, K. (1994). Negotiating social identity when contexts change: Maintaining identification and responding to threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 243-251.
- Fishman, J.A. (1980). Social theory and ethnography: Neglected perspectives on language and ethnicity in Eastern Europe. In P. Sugar (Ed.), *Diversity and conflict in Eastern Europe* (pp. 69–99). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio.
- Gerritsen, D. & Maier, R. (2012). Young migrants and discourses on young migrants in the Netherlands. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 33, 665-678.
- Groves, R.M., & Magilavy, L.J. (1986). Measuring and explaining interviewer effects in centralized telephone surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50, 251-266.
- Hatchett, S., & Schuman, H. (1975). White respondents and race-of-interviewer effects. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 39, 523-528.
- Hox, J.J., De Leeuw, E.D, & Kreft, G.G. (1991). The effect of interviewer and respondent characteristics on the quality of survey data: A multilevel model. In P. Biemer, R. M. Groves, L.E. Lyberg, N.A. Mathiowetz, & S. Sudman (Eds.), *Measurement errors in surveys* (pp. 439-461). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Hox, J.J. (1994). Hierarchical regression models for interviewer and respondent effects. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 22, 300-318.
- Hyman, H.H., Cobb, W.J., Feldman, J.J., Hart, C.W., & Stember, C.H. (1954).

- Interviewing in social research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marin, G., Triandis, H.C., Betancourt, H., & Kashinma, Y. (1983). Ethnic affirmation versus social desirability. Explaining discrepancies in bilinguals' responses to a questionnaire. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 14, 173-186.
- Molenaar, N.J. (1991). Recent methodological studies on survey questioning. *Quality & Quantity*, 25, 167-187.
- Nederveen Pieterse, J. (2007). *Ethnicities and global multicultural: Pants for an octopus*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- O+S (2011). *Bevolking naar herkomstsgroepering, 1 januari 2011*. www.os.amsterdam.nl.
- Phinney, J.S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 499-514.
- Phinney, J.S. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7, 156-176.
- Reese, S.D., Danielson, W.A., Shoemaker, P.J., Chang, T.K., & Hsu, H.L. (1986). Ethnicity-of-interviewer effects among Mexican-Americans and Anglos. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50, 563-572.
- Reinecke, J., & Schmidt, P. (1993). Explaining interviewer effects and respondent behavior: Theoretical models and empirical analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, 27, 219-247.
- Rhodes, P.J. (1994). Race-of-interviewer effects: A brief comment. *Sociology*, 28, 547-558.
- Schaeffer, N.C. (1980). Evaluating race-of-interviewer effects in a national survey. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 8, 400-419.
- Stenner, K. (2005). *The authoritarian dynamic*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tucker, C. (1983). Interviewer effect in telephone surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45,

245-249.

Van Bochove, M., Rusinovic, K., & Engbersen, G. (2010). The multiplicity of citizenship: Transnational and local practices and identifications of middle class migrants.

Global Networks, 10, 344-364.

Verkuyten, M. (2005). *The social psychology of ethnic identity*. East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Verkuyten, M., & De Wolf, A. (2002). Being, feeling and doing: Discourses and ethnic self-definitions among minority group members. *Culture & Psychology*, 8, 371-399.

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30, 1024-1054.

Welch, S., Comer, J., & Steinman, M. (1973). Interviewing in a Mexican-American community: An investigation of some potential sources of response bias. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37, 115-126.

Yang, K.S., & Bond, M.H. (1980). Ethnic affirmation by Chinese bilinguals. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 11, 411-425.