Antecedents, implications, and professional development of teachers’ multiculturalism

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CHAPTER 1

General Introduction
Present educational institutions are struggling to create environments in which all students experience equal levels of opportunities, representation, and belongingness (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016). Interpersonal biases from peers and teachers, and structural barriers such as mainstream education that does not relate to minoritized\(^1\) students’ personal experiences and frames of reference (Stevens et al., 2019) seem to be at the core of this challenge.

The current dissertation tries to respond to this challenge by examining teachers’ responsiveness to diversity in the classroom and how it relates to students’ social and academic experiences. Next, it establishes some important teacher characteristics that are associated with teachers’ multicultural orientation and examines possible positive effects of professional learning in improving teacher responsiveness to diversity.

Although the challenges educational institutions experience are similar in many European countries (Council of Europe, 2017), societies rely on different strategies to address diversity in education (Fine-Davis & Faas, 2014). In this dissertation, we zoom in on the Dutch educational context—more specifically, on Dutch primary school classrooms. I will, therefore, first provide an overview of the Dutch socio-political context, which undoubtedly affects policies and practices employed by schools and teachers. The remainder of this chapter introduces the theoretical framework and the terminology that help us organize and interpret the findings of the research that are delineated in the following chapters. I conclude this introduction by outlining these chapters.

**Cultural Diversity in the Netherlands: Background Information**

During the past few decades, the Netherlands, like many other European countries, has become increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse. Based on the latest figures, about 1 in every 4 individuals, i.e., 4,312,289 people in total, have a migration background in the Netherlands. This includes people who were born abroad (the first generation) and those who were born in the Netherlands and of whom at least one of their parents is an immigrant (Het Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021). Accordingly, around 36% of primary school students currently has a migratory background (Onderwijs in Cijfers, 2020), which has been previously found to approach 50% in big cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Den Haag (as reported in Stevens, Crul, Slootman, Clycq, & Timmerman, 2019).

The largest minoritized ethnic groups in the Netherlands originate from the former Dutch colonies of Surinam and the Antilles or have migrated to the country as ‘guest workers’ in the 60’s and 70’s from Turkey and Morocco, invited by the Netherlands due to shortages in “low-skilled” labor. Although the guest workers were initially presumed to stay temporarily,

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\(^1\) In some chapters including the current one, I use the adjective ‘minoritized’ rather than ‘minority’ when referring to students with a migration history. I believe this better reflects the continued lack of acknowledgment of varying experiences and needs of students who come from historically marginalized racial and ethnic\(^2\) groups, even when they are not a numerical minority in the classroom.
this was not the case, and they became the first-generation immigrants in the Netherlands. The subsequent family migration through reunification and marriage drove a prevailing rise of legal immigration (Ong, 2014). In the current dissertation, I focus specifically on individuals with a Turkish or Moroccan heritage. This is because they experience higher levels of exclusion from the Dutch society compared to the other minoritized groups in the Netherlands, as a result of discrimination, unequal representations and opportunities, and low socio-economic and educational position (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016). The discussions on cultural diversity often revolve around these groups due to their connection to Islam and the ongoing discourse about integration challenges of Muslim communities (Rijkschroeff et al., 2005; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006).

Initial occupation of “low-skilled” jobs by the first-generation immigrants from these groups laid the groundwork for an economically disadvantaged position in the Dutch society, with lower employment rates and lower wages in the labor market (Rijkschroeff et al., 2005). Their access to members of the host society, thus to necessary information about the host society and the labor market (i.e., social capital), and their efforts in mastering the host language (i.e., human capital; Stark, 2011) have been further frustrated by residential and school segregation (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016).

The Netherlands has a history of school segregation along religious-political lines. The flow of migrants, relative secularization of the country, and residential segregation together with parental freedom of school choice, however, intensified a new type of school segregation based on socio-economic status (Boterman, 2019; Peters & Walraven, 2011). Due to their potential for counteracting the reproduction of the minoritized ethnic groups’ disadvantaged socio-economic position in the society, desegregation of schools and the role of schools in improving integration became important topics of interest for policy makers, parents, and researchers (Stark, 2011).

School segregation along socio-economic and ethnic lines, however, continues to this day. But even in mixed schools, meaningful contact, dialogue, and integration are not self-evident (Peters & Walraven, 2011). Previous research in Dutch schools indicate that even in culturally diverse schools with many different ethnic groups, children rarely have friendships and casual contacts with peers of a different ethnic background (Baerveldt et al., 2007; Fortuin et al., 2014; Vermeij et al., 2009). In the literature, this has been explained by the homophily principle – individuals’ preference to be associated with similar others, as this facilitates mutual understanding, liking, and formation of close relationships (Leszczensky & Pink, 2015; Smith et al., 2014). To a large extent, these similarities can be explained by a similar ethnic background (McPherson et al., 2001). Mixed classrooms in and of themselves

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2 An ethnic group is a group that may share some common cultural features that differ from those of other groups (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Ancestry, history, tradition, the way people think about the world, their social roles, and language are just some of the cultural features that may differ between groups (Causadias, 2013).
therefore seem to be insufficient for integrating peer groups of different ethnic backgrounds. In such situations, mutual liking and formation of friendships need to be explicitly supported by institutional authority figures such as teachers (see Intergroup Contact Theory; Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Integration Policies & Education

Integration policy refers to the measures taken to ensure full participation of migrants and minoritized groups to mainstream society and institutions, with a focus on counteracting economic disadvantages and improving their socio-economic position and cultural acculturation in the host society (Rijkschroeff et al., 2005).

The Dutch integration policy initially regarded the protection of minoritized groups’ own culture and language as a means to facilitate their preparation for participating and functioning in the Dutch public spheres (Driessen, 2000; Rijkschroeff et al., 2004). This was supported by educational practices, such as offering Onderwijs in Eigen Taal en Cultuur (OETC; ‘Education in Own Language and Culture’, including lessons for Turkish and Moroccan students aimed at developing their mother tongue and cultural knowledge of their country of origin) and employing foreign teaching assistants. Such multicultural education with emphasis on students’ own language and culture was expected to contribute to a positive self-concept, to provide intrinsic motivation, and to improve their educational opportunities in society (Troyna & Williams, 1986), and thus was expected to facilitate the integration of immigrants (Rijkschroeff et al., 2005).

From the late 1980s onwards, integration policies stopped accommodating the maintenance of minoritized groups’ heritage culture and language, abolishing initiatives such as OETC, and started to focus on learning the Dutch language. The extent to which individuals learn the Dutch language has started to be seen as the indication of the importance individuals place on participating in education and in the Dutch society (Wagenvoorde, 2015). With this change in integration policy, multiculturalism and the maintenance of cultural identity was no longer seen as supporting the socio-economic and cultural integration of minoritized groups into the Dutch society, but rather as impeding individuals’ integration (Rijkschroeff et al., 2005). Around 2000’s, instead of providing multicultural education, the main method of combatting the socio-economic disadvantages of minoritized groups took the form of allocating funds to schools proportional to their minoritized student concentration and focusing on Dutch language learning. Multiculturalist policies were replaced by civic integration policies, marked by a focus on personal efforts to fit within the Dutch society, emphasizing the role of active citizenship and merit, while disregarding the hardships individuals face as a group (Mattei & Broeks, 2018).

Dutch integration policies and its effects on the acculturation strategies adopted by minoritized groups can be well understood within the framework of Berry’s Model of Acculturation, also known as Berry’s Fourfold Model (Berry, 1980, 2011; for a more detailed
discussion of Dutch citizenship through the lens of Berry’s model, see Wagenvoorde, 2015). Berry recognized that in diverse societies, individuals are compelled to deal with the question of to what extent they maintain their own cultural identity and characteristics on the one hand, and to what extent they should engage with the host culture on the other hand. In his model, preserving one’s heritage culture and identity and participating in the larger host society represent two dimensions that determine intercultural strategies adopted by minoritized groups. A person’s position on these dimensions determines four different strategies that are commonly used to understand the acculturation mechanisms of migrants (e.g., Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Stevens et al., 2004). A positive orientation to maintain one’s own cultural heritage and at the same time to participate in the larger society and have a positive host cultural identity defines the integration strategy. When members of minoritized groups do not maintain their cultural identity but only seek daily interaction with the mainstream culture, the strategy they pursue is defined as assimilation. On the contrary, when these individuals hold negative attitudes towards the mainstream host culture and wish to maintain their own identity, their strategy is defined as separation. And lastly, if they have negative attitudes towards both their own and the host’s cultural identity, the strategy is defined as marginalization. These strategies are considered to correspond to the strategies adopted by the majority group. The integration strategy of immigration groups is expected to be adopted in response to the multiculturalism strategy of the majority group, assimilation in response to the melting pot, separation to segregation, and marginalization to exclusion strategies respectively.

Seen from the perspective of Berry’s model, the initial multicultural approach of the host country’s integration policies, ensuring both cultural maintenance and participation in the social and economic spheres through emancipation, is in line with the integration strategy adopted by the minoritized groups. The later civic integration policy considers the extent to which an individual orientates themselves to the Dutch culture as an indication of good citizenship (Wagenvoorde, 2015). This merit-based approach to integration, however, discounts the resistance from the majority group members towards the members of the minoritized groups within social domains. As the members of the minoritized groups report, they “want to belong, but when push comes to shove, it’s not allowed” (Andriessen & Wittebrood, 2015 as quoted in Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016). These experiences lead to disengagement of minoritized individuals from the Dutch society and its institutions (Barreto & Ellemers, 2015), also known as separation in Berry’s Model of Acculturation (1980). Therefore, the current efforts to integrate the minoritized groups do not seem to be in sync with the conditions necessary for them to follow an integration strategy. This illustrates that attempts at increasing access to more resources (i.e., human capital) and contact (i.e., social

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3 Berry uses the term ‘dominant’ and ‘non-dominant’ to refer to majority and minoritized groups respectively.
capital) do not automatically lead to better integration, and consequently better educational achievement.

**Ongoing Societal Challenges Around Integration and the Current Dissertation**

The socio-economically disadvantaged position of minoritized groups is not an isolated phenomenon. Social inclusion barriers, educational opportunity and achievement gap between ethnic groups, and the ensuing disadvantaged position of minoritized groups in the labor market are challenges experienced not only in the Netherlands but in many countries today (Council of Europe, 2017). In efforts to overcome these challenges, many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries have been showing modest increases in support for multicultural policies that are used alongside civic integration policies (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013). In a majority of OECD countries with a multicultural student profile, diverse perspectives are being integrated throughout the curriculum and students are being taught how to respond to ethnic and cultural diversity (OECD, 2019).

Deviating from the dominant trend amongst other OECD countries, however, civic integration policies substituted multicultural policies in the Netherlands (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013) as multicultural policies were criticized for failing to reduce educational disadvantages and to improve integration of minoritized students (Rijkschroeff et al., 2005). Yet, the same challenges continue to exist under the current policies. Young people with a migration background report feeling less accepted compared to ten years ago, and perceive exclusion as one of the driving forces behind this (Huijnk et al., 2015). Latest figures indicate that, over the last decade, members of minoritized groups, especially from Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds, report feeling less and less at home, experiencing higher levels of discrimination and lower levels of acceptance, and feeling more pessimistic about having equal representation and opportunities in the Netherlands (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016).

Additionally, minoritized students, although showing improvements, continue to perform more poorly, to have lower levels of retention and attainment, and are still overrepresented in lower level and vocational tracks compared to their ethnic majority counterparts (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016). In support of these figures, studies find lower teacher expectations and biased selection procedures for entering secondary education for students with a migration background (Baysu et al., 2018; Scheerens & Van Der Werf, 2018; Van De Werffhorst & van Tubergen, 2007). The tracking system that is characterized by overrepresentation of minoritized students in the lower academic tracks creates a bottleneck for these students. It restricts possibilities for their future educational trajectories and opportunities in the labor market, and it limits natural encounters between students from different sociocultural backgrounds that would take place within schools. This, in turn, offers only limited support for social cohesion within the Dutch society (De Onderwijsraad, 2019).
An analysis of past integration policies suggests that the ongoing challenges are due to overlooking such inclusion and exclusion mechanisms within social and academic domains, while focusing strongly on improving social and human capital of individual members of minoritized groups (as reported in Rijkschroeff et al., 2005). This shifts the focus from central integration policies to decentralized interpretation and implementation of these policies within schools and classrooms (Driessen, 2012). Education in the Netherlands is highly decentralized and schools enjoy a high degree of autonomy while local governments play only a minor role (Nusche et al., 2014). This implies that schools are free to determine the content and methods of teaching. Therefore, implementation of the integration policies are generally left to individual schools without specific curricular goals and concrete objectives to be accomplished (Driessen, 2012).

That being said, the ongoing challenge for schools is to create a more inclusive society where people from minoritized groups experience belongingness, wherein they have equal representation and opportunities (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016), and can therefore benefit from their increased human and social capital. Based on the reports of minoritized group members, interpersonal biases from peers and teachers, and structural barriers such as an education system that transmits and reproduces the mainstream discourse, knowledge, and values while excluding or invalidating those of minoritized students (Stevens et al., 2019) seem to be at the core of this challenge. Yet the extant research to date has not comprehensively explored the role of teachers in facilitating students’ interpersonal relationships, and educational functioning.

The current dissertation tries to respond to this need by offering an analysis of the factors related to teachers’ multiculturalism, implications of multicultural pedagogical practices of teachers and the inclusion and exclusion mechanisms ingrained in these practices on students, as factors that afford the integration strategy of minoritized groups in Berry’s Acculturation Model. The guiding questions of this dissertation are i) Does a multicultural approach potentially benefit students’ peer relationships and educational functioning when investigated at the classroom level?, ii) Which teachers are more likely to adopt a multicultural approach?, and iii) Would teachers benefit from professional learning on multicultural education and if so, how? The underlying theoretical assumptions I used in attempting to answer these questions are based on Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) when examining the effects of multicultural education on peer relationships, and on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) when examining the effects of multicultural education on student motivation as manifested in their engagement.

Theoretical Framework

Multiculturalism depicts an ideology, a reform movement, and a process in which different identities and cultures coexist: differences are acknowledged and seen as a source of richness, and social inequalities and structures are critically examined to strive for equal
representation of cultures and identities. Through a multicultural approach to diversity in education, as opposed to a colorblind approach wherein cultural differences and group memberships are to a great extent disregarded, it is possible to accept and accommodate differences (Banks, 2004).

In Banks’ (2004) conceptualization of multicultural education, multicultural practices are delineated under five distinct but highly related dimensions. These dimensions postulate that teachers should employ (i) content integration from a variety of cultures in what they teach, reflecting and representing the diversity of their students through texts, histories, values, beliefs, and varying perspectives from different cultures (Koshy, 2017). Moreover, teachers should increase their students’ awareness of (ii) the knowledge construction process and help students to be critical about who the knowledge serves and from whose perspective it was constructed (e.g., cultural references, biases). Next, teachers should aim for (iii) prejudice reduction by modifying their students’ attitudes through teaching methods, materials, and dialogue to decrease negative and improve positive intergroup relations by actively counteracting social biases (i.e., prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination). Further, teachers should aim for an (iv) empowering school culture and social structure, by examining disproportionality in attendance and achievement between groups in various aspects of school (e.g., to giftedness programs). Lastly, teachers should strive for (v) equity pedagogy, i.e., equity in how they teach, by modifying their teaching to include various teaching and assessment styles to facilitate the learning and academic achievement of all students. This requires avoiding standardized, one-size-fits-all approaches to teaching and learning, relating content to students’ lives and creating opportunities for them to engage with learning in accordance with how they engage with the world (e.g., cooperative learning, problem-based learning, role-playing, simulations).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that conditions at school can facilitate motivation, manifested as engagement, to the extent that they are responsive to students’ basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and feelings of relatedness (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Reeve, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Evident from the need for a multicultural approach, however, responsiveness of school contexts to students’ needs have been found to differ not only between but also within schools and classrooms
based on the cultural* and ethnic background of students (Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). Specifically, in educational institutions, the curriculum, materials, and instruction tend to be primarily based on the perspective of the majority group. As a result, minoritized groups’ histories and cultures are usually added as a mere side note to the regular curriculum, thereby perpetuating the acceptance of existing inequalities. The biased perspectives in the curriculum are also often mirrored in interpersonal interactions between students and teachers, and between peers (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014), thwarting minoritized students’ basic psychological needs.

Intergroup Contact Theory suggests that intergroup contact in situations characterized by support from social and institutional figures, equal status, and a cooperative environment, can help reduce intergroup bias and improve interpersonal interactions (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Without meaningful contact that is supported by institutional authority figures such as teachers, organizing mixed classrooms seems to be inadequate for creating equal status between students from different ethnic backgrounds, and promoting interethnic attitudes that are positive enough to desegregate peer groups and promote integration.

Grounded on the premises of the two theories, I expected multicultural education to help fulfil the basic needs of students –by stimulating meaningful contact and creating an environment in which they feel validated and can thrive- and thus boost students’ engagement. For this dissertation, the possible positive effect of multicultural education on fulfilling the basic psychological need for relatedness is especially relevant as it represents a major challenge minoritized youth face in the Netherlands in relation to their outgroup.

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4 It is not easy to settle on a definition of culture. García and Guerra (2006) defined the following characteristics as useful in the application of culture to the educational context: Culture, tends to be shared by members of a group, and reflects values, beliefs, perceptions, and ideals that form the lens through which one understands the world. It should be noted that I do not accept culture as consisting of a fixed set of characteristics inherent to individuals or groups, but rather an ongoing transmission and use of knowledge based on the interactions between individuals’ life histories, communities, and social contexts, which affects how individuals experience and interpret the world (Kirmayer, 2012). In the current dissertation, the use of “cultural” or ethnic groups is useful in highlighting the differences that may exist between individuals that teachers should be mindful about, not as a set of assumptions to leave from, but as personalized stories that students can bring out.

Recently in Europe and in other parts of the world alike, certain demographics such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and language background have been associated with culture in predicting academic achievement and therefore have been used interchangeably with culture (García & Guerra, 2006). Similarly, throughout the dissertation, I use ethnicity and language background as proxies for culture. This is, however, not to suggest that they describe the same construct, but it is rather to stress that the cultural features, such as language, that are likely to be shared within these groups can differ from that of the mainstream dominant culture.
Chapter 1

Terminology

**Multicultural education**

Within the literature on teaching for social justice, next to multicultural education, a variety of intertwined and overlapping conceptual and pedagogical philosophies are frequently mentioned, such as culturally relevant pedagogy/culturally responsive education, culturally responsive teaching, and social justice education (Dover, 2013). I predominantly use multicultural education, as defined by Banks (2004), as an overarching construct, which covers most components of similar pedagogical approaches in ways that are relevant to our studies. More specifically, I would expect these approaches to have similar influences on student peer relationships and motivation, and to be underlined by similar teacher characteristics that promote their application due to their commitment to promoting social and educational equity.

In Chapter 2, I use level of multicultural education and teacher reactions to ethnic victimization as two separate aspects of teachers’ multiculturalism. The terminology I used in this chapter mirrors that of a previous research (i.e., Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002) on which I have grounded the current study. While these constructs are discussed separately within the chapter, they for the most part conform to and portray features of the prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education as conceptualized by Banks. When bringing together results from different chapters in the General Discussion of the dissertation, I refer to these two separate aspects of teachers’ multiculturalism simply as prejudice reduction.

Banks' conceptualization of multicultural education is used also in Chapters 3 & 4. In chapter 3, I look at prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education. In Chapter 4, I use the dimensions of Banks to discern culturally responsive teaching practices of teachers. Similarly, in Chapter 6, I investigate teacher characteristics that are antecedents of culturally responsive teaching practices (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive teaching is considered by scholars as a specific approach to multicultural education that focuses primarily on classroom-level processes, teacher characteristics, and students’ academic outcomes (Dover, 2013). As we focused our research efforts on classroom dynamics and did not look at school-level processes, which also constitute an aspect of multicultural education (i.e., empowering school culture), I mostly use culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education interchangeably in different studies. In Chapter 5, unlike in other chapters, however, I examine teacher multiculturalism as manifested in their daily classroom management strategies.

**Peer relationships**

In virtue of the intertwined relationship between the integration policies and the prevalence of adoption of multicultural ideologies in Dutch schools, I chose to use the term integration (as in Berry, 1980, 2011) referring to interactions among teachers and students,
General introduction

and within students themselves (Nieto & Bode, 2008). I use integration as an umbrella term that reflects students’ relatedness, belongingness, and acceptance to peer groups, while maintaining their own cultural heritage (Berry, 1980, 2011). In Chapter 2, I use social integration and victimization as two aspects of students’ peer relationships. In other chapters, I refer to positive and inclusive teacher-student and peer relationships, friendship formation, prosocial interactions, acceptance of differences between peers to signal integration as desirable outcomes of multicultural education.

Chapters 2 and 5 aim to map out differences in classroom dynamics between the ethnic majority Dutch group and specific minoritized groups. In these chapters, the minoritized groups are comprised of individuals with a migration background from Turkey and Morocco. In contrast, the main interest of Chapters 3 and 4 is not determining differences in these groups’ experiences from that of the majority group. In these chapters, I collapse across different minoritized groups to form only one group, due to pragmatic constraints such as having to estimate high numbers of parameters or to reach reasonable sample sizes. Throughout the dissertation, I use ‘minority’ and ‘minoritized’ adjectives interchangeably when referring to students with a migration history. In one study (Chapter 7), I use language background other than the mainstream language (English) as an indication of a non-mainstream ethnic background.

**Student engagement**

In the chapters that follow, I adopt the conceptualization of engagement as the “outward manifestation of motivation”, and define it as the extent to which a student is actively involved in learning activities and environments (Skinner et al., 2009; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). This conceptualization assumes that goals and emotions direct attention and behavior, which together reflect an individual’s motivation (Skinner et al., 2009). Only in Chapter 2, I use the term motivation in order to match the labels of the secondary data used in the study, whereas in other chapters I use the term engagement to refer to students’ assessed motivation.
Overview of the Dissertation

The present dissertation on the implications (PART I) and antecedents (PART II) of teacher multiculturalism, and professional learning in multicultural education (PART III) starts with a general introduction (Chapter 1) and continues with three separate parts that aim to explore the three central research questions. The different parts of the dissertation and the relationships they investigate are represented in the conceptual model below (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
A Conceptual Model of the Three Parts of the Dissertation

PART I

Part I of the current dissertation tries to answer the research question “Does a multicultural approach potentially benefit students’ peer relationships and educational functioning when investigated at the classroom level?”. Across three studies, I investigate multicultural practices –pertaining to curriculum, teaching pedagogies, and classroom interactions, in relation to students’ peer relationships and their motivation (manifested as school engagement).

To chart the reciprocal interactions between teachers’ multiculturalism reflected in the prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education, and students’ peer relationships and motivation, Chapter 2 conceptualizes classrooms as complex systems with a network of interacting components and utilizes the novel psychometric\(^5\) network approach for the first time in educational research \((N = 2,716)\). Our results lend support for the positive influence

\(^5\) Previously referred to as psychological networks.
of a multicultural approach to diversity on students’ peer relationships and outline different mechanisms through which multicultural practices may impact majority versus minoritized students’ motivation. The network modeling of multicultural classrooms distinguishes certain patterns of interactions that suggest a mediating role of students’ peer relationships on the effect of multicultural practices on student engagement. Chapters 3 and 4, partially and fully, respectively, test the proposed mediation model.

Chapter 3 introduces a multilevel model to establish the effect of prejudice reduction on student engagement \((n_{\text{teacher}} = 35, n_{\text{student}} = 711)\). It additionally investigates the potential moderation of this relationship by teachers’ explicit multicultural attitudes and implicit attitudes towards ethnic minoritized groups.

In Chapter 4, I fit a more expansive structural equation model that includes equity pedagogy, content integration, and prejudice reduction dimensions of multicultural education and examine their relationship with students’ engagement in the classroom, and the quality of their peer relationships as a mediator. Therefore, this chapter aims to test the full mediation model hypothesized in Chapter 2. Moreover, I examine these relationships in classrooms with both high and low minoritized student concentrations in order to identify which multicultural practices can aid or frustrate peer relationships and student engagement depending on the intergroup context.

**PART II**

Part II of the dissertation evolves around the research question “Which teachers are more likely to adopt a multicultural approach?” In two studies, I examine teacher characteristics that are potentially important antecedents of teachers’ responsiveness to diversity in their daily interactions in and around the classroom, as well as in their curriculum and instruction. These characteristics relate to how teachers interpret and act in social situations such as their abilities to accurately understand emotional phenomena (i.e., emotional intelligence) and take the perspective of the other (i.e., perspective taking), and their familiarity with and sensitivity to diversity (i.e., multicultural attitudes). Previously, teachers who possess these characteristics to a greater extent have been found to better recognize and value cultural differences between students (Ponterotto et al., 1998), pay more attention to the variability in their students’ experiences and needs (Darling-Hammond, 2000), address matters around diversity (Ponterotto et al., 1998), and be aware of their own biases that may predispose their judgments (Nieto, 2004).

In Chapter 5, using a within-subjects design, I test whether teachers in Dutch primary schools \((N = 148)\) differ in their classroom management strategies towards minoritized students compared to majority students for the same kind of misbehavior and whether this difference is related to their multicultural attitudes and their abilities to recognize and interpret emotions. Teachers responded to various scenarios depicted in vignettes, matched
on the misbehavior but involving either a minoritized or a majority student, by providing the frequency with which they would engage in various intervention strategies.

Chapter 6 seeks quantitative evidence in support of two teacher qualities, namely teachers’ multicultural attitudes and their perspective taking abilities, that have been previously suggested to be important antecedents of a multicultural approach to diversity but so far have been only studied qualitatively. I use multivariate multiple regression analysis ($N = 143$) to investigate the relationships between these qualities and teachers’ engagement in two separate but related aspects of culturally responsive teaching (i.e., socially sensitive and culturally sensitive teaching).

**PART III**

In light of the findings from Part II, Part III of the dissertation examines whether teachers who received professional learning in multicultural education have different multicultural attitudes and beliefs than teachers who did not receive any professional learning. Latest numbers show that 35% of teachers report ‘developing skills in teaching in multicultural and multilingual settings’ as one of the three areas in which they need more training (OECD, 2019). This is not surprising since, in the Netherlands, teachers do not receive a comprehensive formal education as to how to effectively respond to diversity in their classrooms (Severiens et al., 2014). While this is the case in the Netherlands, in other countries such programs do exists.

Therefore, to answer my third research question “Would teachers benefit from professional learning on multicultural education and if so, how?”, I have collaborated with the Institute for Culture and Society of Western Sydney University, which was part of a 3-year statewide research project ‘Rethinking Multiculturalism/ Reassessing Multicultural Education’, examining approaches to multiculturalism in both urban and rural areas. The project is one of the first worldwide in researching the understanding and application of multicultural education at such a large scale within a very diverse society (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

Using data obtained from in-service primary and secondary public-school teachers in New South Wales ($N = 3,006$) and structural equation modeling, in the last empirical chapter, Chapter 7, I investigate the relationships between professional learning in multicultural education and teachers’ beliefs about the effectiveness of multicultural strategies in fostering a culturally inclusive environment and the importance of these strategies in providing equitable opportunities for students. Moreover, I examine the relationship between professional learning and teachers’ support for monocultural (as opposed to multicultural) ideologies and practices. I examine these relationships separately for professional learning received at three different time points, namely during pre-service and in-service years, and as postgraduate qualifications.
Finally, in Chapter 8, I conclude this dissertation by summarizing and integrating the main findings from the six empirical studies and discussing their scientific and practical implications.