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Ethnic Heterogeneity, Ethnic and National Identity, and Social Cohesion in England

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Introduction

This chapter investigates to what extent ethnic identity and national identity mediate the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion in England. Scholars argue that a shared superordinate national identity is necessary to foster trust, cooperation, and solidarity among diverse sub-groups in a society (Miller 1995; Reeskens and Wright, 2012). Some commentators assert that ethnic heterogeneity undermines the trust and solidarity necessary for cohesive societies (cf. Goodhart, 2013; Scheffer and Waters, 2011) because it reinforces separate ethnic (subordinate) identities rather than promotes a shared national (superordinate) identity. In line with such arguments, social identity theory suggests that ethnic heterogeneity can lead individuals to identify more strongly with other ethnic in-group members rather than with members of society more broadly, which could thereby restrict the development of a shared superordinate identity and therefore harm social cohesion. As such, besides the mechanisms discussed in Chapter 1, the strength of ethnic and national identities represents an additional mechanism that may explain the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion. Indeed, we argue that several of the previously discussed mechanisms could operate via the strength of ethnic and national identification.

Reasoning along the lines of social identity theory, as outlined in Chapter 1, increasing ethnic heterogeneity represents a threat to original national cultures, making people lose their general sense of belonging, as they are confronted with increased ethnic and cultural diversity in their surroundings. Looking for security and familiarity, people in response develop stronger feelings of identification with their own ethnic group, at the cost of their identification with the

nation, to which they feel less akin and in which they find it harder to recognise themselves. These stronger identifications with one's own ethnic group and the concomitant weaker feelings of sharing a national identity may subsequently dilute social cohesion. At first, this may predominantly manifest itself in terms of more negative attitudes towards and fewer contacts with ethnic out-group members, but in the longer run this may extend to ethnic in-group members as well, leading to a more general retraction from social life (cf. Putnam, 2007). A similar chain of events is a crucial building block in the arguments developed by many critics of multiculturalism (cf. Goodhart, 2013; Scheffer and Waters, 2011).

However, contrary to this bleak narrative, there is reason to believe that social cohesion can be maintained in the presence of stronger ethnic identities. The common identity model, for example, suggests that individuals can simultaneously uphold both strong subordinate as well as strong superordinate group identities, thereby reducing in-group bias and intergroup conflict (Gaertner et al., 1993). According to this model, there is no inevitable trade-off between ethnic and national identity. It therefore remains the question whether ethnic heterogeneity does indeed raise the salience of subordinate in-group identities and correspondingly decreases the salience of superordinate overarching identities, and whether these changes in turn reduce levels of social cohesion.

This chapter addresses this question and examines to what extent the strength of ethnic and national identities can explain the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion. We test whether higher levels of ethnic heterogeneity are associated with a stronger sense of ethnic identity, and whether a stronger sense of ethnic identity is associated with lower levels of social cohesion. We simultaneously test whether higher levels of ethnic heterogeneity are associated with a weaker sense of national identity, and whether a weaker sense of national identity is associated with lower social cohesion. In doing so, we investigate two dimensions of ethnic heterogeneity and three measures of social cohesion, as the relationships between our concepts of interest are likely to depend on how they are conceptualised.

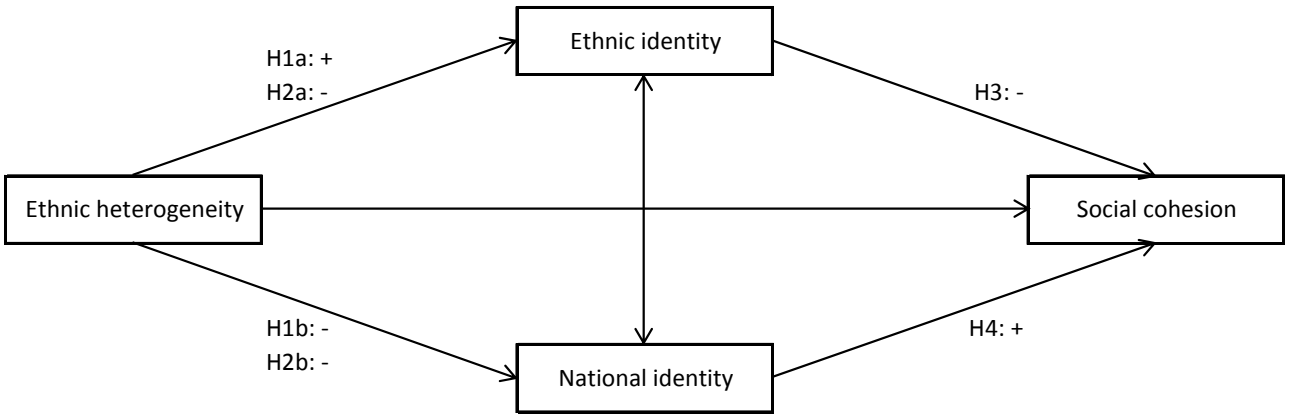
Analytical framework: the mediating role of identity in explaining the link between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion

According to social identity theory, identity provides people with distinct social categories to classify their social worlds in terms of in-groups—*"us"*—and out-groups—*"them"* (Tajfel,

1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Identity can be flexible as opposed to fixed and static, and can be influenced by salient features of a context such as the presence of out-group members, which can result in cognitive biases favouring the in-group (for reviews of in-group bias see Brewer, 1979; Hewstone, Rubin, and Willis, 2002). In this study in-group bias refers to the identification with a subordinate ethnic identity, at the expense of a shared superordinate national identity. Biases towards the subordinate ethnic identity are thought to undermine social cohesion because people move away from shared superordinate national identities that bind people from different ethnic sub-groups together. We investigate the effects of ethnic heterogeneity on the importance of national (superordinate) identification and ethnic/racial (subordinate) identity, which is a commonly used measure of identity strength in the literature (Ashmore et al., 2004).

We derive testable hypotheses by building on the popular narratives discussed above and the theories referred to in Chapter 1 (see also Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014). We focus on two main pathways through which ethnic identity and national identity could explain a negative association between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion, both of which are related to different underlying mechanisms and different dimensions of ethnic heterogeneity (cf. Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014; and Koopmans and Schaeffer, 2013). Analysing these different pathways is a valuable contribution to the scholarly literature in this field given that the role of identity as potential mediator of the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion thus far remains under-investigated. Figure 7.1 provides a schematic overview of our hypotheses.

Figure 7.1 *Schematic overview of hypotheses*



Ethnic out-group density and identity

The first pathway stresses the importance of in-group biases and is grounded in conflict theory (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958). This pathway suggests that the relative out-group size, also referred to as ethnic out-group density, in a locality stimulates perceptions of material, symbolic and cultural threat. This argument relates directly to the out-group density dimension of ethnic heterogeneity because the degree of perceived threat to one's in-group is not premised on the distribution of out-groups in a locality (i.e. one large out-group or many small out-groups), but instead on the presence of ethnic out-group members in general, irrespective of the amount of heterogeneity among these out-group members. On the basis of conflict theory we expect that a larger relative out-group size increases the salience of ethnic identity for people's sense of who they are and stimulates in-group biases, translating into stronger subordinate ethnic identification and consequently weaker superordinate national identification. This relationship assumes that ethnic and national identities are mutually exclusive and thus constitute a zero-sum game, in line with the prediction of classical social identity theory that a rise in salience of one identity comes at the expense of another identity. Our first hypotheses thus read:

> *H1a: Ethnic out-group density is positively associated with the strength of ethnic (subordinate) identity*
>
> *H1b: Ethnic out-group density is negatively associated with the strength of national (superordinate) identity*

Ethnic diversity and identity

The second pathway concerns social disorganisation mechanisms and feelings of anomie. Of the mechanisms referred to in Chapter 1, all those related to diversity in preferences, coordination problems and a lack of social control can essentially be classified as expressions of social disorganisation due to high degrees of ethnic diversity. In a similar vein, Van der Meer and Tolsma (2014:463) argue that higher degrees of ethnic diversity elicit feelings of anomie, which they define as "…anxiety about the existence of shared societal norms and moral values". Both Chapter 1 and Van der Meer and Tolsma (2014) argue that in an environment in which multiple ethnic groups reside, it is harder for people to reach consensus, obtain knowledge, and achieve successful enforcement with regard to shared social norms, which breeds feelings of exclusion, alienation and up rootedness. As a result, people become increasingly uncertain about how to relate to other people, even if these others are from their own ethnic group. In line with the constrict

theory outlined by Putnam (2007), which states that cohesion diminishes both between as well as within ethnic groups in ethnically heterogeneous areas, the social disorganisation and anomie pathway predicts increased normlessness and aimlessness (Smith and Bohn, 2008). This causes individuals to engage less with in-groups and with out-groups because people "no longer know how to behave in public, they are hesitant to meet and mingle with others, regardless of the ethnicity of their co-residents" (Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014:464). Under such circumstances the strength of both people's national identification *and* their ethnic identification is expected to diminish. The composition of the out-group is very important according to these arguments: people living in neighbourhoods where the out-group is homogenous still know what to expect from this out-group, whereas in ethnically diverse areas multiple out-groups evoke feelings of anomie. In line with this pathway we hypothesise:

> *H2a: Ethnic diversity is negatively associated with the strength of ethnic (subordinate) identity.*
>
> *H2b: Ethnic diversity is negatively associated with the strength of national (superordinate) identity.*

Linking identities to social cohesion

Our final set of hypotheses connects ethnic identity and national identity to social cohesion. These hypotheses relate directly to claims that stronger subordinate ethnic identities erode social cohesion (Goodhart, 2013; Scheffer and Waters, 2011), whereas the maintenance of a strong superordinate national identity strengthens social cohesion (Miller, 1995). The underlying assumption behind these claims is that stronger ethnic identification goes together with a stronger focus on one's ethnic in-group, at the expense of feelings of solidarity, trust, and cooperation that extend beyond these in-group boundaries, while a stronger national identity is allegedly associated with a higher commitment to solidarity, trust, and cooperation at a more comprehensive scale. In short, strong ethnic identification is considered to be a dividing force in society, as opposed to the unifying role of strong national identification.

It is important to recognise here that social cohesion is a multifaceted phenomenon: it has an attitudinal as well as a behavioural dimension; it can refer to formal and informal bonds between people; it can concern attitudes towards and relationships with in-group members, out-group members, as well as people in general; and it can also be conceptualised at different geographic levels. Despite this multifaceted nature of the concept of social cohesion, there is little theoretical

guidance from the social psychological literature regarding the different impacts that ethnic and national identity may have across various measures of social cohesion. As such, we hypothesise uniform effects of ethnic identity and national identity across different measures of cohesion, but emphasize that differences are likely to be observed, just like the direct effect of ethnic heterogeneity on social cohesion is found to vary depending on the measure of cohesion used (Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014). Our final set of hypotheses can be summarised as follows:

> *H3: The strength of ethnic (subordinate) identity is negatively associated with social cohesion.*
>
> *H4: The strength of national (superordinate) identity is positively associated with social cohesion.*

Figure 7.1 contains two additional arrows alongside those discussed as part of our main hypotheses. First, the bidirectional arrow between ethnic identity and national identity takes into account that the strength of ethnic and national identities may co-vary. These concepts could be either negatively correlated, as in a zero-sum game, or positively, as posited by the common identity model (Gaertner et al., 1993). The second arrow runs directly from ethnic heterogeneity to social cohesion, and assesses whether ethnic and national identity fully mediate the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion or whether there are additional factors at work. Observing a significant direct effect of ethnic heterogeneity, having accounted for the potential mediating impact of the strength of ethnic and national identification, indicates that this relationship cannot be *fully* explained via the previously discussed identity mechanisms.

Finally, we stress that, while our hypotheses are phrased in general terms, it is plausible that some of the hypothesized relationships vary across ethnic sub groups. For example, increases in ethnic out-group density may increase the salience of ethnic identity to a greater extent among the White British majority, who may perceive higher levels of economic and symbolic threat as the currently dominant sub population in England than ethnic minority groups that are accustomed to the presence of larger ethnic out-groups and are thus less affected by this aspect of geographic context. For this reason, we have conducted additional analyses for White British and ethnic minority respondents separately.

Data and Measurement

We test our hypotheses with data from the 2008-2009 Citizenship Survey, which features a large representative sample of approximately 10,000 adults living in England and Wales, alongside a boost sample of 5,000 ethnic minority respondents. The survey captures information on a wide range of demographics, attitudes, and behaviours, including large batteries of questions on identity and social cohesion. Respondents living in Wales are excluded from the analysis because we have been unable to obtain information on the ethnic composition of smaller geographic areas in Wales. Furthermore, respondents are only selected if they have complete data for our dependent and independent variables, and if they consider their national identity to be British and/or English, accounting for a total of 8,750 respondents. We restrict our analyses to people reporting a British or English national identity, since these identities represent the relevant superordinate identities in English communities, having the potential to bind together people from different ethnic origins.[1]

We match the 2001 Census Small Area Microdata Sample (SAMS) to the Citizenship Survey 2008-2009 to create our contextual-level variables of interest. Local authorities are used as our geographic contextual-level units because they represent the smallest geographical areas for which we can match the Citizenship Survey and SAMS data. Local authorities are local administrative areas and contain on average approximately 330,000 people. The 8,750 respondents in our sample live in 300 different local authorities.

Our contextual-level variables of substantive interest measure ethnic out-group density (the threat, conflict, and cognitive biases pathway) and ethnic diversity (the social control and anomie pathway) of a local authority.[2] *Ethnic out-group density* is defined as the proportion of individuals in the local authority who report an ethnic affiliation that is different from the individual's own ethnic affiliation. Ethnic out-group density ranges from 0 (all individuals in the local authority have the same ethnic affiliation as the individual in question) to 1 (all individuals in the local authority

[1] This restriction is based on the following survey question: "What do you consider your national identity to be? Please choose as many or as few as apply." The answer options are English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, British, and Other. Among the 14,322 respondents living in England 84.6 percent report to have a British or English national identity, with 9.5 percent declaring to have both. Including those respondents who do not consider their national identity to be British or English in our analyses does not substantially alter our results. Notice also that the survey question from which we derive our indicator for the *strength* of national identification refers back to the survey question quoted above (see footnote 4).

[2] We follow the bulk of the literature in this field by assuming linear effects of these heterogeneity measures in our analyses. We acknowledge that it is possible that ethnic heterogeneity has a non-linear impact, exhibiting threshold effects for instance (see also Chapter 3), but a detailed analysis of such non-linearities is beyond the scope of this chapter.

have a different ethnic affiliation to the individual in question). This variable has a bimodal distribution, reflecting that most ethnic minority respondents have a high ethnic out-group density, while most White British respondents have a low ethnic out-group density. The separate analyses we additionally run for White British and ethnic minority respondents serve as a sensitivity check of how this bimodal distribution affects our results. *Ethnic diversity* is defined as the ethnic fractionalization index of a local authority, which is the inverse of the Herfindahl Index. Ethnic diversity varies from 0 to 1, where scores of 1 indicate the highest level of ethnic diversity. For the construction of our measures of ethnic out-group density and ethnic diversity, we use a nine-category classification of ethnicity contained in the Census, consisting of the following categories: White British, White Other, Mixed, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Black African, and Other.[3]

We use three measures of social cohesion captured in the Citizenship Survey. First, we look at neighbourhood trust, which is measured with the question "Would you say that.... (1) many of the people in your neighbourhood can be trusted, (2) some can be trusted, (3) a few can be trusted, (4) or that none of the people in your neighbourhood can be trusted?". A fifth and less-informative answering option – "just moved here" – is excluded from our analysis (approximately two percent of the respondents opted for this answer). Second, we analyze levels of generalised trust, which scope extends beyond the neighbourhood and which is measured using the question "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?". In addition to the two core answering options "People can be trusted", and "You can't be too careful", about eight percent of the respondents spontaneously reply "It depends", which represents an intermediate answer between the two extremes. We treat both neighbourhood trust and generalised trust as ordinal variables in our analysis. Our third measure concerns the behavioural dimension of social cohesion by examining civic participation. This variable is constructed as a factor score on the basis of four measures capturing the yearly instance of a) formal volunteering; b) informal volunteering; c) civic activism; and d) general civic participation.

Our indicators of ethnic (subordinate) and national (superordinate) identity measure the strength of ethnic and national identification, based on the questions "How important is your ethnic or racial background to your sense of who you are?", and "How important is your national identity

[3] The census measures of ethnicity represent self-reported ethnic identity rather than ethnicity derived from country of birth and, as such, are relatively more subjective measures (respondents are also limited in the response options on the survey; although write-in response options are available, these are harder to access and difficult to use).

to your sense of who you are?".[4] The response categories for both questions are "(1) not at all important", "(2) not very important", "(3) quite important", and "(4) very important". We treat the strength of ethnic and national identity as ordinal variables in our analysis.

Table 7.1 presents descriptive statistics for the core variables in our analyses, i.e. ethnic heterogeneity, social cohesion, and the importance of ethnic and national identity.

We control for a number of variables at the individual level captured in the Citizenship Survey 2008-2009. Ethnicity/race is included as a categorical variable measuring whether a respondent is White (57 percent of our sample), Asian (24 percent), Black (12 percent), or Other (7 percent). Religious affiliation is included via a categorical variable measuring whether the respondent is Christian, Muslim, or of another denomination, or has no religion at all. Religious practice is captured via a dummy variable coded 1 for respondents who report active religious participation and 0 otherwise. We treat educational attainment as a continuous measure, ranging from 0 (no qualifications) to 4 (university degree). Housing tenure is included via dummy variables for outright home-ownership, ownership via a mortgage, and renting. We control for whether the respondent is born in Great Britain with a dummy indicator. Our marital status indicator measures whether the respondent is married or cohabiting, single without ever having cohabited or been married, or separated, divorced or widowed. Gender is included as a dummy variable (1 is female; 0 is male). Age is measured in years.

In addition to these individual-level controls, we control at the local authority level for the degree of socio-economic deprivation of the area and whether it is an urban or rural area. For socio-economic deprivation we include the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which is a composite poverty measure created using the rankings of the local authority according to the following characteristics: income, employment, health deprivation and disability, educational skills and training, barriers to housing and services, crime, and the living environment. The urban/rural character of the local authority is controlled for via a dummy variable that equals 1 if the respondent lives in an urban area and 0 if the respondent lives in a rural area.

[4] The importance of ethnic/racial identity refers to the following question asked earlier in the questionnaire "Please could you look at this card and tell me which of these best describes your ethnic group? (1) White – British, (2) White – Irish, (3) Any other White background, Mixed (4) Mixed White and Black Caribbean, (5) Mixed White and Black African, (6) Mixed White and Asian, (7) Any other mixed background, (8) Asian or Asian British – Indian, (9) Asian or Asian British – Pakistani, (10) Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi, (11) Any other Asian/Asian British background, (12) Black or Black British – Caribbean, (13) Black or Black British – African, (14) Any other Black/Black British background, (15) Chinese, (16) Any Other Ethnic Group". The importance of national identity refers to the survey question that we also use for selecting our sample of analysis; see footnote 1.

Table 7.1 *Descriptive statistics for social cohesion, identity, and ethnic heterogeneity (n=8750)*

Neighbourhood trust	Percentage
Many of the people in one's neighbourhood can be trusted	40.1%
Some of the people in one's neighbourhood can be trusted	38.6%
A few of the people in one's neighbourhood can be trusted	18.5%
None of the people in one's neighbourhood can be trusted	2.8%

Generalized trust	Percentage
Most people can be trusted	35.1%
You can't be too careful in dealing with people	56.6%
It depends (as spontaneous answer)	8.4%

Civic participation	Percentage
Any formal volunteering in the past twelve months	40.3%
Any informal volunteering in the past twelve months	61.3%
Any civic activism in the past twelve months	11.4%
Any other civic participation in the past twelve months	37.8%

Importance of ethnic/racial identity	Percentage
Very important	40.4%
Quite important	33.2%
Not very important	19.6%
Not at all important	6.9%

Importance of national identity	Percentage
Very important	45.4%
Quite important	38.2%
Not very important	13.2%
Not at all important	3.2%

Ethnic heterogeneity	Mean	SD
Ethnic out-group density 2008	0.485	0.398
% Change in ethnic out-group density 2001-2011	37.1	43.2
Ethnic diversity 2008	0.395	0.262
% Change in ethnic diversity 2001-2011	49.0	32.8

Estimation Strategy

We test our hypotheses by estimating structural equation models that take into account the clustering of respondents in different local authorities. Structural equation modelling allows us to simultaneously model various pathways, with the outcome variables in some equations (i.e. ethnic

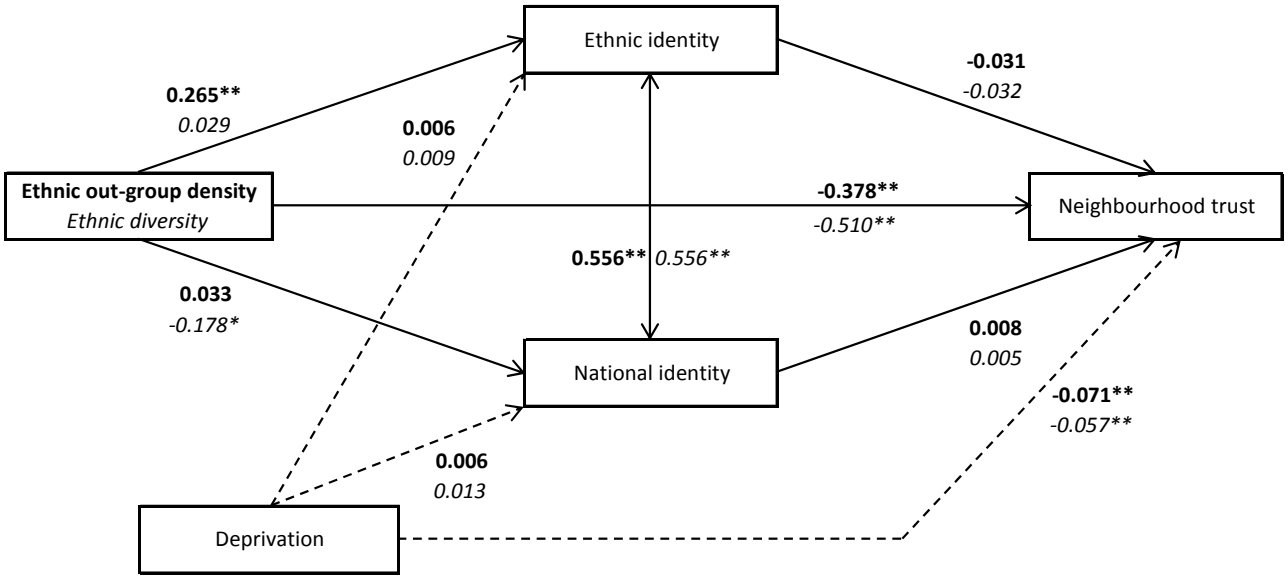
and national identity) being used as predictor variables in other equations (i.e. social cohesion). Although structural equation modelling does not enable us to make firm claims regarding the exact *causal* pathways between our concepts of interest, it does enable us to assess the *plausibility* of the hypothesised pathways by examining to what extent they fit the associations that are present in our data.

We initially estimated two-level hierarchical path models to account for the clustering of respondents in local authorities, but we encountered convergence difficulties in some models. These convergence problems are likely due to the complexity of our models, and previous studies estimating similar models have run into the same problem (e.g. Savelkoul et al., 2011). Instead, we therefore correct for the clustering in our data using the COMPLEX estimation method in Mplus 7, which employs WLSMV estimation (Muthén and Muthén, 1998-2012). This robust weighted least squares estimator estimates probit coefficients for all our regression equations with a categorical dependent variable (i.e. ethnic identity, national identity, neighbourhood trust, and generalised trust), and a simple linear coefficient for the regression equations with the factor score for civic participation as the dependent variable. In addition to the hypothesised pathways outlined in Figure 7.1, our models also estimate the direct path from ethnic heterogeneity to social cohesion, and allow ethnic identity and national identity to be correlated with each other. Finally, we include all of our individual-level and contextual-level control variables in the regressions for all of the endogenous variables in our models (i.e. ethnic identity, national identity, and social cohesion).

Results

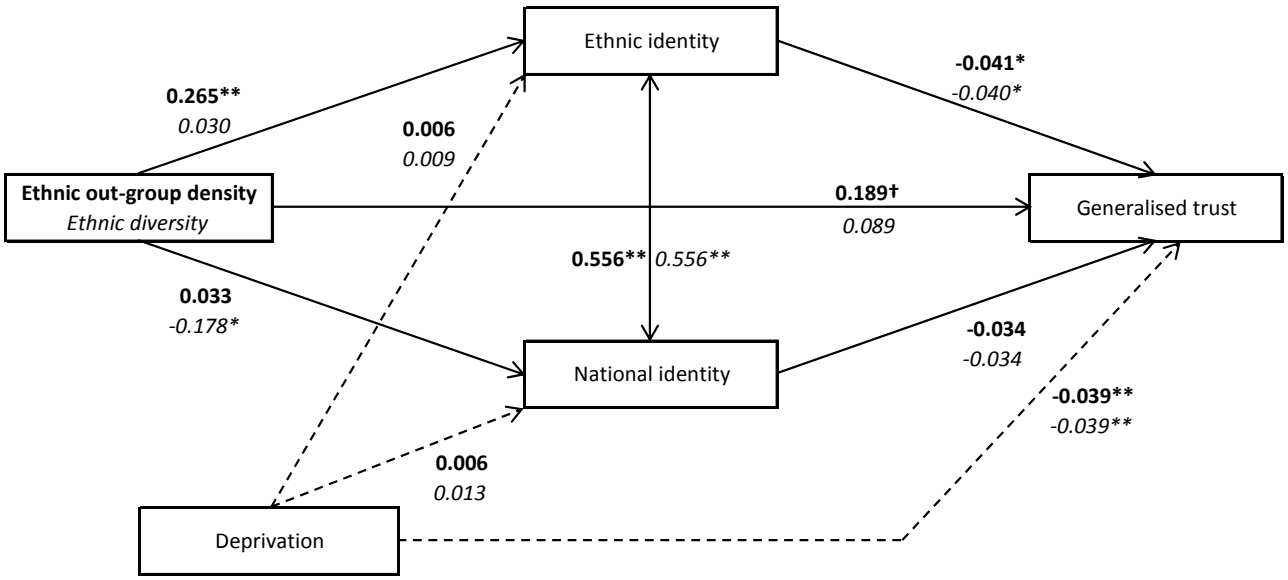
Figures 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 present the results of path models that estimate the effects of ethnic heterogeneity, via ethnic and national identity, on our three measures of social cohesion: neighbourhood trust, generalised trust, and civic participation. Each of these figures summarises two path models: one that uses ethnic out-group density as measure of ethnic heterogeneity (in bold), and another that uses our measure of ethnic diversity (in italics). The figures also display the associations between socio-economic area deprivation with ethnic and national identity and social cohesion, since prior studies demonstrate this is a crucial control variable (Laurence, 2011; Letki, 2008; Twigg, Turner, and Mohan, 2010). We do not present the coefficient estimates for our other control variables, but they are in line with previous research (results available upon request).

Figure 7.2 *Results of path analyses of the identity-mediated effects of ethnic heterogeneity on neighbourhood trust*



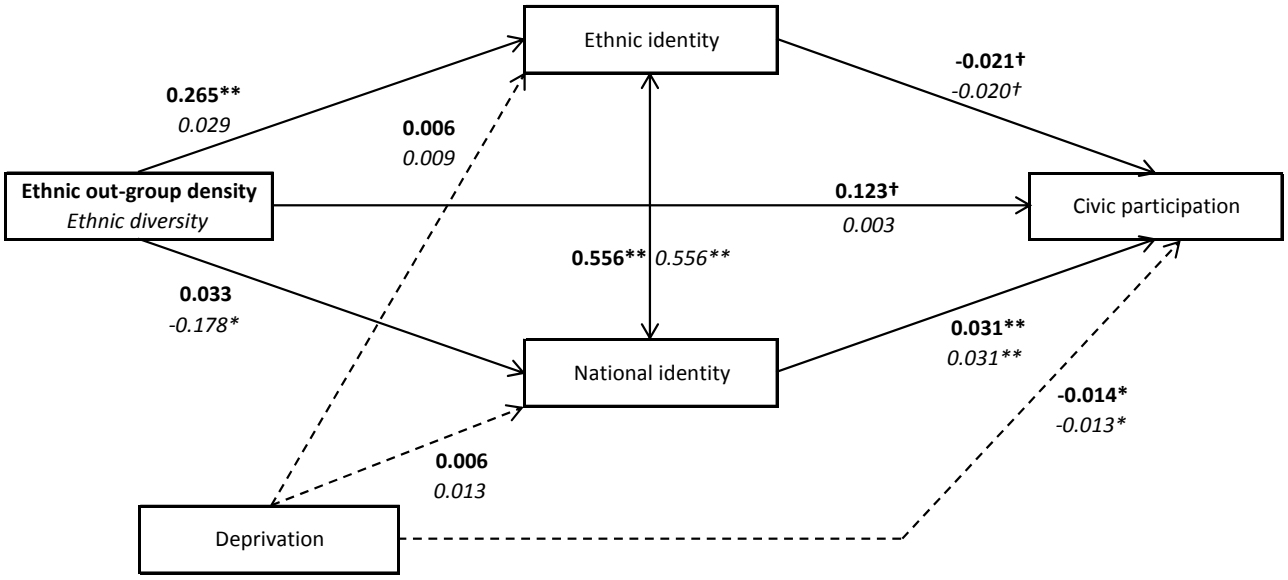
Notes: Bold coefficients: path model with ethnic out-group density as measure of ethnic heterogeneity. The estimated indirect effect of ethnic out-group density on neighbourhood trust via ethnic identity is -0.008 (p=0.146), and the estimated indirect effect via national identity is smaller than 0.001 (p=0.792). Italic coefficients: path model with ethnic diversity as measure of ethnic heterogeneity. The estimated indirect effect of ethnic diversity on neighbourhood trust via ethnic identity is -0.001 (p=0.742), and the estimated indirect effect via national identity equals -0.001 (p=0.808). n= 8750. † p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.

Figure 7.3 *Results of path analyses of the identity-mediated effects of ethnic heterogeneity on generalised trust*



Notes: Bold coefficients: path model with ethnic out-group density as measure of ethnic heterogeneity. The estimated indirect effect of ethnic out-group density on generalised trust via ethnic identity is -0.011 (p=0.067), and the estimated indirect effect via national identity is -0.001 (p=0.692). Italic coefficients: path model with ethnic diversity as measure of ethnic heterogeneity. The estimated indirect effect of ethnic diversity on generalised trust via ethnic identity is -0.001 (p=0.734), and the estimated indirect effect via national identity equals -0.006 (p=0.210). n= 8750. † p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.

Figure 7.4 *Results of path analyses of the identity-mediated effects of ethnic heterogeneity on civic participation*



Notes: Bold coefficients: path model with ethnic out-group density as measure of ethnic heterogeneity. The estimated indirect effect of ethnic out-group density on civic participation via ethnic identity is -0.005 (p=0.112), and the estimated indirect effect via national identity is 0.001 (p=0.679). For this model RMSEA=0.019 and CFI=0.953. Italic coefficients: path model with ethnic diversity as measure of ethnic heterogeneity. The estimated indirect effect of ethnic diversity on civic participation via ethnic identity is -0.001 (p=0.736), and the estimated indirect effect via national identity equals -0.006 (p=0.104). For this model RMSEA=0.019 and CFI=0.957. n= 8750. † p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.

Before discussing our core hypotheses we first stress two other findings. To start with, there is a strong positive correlation between ethnic and national identity in all of our models (0.556), suggesting that these two identities do *not* constitute a zero-sum game from a cross-sectional perspective, thus supporting the common identity model. Separate analyses for the White British and the ethnic minority sub populations in our sample indicate that this holds true for both majority *and* minority groups, with estimated correlations of approximately 0.575 and 0.520, respectively. Second, our finding that socioeconomic area deprivation has a powerful negative direct impact on all of our social cohesion indicators corroborates the findings from previous studies on the UK (Laurence, 2011; Letki, 2008; Twigg et al., 2010). Conversely, area deprivation does not affect the strength of ethnic and national identification.

Ethnic out-group density and identity

With respect to our hypotheses that ethnic out-group density is positively associated with the importance of ethnic identity (hypothesis 1A) and negatively with the importance of national identity (hypothesis 1B), we find the strongest support for hypothesis 1A: people living in local

authorities with higher concentrations of people from a different ethnicity than themselves do have a stronger sense of ethnic identity (estimated coefficient equals 0.265). This finding is in line with the conflict, threat, and cognitive bias mechanisms that have been discussed earlier on in this chapter and volume. Conversely, we do not find supportive evidence for the second implication of these mechanisms: the relationship between ethnic out-group density and the strength of national identification is non-significant in all of our models, suggesting that the rising salience of ethnic identity in communities with higher stocks of ethnic out-group members does not come at the expense of a loss of national identity. Hence, hypothesis 1B is refuted.

Ethnic diversity and identity

On the basis of social disorganisation and anomie mechanisms we hypothesised that higher degrees of ethnic diversity in localities are associated with a weakening of both ethnic and national identities (hypotheses 2A and 2B). As can be seen in Figures 7.2 to 7.4, we find support for hypothesis 2B, with an estimated negative effect of ethnic diversity on national identity (-0.178). However, we do not find any evidence that people in more ethnically diverse areas also have a weaker sense of ethnic identity due to general feelings of exclusion and alienation. Instead, we observe a statistically insignificant effect of ethnic diversity on ethnic identity, causing us to reject hypothesis 2A.

Linking identities to social cohesion

Hypotheses 3 and 4 concern the impact of ethnic and national identity on social cohesion, whereby stronger ethnic identification leads to lower levels of social cohesion (hypothesis 3), while stronger national identification is supposed to have the opposite effect (hypothesis 4). These hypotheses presume that ethnic identity plays a dividing role in society whereas national identity is believed to be a unifying force.

The results demonstrate the importance of making a distinction here between different measures of social cohesion. Firstly, Figure 7.2 shows that hypotheses 3 and 4 are not supported in terms of neighbourhood trust. Although the signs of the estimated coefficients for the effects of ethnic and national identity on neighbourhood trust are in line with our hypotheses, both coefficients are insignificantly different from zero. This suggests that the strength of ethnic and national identification does not influence localised attitudinal measures of social cohesion.

In Figure 7.3, however, a different pattern emerges. While the effect of national identity on social cohesion (measured by generalised trust in this model) is non-significant, resulting in the

rejection of hypothesis 4 once again, we do find that people with a stronger sense of ethnic identity tend to report lower levels of generalised trust, supporting hypothesis 3. This latter finding stands in sharp contrast with the lack of association between ethnic identity and neighbourhood trust observed in Figure 7.2. One potential explanation for this contrast lies in the confounding impact of ethnic residential segregation. After all, if different ethnic groups are segregated across or even within neighbourhoods, this likely strengthens their identification with their own ethnic group. However, this does not have to express itself in lower levels of neighbourhood trust, as one's neighbours probably belong to one's ethnic in-group in such a scenario. On the other hand, generalised trust, which also encompasses trust towards ethnic out-groups, is likely to be damaged. Further investigation is required to untangle the negative association between ethnic identity and generalised trust, but at first glance this result supports the narrative of identity as mediator of the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion. We also observe a negative indirect effect (-0.011) of ethnic out-group density on generalised trust via ethnic identity, which is significant at the ten percent level. This indirect effect results from the positive direct effect of ethnic out-group density on ethnic identity strength combined with the negative direct effect of ethnic identity strength on generalised trust.

Lastly, for civic participation (Figure 7.4) we find support for both hypotheses 3 and 4: ethnic identity has a marginally significant negative effect on civic participation (-0.021), while national identity has a strong positive effect (.031). The former finding suggests that people who identify more strongly with their ethnic group are poorer in terms of formal social capital, which may or may not be offset with larger stocks of informal social capital. The latter finding is interesting because it is the only significant link between national identity and our social cohesion indicators. Apparently, the strength of national identity is less important for attitudinal measures of cohesion, but is a strong predictor of civic behaviour. Altogether, the right-hand half of Figure 7.4 is consistent with the claim that subordinate, ethnic-based identities are detrimental to social cohesion, whereas stronger superordinate, national identities tend to be associated with higher levels of social cohesion. Nevertheless, if we combine the coefficient estimates of the right-hand half of the figure with those of its left-hand half, neither the indirect paths from ethnic heterogeneity via ethnic identity to civic participation, nor their counterparts via national identity, are statistically significant.

The direct effects of ethnic heterogeneity on social cohesion

While the direct path from ethnic heterogeneity to social cohesion is not the focus of this chapter, it is interesting to pay some attention to our estimates for these direct paths. In short, our results demonstrate that ethnic out-group density and ethnic diversity have strong negative associations with neighbourhood trust, that ethnic out-group density has a weak but significant positive relationship with generalised trust and civic participation, while ethnic diversity is unrelated to generalised trust and civic participation. These results are reasonably consistent with the existing British literature on the direct relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion. Most studies on Great Britain suggest that while ethnic heterogeneity does have a negative impact on neighbourhood attitudes and local trust (Laurence, 2013; Letki, 2008, Twigg et al., 2010), its effects on generalised trust and civic participation are non-existent or even positive (Laurence 2013; Letki, 2008; Sturgis et al., 2011). This is the exact same pattern as we find here.

The strong direct effects of ethnic heterogeneity on neighbourhood trust that remain after accounting for the role of ethnic and national identity as potential mediators of this relationship underline the fairly weak mediating impact of identity.[5] This also suggests that there must be other mechanisms underlying this relationship than the identity-related ones that we focus on in this chapter. Various alternative mechanisms have already been mentioned in Chapter 1, including more general versions of the cognitive bias and social disorganisation mechanisms, but also mechanisms related to communication problems and diversity in terms of socio-political preferences. Another alternative explaining concerns the confounding impact of residential stability, which tends to be lower in more ethnically heterogeneous areas (Laurence 2011, 2013). Nonetheless, previous research on the UK indicates that strong negative direct effects of ethnic heterogeneity on neighbourhood trust persist after controlling for residential turnover (ibid.). Finally, contact mechanisms (see Chapter 7) and residential ethnic segregation (see Chapter 2) are also often cited as prominent mediators and/or moderators of the ethnic heterogeneity – social cohesion nexus.

Changes in ethnic heterogeneity

In recognition of arguments that most claims on the impact of ethnic heterogeneity on social cohesion are fundamentally dynamic in nature, we have rerun our models to estimate the effects of changes in ethnic out-group density and ethnic diversity. The idea here is that social cohesion is

[5] In fact, the coefficient estimates we find for the direct effects of ethnic heterogeneity on all of our cohesion measures are virtually the same as when we omit the identity-based mediation channels from our models (results available upon request).

probably most strongly affected by changes in the ethnic composition of local areas rather than by stable levels of ethnic heterogeneity to with which people are familiar (e.g. Hopkins, 2009). Therefore, we have replaced our static ethnic heterogeneity measures for the year 2008 with variables measuring the change in these indicators on the basis of the ethnic composition of the local authorities in 2001 and 2011 (i.e. the years that the Census survey took place). Table 7.2 presents the estimated effects of these changes in ethnic heterogeneity on the strength of people's ethnic and national identification, as well as on our three measures of social cohesion.

Table 7.2 *Results of path analyses of the identity-mediated effects of changes in ethnic heterogeneity on social cohesion*

Social cohesion measure	Ethnic heterogeneity measure	Effect of 10%-point change in ethnic heterogeneity on:		
		Ethnic identity	National identity	Social cohesion
Neighbourhood trust	Ethnic out-group density	**-0.005**	**0.014****	**0.003**
		*-0.020**	*0.003*	*0.019**
	Ethnic diversity	**0.001**	**0.019****	**0.007**
		-0.008	*0.017**	*0.021**
Generalised trust	Ethnic out-group density	**-0.005**	**0.014****	**-0.003**
		*-0.020**	*0.003*	*-0.018†*
	Ethnic diversity	**0.001**	**0.019****	**-0.005**
		-0.008	*0.017**	*-0.014†*
Civic participation	Ethnic out-group density	**-0.005**	**0.014****	**-0.006**
		*-0.020**	*0.003*	*0.000*
	Ethnic diversity	**-0.001**	**0.018****	**-0.003**
		-0.008	*0.017**	*0.000*

Notes: Only the estimates for the effects of changes in ethnic heterogeneity are displayed. Bold coefficients: full sample (n=8750); italic coefficients: restricted sample for which the change in ethnic heterogeneity is less than 100 percent (n=8072 for the ethnic out-group density models, and n=8130 for the ethnic diversity models). † p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.

Table 7.2 reinforces our previously established conclusion that ethnic and national identity have little or no mediating power when it comes to the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion. Indeed, these models for the *changes* in ethnic heterogeneity convey an even more optimistic message than the models for the *levels* of ethnic heterogeneity. The majority of models presented in Table 7.2 show that increases in ethnic out-group density as well as ethnic diversity are associated with stronger national identification. Moreover, if we ignore outliers for whom ethnic out-group density has risen by more than 100 percent, increases in ethnic out-group density go together with weaker identification with one's own ethnic group. In other words, to the extent that we found evidence that higher ethnic heterogeneity is associated with stronger ethnic

and weaker national identification; this evidence largely evaporates when looking at changes in ethnic heterogeneity over time. Interestingly, the strong negative direct effects of ethnic heterogeneity on neighbourhood trust in Figure 7.3 also disappear when shifting our focus from levels of heterogeneity to changes in heterogeneity.

Differential effects across ethnic groups

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, one may expect the effect of ethnic heterogeneity on identity, but also the effects of ethnic and national identification on social cohesion, to be different for ethnic majority than for ethnic minority groups. To allow for such differential effects, we have rerun our path models separately for all White British people (n=4859) and all ethnic minorities (n=3891) in our sample.

The key insight obtained from these analyses (results available upon request) is that there is indeed considerable variation across these two groups. In terms of the association between ethnic heterogeneity and identity, both ethnic out-group density and ethnic diversity are related to stronger ethnic identification for White British people, while these factors do not seem to be related in any way to the strength of their national identity. On the other hand, we observe that for ethnic minority respondents the relative size of ethnic out-groups is neither associated with their ethnic nor national identification, but that higher degrees of ethnic diversity go together with both weaker ethnic as well as national identification.[6] Thus, we observe partial support for the conflict/threat/cognitive bias mechanism among White British people as far as the effect of ethnic out-group density and diversity on ethnic identification are concerned, while the effects of ethnic diversity on ethnic and national identification for ethnic minority respondents is in accordance with the social disorganisation/anomie mechanism. These cross-ethnic differences are masked in our general analyses summarised in Figures 7.2 to 7.4.

With respect to the relationship between ethnic and national identity and social cohesion, we find that for White British people a stronger ethnic identity is associated with lower civic participation and to a lesser extent lower neighbourhood trust. Among ethnic minority respondents we observe a negative relationship between ethnic identity and generalised trust and a strong

[6] If we instead look at *changes* in ethnic heterogeneity, we observe that for White British respondents increases in both ethnic out-group density and ethnic diversity are weakly associated with *stronger* national identities but are not related to the strength of ethnic identification. For the ethnic minority subpopulation changes in ethnic out-group density are neither associated with the strength of ethnic identity nor with the strength of national identity, while increases in ethnic diversity are related to *stronger* ethnic and *stronger* national identification.

positive relationship between national identity and civic participation. Altogether, these associations imply a strong significant negative indirect effect of ethnic diversity on civic participation via national identity for ethnic minority respondents, as well as a negative indirect effect of both measures of ethnic heterogeneity on civic participation and to a lesser extent neighbourhood trust via ethnic identity for the White British subpopulation. From this perspective identity seems to have more mediating power when we look at the White British and ethnic minority subpopulations separately than in a pooled analysis.

Discussion and conclusion

This chapter refines the literature investigating the link between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion by exploring the extent to which ethnic and national identity mediate these relationships in England. This is a timely contribution given popular claims that ethnic heterogeneity causes people to identify more strongly with other ethnic in-group members rather than with members of society more broadly, thereby restricting the development of social cohesion (cf. Goodhart, 2013; Scheffer and Waters, 2011)—claims that have thus far eluded any systematic empirical scrutiny. We test the pathways that may exist between ethnic heterogeneity, ethnic and national identities, and social cohesion, incorporating recommendations that the effects of ethnic heterogeneity may be different depending on the exact measures of heterogeneity and social cohesion used (Koopmans and Schaeffer, 2013; Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014).

Our first hypothesis, founded on arguments related to ethnic conflict and cognitive out-group biases, states that the proportion of ethnic out-groups in an area is positively associated with the strength of ethnic identity, and negatively associated with the strength of national identity. Despite finding that larger ethnic out-groups stocks are associated with a stronger ethnic identity (mainly for White British people, as additional analyses suggest), we do not find that national identity is weakened in favour of this stronger ethnic identity. In line with social disorganisation and anomie mechanisms, we hypothesise that the ethnic diversity in an area is negatively associated with the strength of national identity *and* ethnic identity. Our analysis finds that ethnic diversity is associated with a weaker national identity at the 10 percent significance level; in contrast, there is no effect of ethnic diversity on ethic identity. Nevertheless, these results mask the fact that ethnic diversity is associated with significantly weaker ethnic as well national identification for ethnic minorities, as additional analyses indicate.

We also test hypotheses that stronger ethnic identification is associated with lower levels of social cohesion, while stronger national identification is associated with higher levels of social cohesion. We fail to find support for these claims with regard to our local attitudinal measure of neighbourhood trust. Neither do we find evidence for an association between national identity and generalised trust, but we do find that ethnic identity is negatively associated with generalised trust. Finally, we do find that stronger ethnic identification correlates with lower levels of civic participation, while stronger national identification correlates with higher levels of civic participation.

We thus find partial support, depending on the measures of ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion used, for some of the links through which ethnic and national identity could mediate the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion. That said, in general we have to conclude that the overall evidence on the question whether the strength of ethnic and national identification can partly explain this relationship is weak. This at least seems to hold as far as the English context is concerned. Importantly, most of the indirect effects of ethnic heterogeneity on social cohesion via ethnic and national identity are statistically insignificant, regardless of the specific measure of ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion used. An exception is the indirect effect of ethnic out-group density on generalised trust via ethnic identity, which is negative and in line with our hypotheses, but this indirect effect is only significant at the ten percent level. We do find some more support for the role of ethnic and national identity as mediators in our analyses distinguishing ethnic majority from minority groups. Therefore, while an extensive analysis of such subpopulation-specific patterns is beyond the scope of the present study, we stress that future research should delve further into this issue. In any case, our analysis shows that if we pool together the different ethnic subpopulations, the answer to the question as to what extent ethnic identity and national identity mediate the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion is "not a great extent at all".

There remain a number of caveats to this study. Firstly, as with almost all studies on the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion, there is the issue of causality and selection, as already touched upon in Chapter 1 and elsewhere in this volume. In the absence of the ability to randomly allocate people to neighbourhoods or local authorities with different ethnic composition, it remains a challenge to make solid causal claims on the relationship between these concepts, and our study is no exception to this rule, given that we only have observational data at our disposal. As Laurence (2013) notes, and as has also been pointed out in the introduction to this volume, it is virtually impossible under such circumstances to rule out the possibility that any

relationships that we observe between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion (as well as ethnic and national identity, for that matter) originate from selection biases due to, for example, selective residential mobility rather than from true causal mechanisms. It is equally hard to attach any causal direction to the association between identity and social cohesion. Causality is very likely to run two ways between these concepts, and one could even go as far as to make the argument that the strength of national identification can be regarded as a dimension of social cohesion.

As mentioned in our results section, most theoretical assertions concerning the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion have a dynamic character, arguing how *changes* in the degree of ethnic heterogeneity lead to *changes* in social cohesion. An optimal test of these claims should, therefore, also have a dynamic character. Notwithstanding a few exceptions (e.g. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this volume; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2012; Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010), however, most studies in this area have a cross-sectional design. Although we only have measures of social cohesion and identity available for one point in time in this study, we have looked at the influence of changes in ethnic heterogeneity over time, thus making a modest step in the right direction. These analyses illustrate that *changes* in ethnic heterogeneity do not necessarily yield the same results as *levels* of ethnic heterogeneity. In fact, when concentrating on changes in ethnic heterogeneity, our results are even more dismissive of the idea that identity (partially) mediates the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion.

Another caveat concerns our inability to distinguish between in-group and out-group directed measures of social cohesion in the Citizenship Survey. Many theoretical arguments suggest that the effects of ethnic heterogeneity on social cohesion may differ depending on whether one looks at 'bonding' or 'bridging' forms of social cohesion, and such arguments can easily be extended to incorporate the mediation effects of national and particularly ethnic identity as well. Even though empirical studies are yet to convincingly show that the effects of ethnic heterogeneity do indeed differ conditionally on whether one looks at in-group or out-group forms of social cohesion (Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014), it is very likely that potentially differing impacts of ethnic identity on in-group and out-group social cohesion are concealed in our analysis as a consequence of our inability to distinguish between such concepts. For example, it remains unclear whether our finding that stronger ethnic identification is associated with lower levels of generalised trust would hold up if we were to distinguish between the effects of ethnic identity on trust towards ethnic in-groups and out-groups.

A final note of caution regards the magnitude of the effects that we find. In this respect, our study echoes the findings from previous studies on the UK, which emphasise the limited substantive significance of ethnic heterogeneity in terms of explaining variation in the outcome of interest (e.g. Letki, 2008; Sturgis et al., 2011; Twigg et al., 2010). For example, when we compare an individual from a local authority with an ethnic out-group density of practically 0 to an individual from a local authority with an ethnic out-group density of almost 1 (i.e. the two most extreme scores on the ethnic out-group density scale), we find that the second individual only has a 10 percentage points higher predicted probability of reporting that their ethnic or racial background is very important to them, despite the strong positive coefficient estimate that we find for the effect of ethnic out-group density on ethnic identity strength. Once again, this underscores the point that the role of ethnic and national identity as mediator of the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion seems limited in England. Nevertheless, it remains a task for future research to replicate this study for other countries, to examine more carefully how the explanatory power of the identity mechanism varies across ethnic subpopulations, and to explicitly address how the influence of ethnic and national identity relates to the influence of other possible mechanisms underlying the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion.

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