ICS PhD Project 8:
Recognizing dual ethnic/national identifiers in social networks: causes and consequences

Aim
To understand 1) how the structure of social networks affects the recognition of people with dual ethnic/national belonging and 2) how and when this recognition of dual identifiers affects interethnic prejudice.

Theoretical background
The increasing ethnic diversity of most European countries has led to high tensions between ethnic groups, and negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities in particular. Recent research suggests that *dual identifiers*, i.e. people who feel that they belong to multiple groups, may improve interethnic attitudes and relationships because these dual identifiers can create social bridges between communities (Love & Levy, 2019). However, not all dual identifiers are recognized as such by others, and misperception may undermine the bridging that dual identifiers can accomplish.
In this PhD project, you will combine different sociological and social-psychological theories to understand when people recognize the belonging of (descendants of) immigrants to both their ethnic group *and* the national majority group. You will move beyond work on ethnic categorization that focused on the way dual identifiers signal their group memberships behaviorally (e.g., through clothing) and instead test how dual group memberships can be *signaled socially*. In particular, you will explore if the structure of social networks in which dual identifiers are embedded affects people's inferences about their dual belonging.
You will then examine when and how the realization that people have contact with dual identifiers in their social network affects attitudes toward other ethnic groups. Theories about direct and indirect intergroup contact predict attitude change, but recent work has shown that this depends on the structure of the network in which the contact takes place and the valence of the contact experience (e.g., Stark, 2020). What is currently unknown is how intergroup attitudes are affected by having dual identifiers in one's social network or by realizing that one's ingroup friends have contact with dual identifiers. You will also examine potential contextual and psychological factors that may facilitate or undermine the effect of dual identifiers in people's networks. By disentangling the influence of, for instance, perceptions of the compatibility of identities, we will be able to better explain when dual identifiers can reduce intergroup prejudice.

Research design
To test how people's interethnic attitudes are affected by recognizing others' dual belonging in social networks, you will collect your own *egocentric network* data in population-based online samples (e.g., Stark, 2020). Two studies will focus on the Netherlands and one will be a cross-national comparison. You will develop survey experiments to test for causal effects of the salience of cross-ethnic ties in people's social networks on their recognition of dual identifiers. In other experiments, you will establish how and when the recognition of dual belonging affects intergroup prejudice.

Project
This PhD position is part of the ERC project "Bridges in social networks: Harnessing dual identity to improve interethnic relations". Additional members of the team will be a postdoctoral scholar who will develop a new tool to measure perceptions of social network structure. Moreover, two PhD students will start next year and investigate the role of dual identifies in whole networks of school classes.

Literature
- Love, A., & Levy, A. (2019). Bridging Group Divides: A Theoretical Overview of the "What" and "How" of Gateway Groups. *Journal of Social Issues*, *75*(2), 414–435. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12327
- Stark, T. H. (2020). Indirect contact in social networks: Challenging common interpretations of the extended contact hypothesis. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *23*(3), 441–461. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430219846337

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Location
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