Host populations' perceptions toward migrants: The effect of private/public settings and the moderating role of threat

Christelle Maisonneuve [a,*], Benoit Testé [a,1], Anne Taillandier-Schmitt [b], Michael Dambrun [c]

[a] LAUREPS (CRPCC, EA 1285), University of Rennes 2, Place du recteur Henri le Moal, CS 24307, 35043 Rennes Cedex, France
[b] EA2114 (Psychologie des Ages de la Vie), Université François Rabelais de Tours, 3 rue des Tanneurs, 37000 Tours, France
[c] LAPSCO/UMR 6024, Université Blaise Pascal, Clermont Fd II, 34 avenue Carnot, 63037 Clermont-Fd Cedex, France

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ABSTRACT

In the light of the French integration model, the present research was designed to examine the influence of host culture adoption and original culture conservation in the private sphere and the public sphere on the host population's judgments of migrants. Using the scenario method, in a pilot and a main studies ($n = 156$) migrants' targets were portrayed as adopting the host culture or conserving the original one, depending on the private (at home) or public (at work) setting. Our results suggest that the host population's perceptions are influenced by the behaviors adopted by migrants in both the private and public spheres, and by the type of judgment being made, as the effects we found differed according to the dependent variable being examined (affective, normative, and perception of integration into French society). Finally, the main study reveals that threat significantly moderates host populations' perceptions. Three main contributions and one implication are discussed and perspectives for future researches are proposed.

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1. Introduction

Acculturation models based on Berry's research (1980) define acculturation in terms of two orthogonal dimensions – conservation of the original culture and frequency of contact with the host population. In their model, Bourhis, Moise, Perrault, and Senecal (1997) substituted adoption of the host culture for frequency of contact with the host population. Such bi-dimensional models have been widely used to analyze migrants' strategies (Barrette, Bourhis, Personnaz, & Personnaz, 2004; Berry, 1980, 2005; Bourhis & Bougie, 1998) and to explore how host communities perceive migrants (Berry, 2006; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1977; Bourhis & Bougie, 1998). Berry and Bourhis et al.'s models cross the two dimensions of acculturation to define four possible orientations for migrants and host populations. The dimensions for hosts are referred to as integration (when the host population expects migrants to both conserve their original culture and adopt the host culture), assimilation (when the host population expects migrants to adopt the host culture without conserving their original culture), segregation (when the host population expects migrants to conserve only their original culture),

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* Corresponding author at: Département Carrières Sociales, 263 av du général Leclerc, CS44202, 35042 Rennes Cedex, France. Tel.: +33 02 23 23 42 53; fax: +33 02 23 23 40 91.

E-mail addresses: christelle.maisonneuve@univ-rennes1.fr (C. Maisonneuve), benoit.teste@univ-rennes2.fr (B. Testé), anne.taillandier@univ-tours.fr (A. Taillandier-Schmitt), michael.dambrun@univ-bpclermont.fr (M. Dambrun).

[1] Tel.: +33 02 99 14 19 55.

and exclusion (when the host population expects migrants to neither conserve their original culture nor adopt the host culture). This model is useful for situating the orientations of host countries on both the individual and political levels. For example, on the political level, Canada's multiculturalism approach corresponds to integration (Bourhis & Bougie, 1998), whereas America's melting pot approach corresponds to assimilation (Bourhis & Bougie, 1998; Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). France's integration model is usually defined as assimilationist (Barrette et al., 2004; Sabatier & Berry, 1994); however, the situation is more complex than this because, despite a clear injunction to assimilate, maintenance of the original culture is tolerated when it occurs in the private sphere. The first aim of our research was to show that the type of acculturation strategy (adoption of host culture vs. conservation of original culture) that migrants adopt in the private and public spheres influences the host population's evaluations of those migrants. We addressed this issue through two studies in which participants were asked to evaluate targets who differed according to whether they conserved their original culture or adopted the host culture in private and in public (Navas et al., 2005). We used the scenario method (Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998) to portray the targets' behaviors in private vs. public settings. The second aim of our research was to show that the level of perceived threat the host population associates with the presence of migrants moderates the relation between acculturative preference and private vs. public behaviors.

1.1. Strategies adopted by migrants and the French integration model

In the literature, France's "republican integration model" of acculturation is classically considered to be assimilationist (Barrette et al., 2004; Sabatier & Berry, 1994). For example, Sabatier and Boutry (2006), referring to Bolzman (2001), define France as a "typical example of assimilationist citizenship", corresponding to a Universalist ideology in which differences tend to be ignored and equal treatment for all individuals is promoted. Under this conception, immigrants are expected to adopt French culture, and to accept and respect France's republican principles. Consequently, and as Guimond (2010) pointed out, the epithet "integration" in the model's name is misleading. However, closer examination of the French integration ideal shows that it is more complex than simple assimilation. According to Kamiejski, Guimond, De Oliveira, Er-Rafiy, and Brauer (2012), the French model is framed by the orthogonal dimensions of citizenship and secularism. Their work was based on the French constitution of 1958, which states "France is an indivisible, secular, democratic, and social republic".[1]. The citizenship dimension corresponds to the principle of indivisibility ("French society is composed of citizens rather than communities" – item created by Kamiejski et al. to define the citizenship dimension), whereas the secularism dimension corresponds to "a political concept involving the separation of civil society and religious society in which the State has no religious power and Churches have no political power"[2] (Capitant, quoted by Barbier, 1995, p.8). In daily life, France's integration model distinguishes between the public and private spheres, with people being free to choose their way of life and how they express their religious beliefs in private (Sabatier & Boutry, 2006); however, prominent displays of religious or sectarian symbols in government-run institutions are prohibited. Navas, Rojas, Garcia, and Pumares (2007) observed that classic definitions of acculturation orientations are not really adapted to the complex realities of modern societies containing different spheres of life. Navas et al. (2007) differentiated between peripheral domains (work, economics, politics) and more central domains (family, religion, way of thinking). They suggested, as did Brown and Zagefka (2011), that migrants adapt their behaviors to the context, and that a host population's judgments of migrants depend on the strategies migrants adopt in different contexts. Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2003) proposed this perspective when they compared the acculturative preferences in the private and public spheres of Dutch and Turkish–Dutch people. They found that Dutch people prefer migrants to assimilate in both the private and public spheres but that Turkish–Dutch people tend to choose integration in the public sphere and separation in the private sphere.

The present research focused on the situation in France, where the "French integration model" is strongly ingrained, both socially and politically. We examined whether or not it guide participants' judgments of migrants' acculturation strategies. We expected the host population's judgments of migrants to depend on the acculturation strategies those migrants adopt in the public and private spheres. We investigated this by asking participants to judge a migrant target on the basis of the acculturation strategies (adoption of host culture or conservation of original culture) adopted in a private setting and a public setting. According to the French integration model, the host population's judgments should be influenced more strongly by migrants' behaviors in public than by their behaviors in private. However, these judgments may be moderated by the degree to which participants perceive themselves threatened by the presence of migrants.

1.2. Threat as a moderator

Threat is considered a central variable in explaining prejudices and negative attitudes toward migrants (Bourhis & Bougie, 1998; Florack, Piontkowski, Rohmann, Balzer, & Perzig, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005). Moreover, threat is also linked with the host populations' acculturative preferences (Tip et al., 2012; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011). Lòpez-Rodríguez, Zagefka, Navas, and Cuadrado (2014) tested a model with threat as a

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[1] "la France est une république indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale".
[2] "une conception politique impliquant la séparation de la société civile et de la société religieuse, l'Etat n'exerçant aucun pouvoir religieux et les Eglises aucun pouvoir politique".