Effects of ingroup norms on domain-specific acculturation preferences: Experimental evidence from two cultural contexts☆

Linda K. Tip [a,*], Roberto González [b], Rupert Brown [a], Pablo De Tezanos-Pinto [b], Patricio Saavedra [b], Viviana Sagredo [c], Hanna Zagefka [d], Laura Celeste [e]

[a] University of Sussex, UK
[b] Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile
[c] University of Jena, Germany
[d] Royal Holloway University of London, UK
[e] University of Leuven, Belgium

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Two experiments investigated effects of perceived ingroup acculturation norms. Majority members read an article about their peers having specific acculturation preferences for minority members in public and private domains, which was the experimental manipulation. Dependent variables were liking for ingroup members, majority members' own preference for culture maintenance *relative to* their preference for culture adoption for public and private domains, and their investment in cultural maintenance *relative to* their investment in contact with the minority. In England ($N = 237$) we focused on attitudes towards Muslims, while in Chile ($N = 291$) the focus was on attitudes towards the indigenous Mapuche. Results reflect the political climates of the two countries: Chileans showed more reactance against their peers demanding assimilation from minority members than English people did – by increasing their preference for maintenance relative to adoption. Yet, in both countries, peers who demanded assimilation were liked the least. In England, responses on public acculturation preferences and acculturative investment were the same, whereas they differed in Chile. Overall, Chileans valued culture maintenance of Mapuche more than culture adoption for both public and private domains. For English people however, this was only the case for the private domain, while for the public domain they had opposite overall preferences. Finally, regardless of country, the more people preferred culture maintenance relative to adoption in the public domain, the higher their support for multiculturalism was too, highlighting the importance of investigating relative acculturation preferences.

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1. Introduction

With worldwide immigration numbers growing (OECD-UNDESA, 2013), immigration and multiculturalism have become popular topics in the media. Newspapers regularly present survey results showing how the general public feels about immigrants (for an example, see The Guardian, 2013). Among other things, such articles provide majority members with information about the norms prevailing within their own group regarding acculturation issues. Multiple studies suggest that group norms are influential determinants of people's attitudes and behaviour in a wide range of intra- and inter-group settings (Brown, 2000; Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990; Pettigrew, 1958; Sherif, 1936). However, the role of ingroup norms regarding acculturation preferences has not yet been investigated.

1.1. Acculturation preferences

It is likely that acculturation preferences play an important role in intergroup relations. Berry's (1997) acculturation model describes the ways in which ethnic minorities can adapt to living in a country, using two dimensions: the extent to which an individual wants to maintain his or her own ethnic culture (culture maintenance or CM) and the extent to which an individual wants to have contact with members of the majority group (desire for contact or DC). Crossing these two dimensions creates four acculturation preferences: *integration* (high CM, high DC); *separation* (high CM, low DC); *assimilation* (low CM, high DC); and *marginalisation* (low CM, low DC). In some accounts, it has been suggested to replace the 'contact' dimension with a dimension of how much immigrants desire to take on or adopt the culture of their new country of residence (e.g., Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997). Crossing the dimensions *culture maintenance* and *culture adoption* (CA; rather than DC), yields the same four acculturation preferences as mentioned above. The present research will follow this approach by looking into combinations of CM and CA.

Although early acculturation research focused only on minority members, research suggests that acculturation preferences of majority members also play a major role in intergroup dynamics (e.g., Bourhis et al., 1997; González, Sirlopú, & Kessler, 2010; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdrzálek, 2000). That is, the majority can prefer minority members to *integrate*, *separate*, *assimilate*, or *marginalise*, and much research has shown that a preference for *integration* on the side of the majority is associated with better intergroup relations (e.g., Pfafferott & Brown, 2006; Zagefka & Brown, 2002; Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, & Petzel, 2001). The research reported here is designed to investigate whether (perceived) ingroup norms regarding acculturation can predict majority members' own acculturation preferences.

1.2. Ingroup norms and acculturation

To date, most acculturation research has focused on acculturation attitudes as a determinant of – or, more precisely, a correlate of – various outcomes such as adaptation, well-being and intergroup attitudes (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Sam & Berry, 2006). Rather less attention has been paid to the antecedents or determinants of acculturation attitudes (for exceptions, see Zagefka, Brown, & González, 2009; Zagefka, González, & Brown, 2011; Zagefka, Tip, González, Brown, & Cinnirella, 2012). It is likely that one important determinant of acculturation attitudes is what other members of the ingroup think is appropriate: the prevailing ingroup norms. Ingroup norms about attitudes towards the outgroup often influence attitudes of individual ingroup members. For example, ingroup norms have shown to be predictive of prejudice of ingroup members (Bennett et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1958), social approval of having negative attitudes towards the outgroup (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002), views regarding racism (Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, & Vaughn, 1994), and liking of the outgroup (Nesdale, Maass, Durkin, & Griffiths, 2005). Given this work, it seems likely that ingroup norms about acculturation may be an important determinant of people's own attitudes.

Of course, we can expect that there are already existing ingroup norms regarding acculturation preferences. The question is how people respond when these norms change. For example, endorsing a multicultural (or integration) ideology is becoming increasingly normative (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2007). The question we are trying to answer is: How do people respond to individuals who openly endorse a segregation or assimilation ideology in a society where supporting integration is the norm? That is, what do they think of this individual, and how would this deviating individual affect their own acculturation preferences?

According to self-categorisation theory (e.g., Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994), people generally prefer ingroup members to comply to ingroup norms, because compliance reinforces the typical characteristics of their own group thereby confirming clear and certain differences between the ingroup and the outgroup. Marques, Abrams, and Serôdio (2001) suggest that when ingroup members deviate from the existing group norm, they might pose a threat to ingroup distinctiveness and positivity. In response, and in order to sustain positive distinctiveness for their salient ingroup, they propose that a group member who deviates from the existing group norm will be negatively evaluated, and that attempts will be made to reinforce ingroup consensus among the other group members.

1.3. Majority members' investment in acculturation

Investigating participants' acculturation *preferences* only may not be sufficient. True integration entails effort and investment from an individual. From the point of view of the majority, this means that they have to try to foster an