Ethnic in-group evaluation and adhesion to acculturation ideologies: The case of Moroccan immigrants in France

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to examine the link between adhesion to different acculturation ideologies (multiculturalism, citizenship, secularism and assimilation) and group evaluation among Moroccan immigrants in France. We present two studies. In the first study, we found a negative correlation between adhesion to assimilation or secularism and in-group liking: the more immigrants preferred these ideologies, the less they displayed a positive evaluation of Moroccan people. No significant correlation was noticed between citizenship or multiculturalism and in-group liking. In contrast, adhesion to each one of the acculturation ideologies correlated positively with out-group liking. In the second study, we experimentally manipulated the acculturation ideologies and we showed that in-group liking was lower in assimilation and secularism conditions compared to citizenship and multiculturalism conditions. Out-group liking did not differ as a function of the acculturation ideology. The effect of acculturation ideologies on group evaluations was mediated by perception of the legitimacy of the acculturation ideologies. We discuss these results in terms of individual mobility.

Immigrants' evaluation of the ethnic in-group plays an important role in their identification with the group (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002), which in turn influences their acculturation (Badea, Jetten, Iyer, & Er-rafiy, 2011). The acculturation process takes place in an ideological context which more or less valorizes the ethnic culture of immigrants. Some acculturation ideologies defend the dominant position of majority group members; others promote the maintenance of each ethnic group's cultural heritage or the equal treatment of individuals, regardless of their group membership (Berry, 2006; Levin et al., 2012). Immigrants themselves adhere to an acculturation ideology (Verkuyten, 2005) and are aware of the immigration policy in the host society (Sam & Berry, 2006). The aim of this paper is to test whether adhesion to acculturation ideologies by members of minority groups shapes their evaluation of the ethnic in-group and of the majority out-group. Specifically, we examine the case of Moroccan immigrants in France.

1. Acculturation ideologies in France

Since the French revolution, France has emphasized equality for all individuals, independently of their social, cultural and religious origins. This position does not recognize specific rights for any minority, be it ethnic, linguistic or religious.

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Through fear of communitarianism, which refers to strong allegiance to one's own ethnic or religious group or community rather than to the nation-state as a whole, all "specificities" are relegated to the private domain. The official acculturation ideology is "assimilation–citizenship" (Sabatier & Boutry, 2006) which encourages immigrants to adopt French culture and does not allow them to defend any specific rights. This mixture between assimilation and citizenship is ambiguous. On the one hand, assimilation requires immigrants to abandon their own culture to the benefit of the language, values and customs of the majority group. Many studies have shown that adhesion to this acculturation ideology by the majority group members is associated with greater prejudice against immigrants (Badea, 2012; Levin et al., 2012; Wolsko, Park, & Judd, 2002). On the other hand, citizenship promotes equality between French citizens and the respect of democratic values by all individuals independently of their social, ethnic or religious origin (Kamiejski, Guimond, De Oliveira, Er-rafiy, & Brauer, 2012). Assimilation – citizenship sees the maintenance of cultural rights as an obstacle to equal rights in other domains. In other words, individuals must renounce their cultural specificities in order to be more easily assimilated into the host culture (Guimond, 2010). In this research we separately and respectively examine adhesion to assimilation and to citizenship ideologies (see for example, Kamiejski et al., 2012).

Officially monolingual and secular, France is in reality multilingual, multicultural and multireligious (Sabatier & Boutry, 2006). In this multicultural context, even if the official immigration policy is one of assimilation – citizenship, other acculturation ideologies such as multiculturalism and secularism are promoted in French political discourse. The acculturation ideology of multiculturalism defends the idea of a multiple cultural identity, where specific cultures and the national culture coexist harmoniously. Partisans of multiculturalism think that only someone who feels safe in his/her own culture can be tolerant and generous towards others. Allowing minority groups to maintain their cultural and linguistic specificity becomes a value of the majority group. Majority group members who prefer multiculturalism express less prejudice against immigrants (Badea, 2012; Levin et al., 2012; Wolsko et al., 2002). Multiculturalism shares with citizenship the idea of equality (between cultures and between individuals respectively). It is important to mention that multiculturalism is associated with positive intergroup attitudes in France. In other contexts such as Former Soviet Union, Japan and Mauritius, the majority group members can use multiculturalism to justify their dominant position and minorities can use assimilation to challenge inequality (Antonova, 2005). Concerning secularism ("laïcité"), this ideology requires religion and politics to be separate (Kamiejski et al., 2012). During the debate on national identity in France in 2009, initiated by the government, discourses conflated religion and ethnic identity. Secularism was widely evoked during the debate which led to the law against the Islamic veil (Baubérot, 2010). The veil ban is not respected by all members of Islamic minority and sanctions can lead to incidents such as the one recently seen in a Paris suburb (Le Monde, 22nd of July, 2013). Adhesion to secularism by the members of the majority group can be linked to negative attitudes towards immigrants (Kamiejski et al., 2012).

In this research, we look at whether adhesion to these acculturation ideologies (assimilation, citizenship, multiculturalism and secularism) by the members of a minority group shapes their evaluation of the ethnic in-group and of the majority out-groups. We take the example of Moroccan immigrants in France. The Moroccan community accounts for more than one million immigrants, living in the Paris region and around other big towns such as Clermont-Ferrand and Marseille. Most of them are Muslim and like other Muslims, they are the target of anti-immigrant sentiment in France (Badea et al., 2011). Many works of research show that Moroccans score high on positive attitudes towards their ethnic group (Badea et al., 2011; Sabatier, 2008) and their attitudes against Moroccans and French people are negatively correlated (Sabatier, 2008). It is possible for this group to show various patterns of group evaluation in line with their adhesion to acculturation ideologies.

Few studies have examined minorities' preferences for different acculturation ideologies and the link between these preferences and the evaluation of their own groups. In a study carried out in the Netherlands, Verkuyten (2005) demonstrated that the more Turkish immigrants endorsed assimilation ideology, the more they displayed negative in-group evaluation. In contrast, the more minority group members endorsed multiculturalism, the more they showed positive in-group evaluation. In a recent study in France, Kamiejski et al. (2012) showed that immigrants of Maghrebi origin, who adhere strongly to the principle of citizenship, evaluate North Africans as favourably as they evaluate French people, compared to those who adhere weakly to this acculturation ideology and who show an intergroup bias. When passively submitted to an assimilation ideology, minority members can also show a less favourable evaluation of their ethnic group. In a Canadian study, Wright and Taylor (1995) showed that Inuit children educated in a majority group cultural context (i.e. assimilation) evaluated Inuits less favourably than Canadians, compared to Inuit children educated in an environment promoting their own culture (i.e. multiculturalism).

2. Acculturation ideologies and ethnic in-group evaluation

Research shows that socialization plays an important role in the transmission of attitudes towards minority groups. "Participating in a culture means, at least in part, learning and accepting what the culture believes about one's own and other groups" (Mackie, Hamilton, Susskind, & Rosselli, 1996, p. 60). Politics of immigration legitimize relationships between majority group members and immigrants (Bourhis, Moïse, Preault, & Senecal, 1997). They can be at the origin of the "normative discourse" of immigrants' acculturation in a country (Guimond, de la Sablonnière, & Nugier, 2014). Through a socialization process, Moroccan immigrants can learn what French society believes about their own and other ethnic groups (Mackie et al., 1996). In a study carried out in France (Dambrun, Gatto, & Roche, 2005) Moroccan children show a more positive