Explaining majority members' acculturation preferences for minority members: A mediation model

Lucía López-Rodríguez [a,*], Hanna Zagefka [b], Marisol Navas [a], Isabel Cuadrado [a]

[a] *University of Almería, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Psychology, Cañada de San Urbano s/n. Almería, 04120, Spain*
[b] *Royal Holloway, University of London, Department of Psychology, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX, United Kingdom*

A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Two studies were conducted to integrate processes described in the literature on acculturation, stereotype content, and intergroup threat. Spanish majority members filled out questionnaires about their views of Moroccan immigrants (Study 1) and Ecuadorian immigrants (Study 2). They reported their perception of the immigrants' endorsement of culture maintenance and adoption, their preferences for immigrants to maintain the original culture and adopt the host culture, their positive stereotypes about immigrants, and perceptions of threat. Results showed that 'perceived culture adoption' had an effect on 'stereotypes', which in turn had an effect on 'perceived threat', which in turn had an effect on 'preference for culture maintenance' (Studies 1 and 2) and 'preference for culture adoption' (Study 1). Moreover, results confirmed that there were significant indirect effects of the majority's acculturation perceptions on majority members' acculturation preferences, yielding further support that 'stereotypes' and 'perceived threat' are important mediators in the process. Stereotypes and perceived threat were both consequences of majority members' acculturation perceptions and predictors of majority members' acculturation preferences.

1. Introduction

Every year thousands of people across the world migrate to another country, searching for a way to improve their lives. This leads to the coexistence between groups of different cultures in many settings. When different cultural groups enter into contact and have to live together in the same physical and social space, this generates several processes of change commonly called 'acculturation'. Acculturation, in fact, is the result of the multiple changes which take place when different cultural groups come into continuous contact, with changes in the original cultural patterns of both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936).

Acculturation can take many different forms. Initially, scholars were mainly interested in the immigrants' acculturation process. However, due to the interactive nature of acculturation, the majority's perspective began to wake interest (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997; Dinh & Bond, 2008). Host majority members can influence the acculturation strategies of minority members', who in turn may also affect the orientations of the host majority' (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 375). Consequently, acculturation researchers have started to show interest for majority members' preferences and

---

* Corresponding author at: University of Almería, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Psychology, Cañada de San Urbano s/n. Almería, 04120, Spain. Tel.: +34 667719007.

E-mail addresses: lucialopezrod@gmail.com (L. López-Rodríguez), Hanna.Zagefka@rhul.ac.uk (H. Zagefka), msnavas@ual.es (M. Navas), icuadrad@ual.es (I. Cuadrado).

perceptions regarding minority groups' acculturation behavior (Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1977; Berry, 2001; Bourhis et al., 1997; Navas et al., 2005; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdrzalek, 2000; Piontkowski, Rohmann, & Florack, 2002; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011, 2012; Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Indeed, it seems essential to understand the antecedents of majority members' preferences regarding the acculturation of different minority groups. As Van Acker and Vanbeselaere (2011) have highlighted, knowing these antecedents may offer chances to modify majority members' preferences and to fill the gap between the positions of both the majority and the minority groups, and consequently, to improve their relations.

The aim of this research was to investigate predictors of majority members' acculturation preferences for minority members. Specifically, an objective was to illuminate the relationship between majority members' acculturation perceptions and their preferences for minority groups, stereotypes, and perceived threat, and to integrate some prominent approaches and insights from the acculturation literature (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 1977), the stereotype content literature (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), and the intergroup threat literature (Stephan & Renfro, 2002).

1.1. The majority's acculturation perceptions and preferences about minority groups

Acculturation preferences have been conceptualized as an independent variable (e.g., Zagefka & Brown, 2002; Pfafferott & Brown, 2006) as well as a dependent variable (Zagefka, Brown, Broquard, & Martin, 2007; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011), exploring, in this last case, how the majority's perceptions of what immigrants want inform the majority's own acculturation preferences.

The present work intends to extend this current research by exploring the possible antecedents of the majority's acculturation preferences for minority groups. Following previous findings (Zagefka et al., 2007; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011), we hypothesize that majority members' acculturation perceptions of what immigrants do predict majority members' acculturation preferences for these immigrants. Further, we predict that these relations between the majority's acculturation perceptions and their preferences would be mediated by two important psychosocial variables: stereotypes and perceived threat.

1.1.1. Measuring acculturation perceptions and preferences
From a psychological perspective, Berry's framework is the most influential in the field of acculturation (Berry, 1997, 1999). This approach argues that acculturation is shaped by two distinct dimensions: on the one hand, the preference for culture maintenance (i.e., the wish to preserve aspects of one's original culture), and on the other hand, the preference for contact (i.e., the wish to interact with members of another group). Nevertheless, Bourhis et al. (1997) proposed later that the contact dimension should be replaced by 'culture adoption' (i.e., the wish to adopt cultural practices of the other group), a term that would be more consistent with the other dimension of cultural maintenance.[1] This research will follow the adoption (rather than contact) conceptualization for both acculturation perceptions and preferences.

Although the two acculturation dimensions have traditionally been combined into discrete categories (e.g., integration, assimilation), several studies with majority members have found that the underlying dimensions may be related rather than orthogonal (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011, 2012; Zagefka, Brown, & González, 2009). Therefore, it has been recommended to assess the dimensions underlying acculturation preferences and perceptions separately (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; Rudmin, 2003; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011). For these reasons, the present research will investigate the dimensions of maintenance and adoption separately for majority members' acculturation perceptions and preferences.

1.2. Searching for antecedents of the majority's acculturation preferences: the power of stereotypes

The acculturation process is complex and does not occur in a psychological vacuum. It is influenced by several factors, which affect majority and minority members' acculturation preferences, and, consequently, the harmonic (vs. conflictive) intercultural relationships between minority and majority groups. Several intergroup variables (e.g., prejudice, identity, similarity, threat) have been linked to acculturation preferences (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Florack, Piontkowski, Rohmann, Balser, & Perzig, 2003; Navas, López-Rodríguez, & Cuadrado, 2013; Piontkowski et al., 2000; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011; Zagefka et al., 2009; Zagefka, Tip, González, Brown, & Cinnirella, 2012; Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, & Petzel, 2001).

'Stereotypes' can be assumed to influence the acculturation preferences of majority members. The Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999) proposes that people will have very fundamental judgments about groups in terms of 'warmth' and 'competence'. Currently, some scholars (Brambilla, Rusconi, Sacchi, & Cherubini, 2011; Brambilla, Sacchi, Rusconi, Cherubini, & Yzerbyt, 2012; Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007) consider three stereotype dimensions in group perception: 'morality' (with traits such as honest, sincere, trustworthy), 'sociability' (with traits such as likeable, warm, friendly), and 'competence' (with traits such as capable, intelligent, skillful). The main contribution of our

---

[1] Some authors (Berry & Sabatier, 2011; Ward & Kus, 2012) have recently shown that there are some implications when comparisons are made between Berry's dimension of contact and dimension of adoption. Van Acker and Vanbeselaere (2011) have suggested that perceived contact engagement and perceived culture adoption may be used as equivalents, since they are positively and strongly correlated. However, for acculturation preferences the dimension of contact proposed by Berry and the dimension of adoption are not equivalent (the correlation between them is small and they correlate with approval of culture maintenance and negative outgroup affect in different ways).