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The role of immigrant acculturation preferences and generational status in determining majority
intergroup attitudes

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Keywords: acculturation, generational status, perceived threat

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Abstract

Two experiments (Ns = 220, 135) investigated the role of first and second generation immigrants' desire for Culture Maintenance and Intercultural Contact in affecting majority members' intergroup attitudes (2 X 2 X 2 design). Participants were presented with fictitious interviews through which immigrants' acculturation preferences and generational status were manipulated. Immigrants' desire for contact strongly affected host members' attitudes: those who were perceived to want contact elicited more favourable intergroup attitudes than those who did not. Desire for contact also moderated the relationship between immigrants' desire for culture maintenance and attitudes towards them: culture maintenance only stimulated favourable attitudes if the immigrant also expressed desire for contact. Immigrants' generational status and their desire for Culture Maintenance were found to interact, such that less favourable attitudes were shown towards second generation immigrants refusing their heritage culture. Psychological processes mediating these effects were investigated, finding evidence for symbolic threat, appreciation for multiculturalism and metastereotypes. Overall, the results suggest that both immigrants' generational status and acculturation attitudes should be taken into account when studying intergroup attitudes of dominant groups and in planning interventions for the improvement of intercultural relations.

Keywords: acculturation; generational status; perceived threat; multiculturalism; metastereotypes

Introduction

We now live, it could be said, in a nomadic world. Every year millions of people migrate within or across national boundaries, fleeing famine, war or persecution or seeking material or cultural enrichment. According to 2005 United Nations (UN) figures, over 195 million people now live in a country other than that of their birth and, of these, there were nearly 14 million refugees (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2008; <http://esa.un.org/migration/>). In Europe alone, it is estimated that there are over 64 million migrants and Italy, the site of the present research, had over 3 million migrants living inside its borders in 2005 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs; <http://esa.un.org/migration/>). Such mass migration poses social psychological challenges for immigrants and members of receiving societies alike. Immigrants may need to reconstruct anew their social identities and sometimes have to face a less than warm, not to say downright hostile, welcome from their new country of settlement. Members of the host society will often be confronted with ethnic groups with quite different cultural traditions whom they may perceive to represent a threat to their material well-being, to their traditional way of life, or both. It is not uncommon for those majority members to react to such perceived threats by expressing negative sentiments to immigrants (McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Quillian, 1995; Semyonov, Raijman, & Gorodzeisky, 2006). In this paper we investigate two little studied sources of such anti-immigrant sentiment – namely, the acculturation attitudes that the immigrants themselves endorse, together with the assumed generational status of those immigrants. It is our contention that if immigrants are seen as holding acculturation attitudes that do not chime well with what the host majority expects of them, then this will instigate anti-immigrant prejudice. In certain respects, this may be especially visible in reactions to *second generation* immigrants.

Acculturation attitudes

Social psychological research on acculturation has been dominated by Berry's two dimensional framework (Berry, 1980, 1997). As is well known, Berry has proposed that immigrants

can have a preference to maintain (or relinquish) their heritage culture (the so-called Culture Maintenance dimension), and can wish to have much (or little) contact with the host society (the Intercultural Contact dimension). The combination of these two dimensions results in four potential acculturation strategies: *integration*, when immigrants want both to maintain their culture and have contact with the host majority; *assimilation*, when they are favourable to contact but not to culture maintenance; *separation*, when immigrants desire to conserve their heritage culture without being in contact with host members; and *marginalisation* when they refuse both culture maintenance and intercultural contact.

Perhaps not surprisingly, research on acculturation has focussed mainly on the immigrants' perspective, chronicling various psychosocial outcomes that are associated with the different acculturation strategies (for reviews see, Berry, 1997; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Liebkind, 2001). In recent years, however, there has been a growing realisation that members of the host society also will have preferences for which acculturation strategy they would like immigrants to adopt and, moreover, that these preferences, and especially the concordance between them and the immigrants' preferences, could be an important determinant of the nature of the subsequent intergroup relationship between the two groups (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Sénécal, 1997; Piontkowski, Rohmann, & Florack, 2002; Roccas, Horenczyk, & Schwartz, 2000; van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998; Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Moreover, some studies showed that the way in which host members perceive immigrants' preferences can influence intergroup attitudes. For example, Zagefka and Brown (2002) found that German majority group preferences for integration were associated with more favourable attitudes, as was the degree of fit between those preferences and the perceived preferences of Turkish immigrants (see also, Pfafferott & Brown, 2006). In two subsequent studies, perceived immigrant preferences for intercultural contact were negatively correlated with majority group prejudice towards those immigrants; perceived immigrant preferences for cultural maintenance were not (Zagefka, Brown, Broquard, & Leventoglu Martin,

2007).

In this paper we want to investigate experimentally the role of immigrants' acculturation preferences in affecting the host majority's intergroup attitudes. More specifically, we are interested in analysing the different contribution to the outcome of interest of the two dimensions underlying immigrants' acculturation strategies in Berry's framework. The four acculturation strategies have been typically studied as discrete constructs in this field. It is our aim to provide experimental evidence on the role of the two underlying dimensions, perceived Intercultural Contact and perceived Cultural Maintenance, both as orthogonal predictors of intergroup attitudes in their own right, but also in interaction. Moreover, we are interested in investigating the psychological processes which may affect the relationship between immigrants' acculturation preferences and host members' attitudes towards them, in order to better understand which mechanisms are responsible for unfavourable attitudes held by dominant groups.

Experimental studies in this field have been rare. However, noteworthy is some experimental research showing that perceptions of immigrants' acculturation strategies can affect host majority members' attitudes. Van Oudenhoven et al. (1998) manipulated whether a particular immigrant appeared to endorse one of Berry's (1997) four strategies and then elicited native Dutch respondents' reactions to this person. They found the most favourable evaluations of the person when s/he appeared to endorse assimilation, closely followed by those in the integration condition. The immigrant endorsing separation or marginalisation was viewed less favourably. The fact that perceived assimilation and integration elicited the most favourable responses seems to suggest that it was a perception of a desire for contact by the immigrant protagonist that was the primary determinant of her/his subsequent positive evaluation. Similar findings emerged from a study carried out in Italy by Kusic, Mannetti and Sam (2005). The authors manipulated immigrants' acculturation preferences in order to analyse majority members' evaluation and normative reactions to different acculturation strategies perceived to be held by Moroccan immigrants. They found that

Italians had more negative attitudes towards the strategies of separation and marginalisation, while both assimilation and integration were positively evaluated.

This research provides preliminary evidence about the influence of acculturation strategies on attitudes. However, several questions remain: the potentially different determining roles of the two underlying acculturation dimensions are not clear, and the psychological processes mediating the observed effects have yet to be identified. In this paper we address these issues in two experiments.

The results of the studies reported above, in which perceived assimilation and integration were more positively reacted to, together with those previously cited (Zagefka et al., 2007), suggest that the Contact dimension can be identified as the primary determinant of host members' attitudes towards immigrants. We believe it is likely that immigrants who are seen to desire intergroup contact will be perceived by host society members as less threatening to their common values and traditional way of life, which will result in them being more appreciated. This is because most majority members will regard it as normative and desirable that immigrants should seek contact with host members and with aspects of the host culture. A perception that immigrants actively reject the host culture and its members may be regarded as somewhat 'disrespectful' of the host society, and its values and customs could be felt to be in danger. The result could be a heightened feeling of threat in the minds of the majority group. Host members perceiving that opportunities for future interaction with immigrants do not exist, or think that an initial rejection could be irreversible, may be characterized by an aggressive reaction (Ayduk, Gyurak, & Luerssenand, 2008) and could consequently show more negative attitudes towards those immigrants.

Moreover, host members might think that immigrants' desire for contact could be regarded by outside observers as a response to - almost an index of - the majority's attitudes towards multiculturalism and immigration. Thus, choices which seem to indicate that the immigrant group is excluded from the larger society could generate negative attributions about the prevailing intergroup climate in the host country. Put differently, the immigrant group's perceived desire for contact

could influence host members' metastereotypes, the beliefs about the stereotypes that an outgroup holds about the ingroup (Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998).

We develop these hypotheses further in Study 2, after first establishing that immigrants' perceived desire for contact (or not) is, indeed, the most potent determinant of intergroup attitudes.

Perceived culture maintenance is also likely to have a role in influencing host members' attitudes, even if it is one that is subordinate to the contact dimension. Specifically, it is our contention that culture maintenance might be appreciated by host members, but *only* when contact is also sought. If immigrants seem to respect the host culture and its members by seeking intercultural contact, then host members may favour culture maintenance on the part of those immigrants. In other words, immigrants who are perceived to favour an integrationist strategy may well be appreciated, perhaps in a form of reciprocal multiculturalism. Such an outcome is more likely to occur in cultural contexts (like Italy, see Matera & Stefanile, 2008; Pintus & Giovannini, 2006) where a multiculturalist ideology is normatively endorsed (Bourhis et al., 1997; Piontkowski et al., 2002). A further implication is that, if immigrants are seen as rejecting contact, whether they wish to maintain their culture or not will be a matter of indifference to majority members.

Immigrants' generational status

Typically, in research investigating attitudes towards immigrants, the latter are considered as an undifferentiated category; the only feature used in order to differentiate among immigrants is typically their ethnic or national origin (Bourhis & Bougie, 1998; Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). No research has previously analysed the role of immigrants' generational status in affecting host members' intergroup attitudes, even though such second generation immigrants are more and more visible in many societies (Algan, Dustmann, Glitz, & Manning, 2010; Caritas/Migrantes, 2009). Yet, it is well known that generational status (first versus second or later generation) is associated with different acculturation preferences and psychosocial outcomes in the immigrants themselves (Ait Ouarasse & van de Vijver, 2005; Farver, Bhadha, &

Narang, 2002). Given these differences, it is plausible to suppose that first and later generation immigrants will be perceived and responded to differently by the majority. Second and later generation immigrants will usually be fluent in the host community language and will often adopt similar clothing and culinary practices to the majority. As a result, the majority may come to expect less cultural distance between themselves and these immigrants than they will for first generation ones.

In considering the effects of generational status, there are two potentially fruitful lines of argument. The first concerns threats to the distinctiveness of the majority group. Depending on perceived similarity, immigrants could trigger different psychological processes in host members, which in turn may influence their attitude towards them. One might speculate that outgroups who are perceived as more similar to the ingroup might be more appreciated; however, the relationship between similarity and intergroup attitudes is actually quite complex (Brown, 1984a, 2010; Brown & Lopez, 2001). Similar out-groups, even if sometimes more liked (Brown, 1984b; Brown & Abrams, 1986), can also stimulate needs for differentiation, posing threats to distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004). According to this view, second generation immigrants might pose more of a threat to distinctiveness than first generation immigrants, precisely because in several respects they may have adopted life-styles that more closely resemble that of the host society.

However, other psychological processes could come into play, and this is the second possible line of argumentation. Once again, we can invoke the metastereotyping process: host members might think that second generation immigrants' culture relinquishment could be perceived by outside observers as a response to an assimilationist ideology held by the majority. This choice, which seems to indicate that the immigrant group feels compelled to assimilate, could generate negative metastereotypes about host members' ideas concerning immigration. While contact refusal can be assumed to be associated with negative metaperceptions independently of immigrants'

generational status, culture relinquishment is predicted to produce negative metastereotypes especially when chosen by *second generation* immigrants. In other words, we believe that contact will be assumed to be desired by *all* immigrants who choose to live in another country, but that culture refusal may be viewed rather differently if chosen by first or second generation immigrants. First generation immigrants spend most their life in their country of origin, so that their choices related to heritage culture maintenance could be dictated by their own main ideologies and rules. On the other hand, second generation immigrants live all (or almost all) their life in the host country, so that the socialization process takes place entirely there for this group; second generation immigrants may be then be believed to make such choices conforming to social norms which are dominant among host members. Someone who was born and grew up in the host country might be expected to know perfectly well which norms are held by most members of that society, and to align themselves to those . The same process is less likely to occur with respect to first generation immigrants, who were socialized in another country, and whose choices regarding culture refusal could be perceived as normative according to their own cultural background, and not to the one dominant in the host society. Thus, second generation immigrants who are seen to be refusing their heritage culture might be perceived to be responding to a dominant assimilationist ideology more than first generation immigrants doing the same thing. This, then, could generate negative metastereotypes, causing host society members to believe that they appear to others as intolerant people.

Generational status may therefore play a different role in combination with the two dimensions underlying acculturation. As immigrants' desire for contact is assumed by host members to be essential, it is plausible to suppose that immigrants favourable to intercultural contact are appreciated regardless of their generational status. Immigrants' perceived desire for culture maintenance might play a different role however. Considering the two different psychological processes described above (distinctiveness threat and negative metastereotypes), we

can predict that culture maintenance on the part of second generation immigrants will be favourably viewed by the host majority. With regard to the distinctiveness hypothesis, culture maintenance may give rise to intergroup differentiation which could be particularly appreciated by host members, as it could help to reduce distinctiveness threat. With respect to the metastereotypes hypothesis, second generation immigrants seen to be desiring culture maintenance may contribute to making Italians appear opened-mind and tolerant people, especially in other immigrants' eyes.

From both these lines of argument, it can therefore be predicted that second generation immigrants who wish to *maintain* aspects of their heritage culture would be appreciated more than those who do not. The same arguments apply much less, if at all, to first generation immigrants because their opinions and intended behaviours concerning culture maintenance may be perceived as less related to those of host society members. We will elaborate specific hypotheses about these effects later in the paper (see Study 2). Our first goal is to establish if an interaction between generational status and culture maintenance can, in fact, be observed.

Two studies were conducted in Italy, using only native Italians as participants. The immigrant group was from the African continent since this is one of the most numerous and visible ethnic minorities in Italy. Official data (Caritas/Migrantes, 2009) indicate that European immigrants are still the most numerous in Italy (53.6%), followed by Africans (22.4%), Asians (15.8%) and Americans (8.1%). The increased percentage of foreigners in European countries is due not only to the growth of migration flows, but also to the increased presence of second generation immigrants, born in the host community from foreigner parents: second generation immigrants are more and more visible in societies such as Italy (Caritas/Migrantes, 2009). With reference to this context, it is also relevant to note that multiculturalism is generally favoured in Italy (Pintus & Giovannini, 2006), especially with respect to usually valued immigrant groups like those from the African continent, the one studied in this research (Matera & Stefanile, 2008).

We can now state our hypotheses.

[H1] Immigrants' desire for Intergroup Contact will improve host members' attitudes towards them.

[H2] Immigrants' desire for Culture Maintenance and Contact will interact in affecting host members' attitudes, with immigrants' perceived desire to maintain their heritage culture having an effect only when they are also perceived to seek intergroup contact.

[H3] Immigrants' perceived Generational Status will interact with their perceived desire for Culture Maintenance in affecting host majority's attitudes towards them.

These hypotheses were tested experimentally using both an evaluative and an affective measure of intergroup attitude (Bagozzi, Gürhan-Canli, & Priester, 2002).

Study 1

Method

Participants

An opportunity community sample of 220 Italian citizens was recruited to participate in the study. First and second generation immigrants were not included in the sample. More than half participants were female (F=60.9%, M=38.6%), and their mean age was 41.38 years (SD=10.90). Almost all respondents were born in Tuscany and lived in this region. Their educational level was quite high (University graduate=30.8%, high school degree=52.4%, junior high school degree=16.8%; 89.4% employees and 10.6% unemployed people). Participants were invited to take part in a study about immigration. Participation was voluntary. Participants were assigned randomly to the different experimental conditions.

Design

The study used a 2 X 2 X 2 between-participants design in which acculturation preferences and generational status of an immigrant group member were manipulated: immigrants' desire for Culture Maintenance (high vs. low) X desire for intergroup Contact (high vs. low) X perceived generational Status (1st vs. 2nd).

Measures and procedure

A two-part questionnaire was developed. Background variables, such as gender, age, nationality, parents' nationality, educational level and employment, were addressed at the end of the questionnaire.

The common practice of measuring acculturation strategies relying on compound or double-barrelled items (Berry et al., 2006), or applying vignettes which attempt to portray each of the four strategies in their entirety (e.g., Rohmann, Piontkowski, & van Randenborgh, 2008; van Oudenhoven et al., 1998) has come under critical scrutiny in recent years (Arends-Toth & van de Vijver, 2006; Brown & Zagefka, in press; Matsudaira, 2006; Rudmin, 2003; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). Not least among the problems with the use of such compound items or manipulations is that they make it impossible to estimate the independent contributions of Contact and Cultural Maintenance to the outcome of interest. As we are interested precisely in investigating how perceived Contact and Cultural Maintenance affect intergroup attitudes, independently and in combination, we chose to manipulate them separately.

Ps were first presented with a questionnaire at the beginning of which a fictitious (but apparently real) interview with an African immigrant to Italy was presented. Respondents were asked to read it with attention. In this interview his presumed generational status was varied, as were his ideas about heritage culture maintenance (favourable versus unfavourable) and intergroup contact (favourable versus unfavourable). After reading this brief interview, participants were asked to express their opinions towards other immigrants like the interviewee (see appendix A).

The study thus had the following independent variables.

Immigrants' desire for intergroup Contact. The immigrant interviewed expressed his opinions about intergroup contact, asserting he believed it was/was not important to establish and keep in contact with Italians.

Immigrants' desire for heritage Culture Maintenance. The immigrant interviewed expressed

his opinions about heritage culture maintenance, stating he thought that it was/was not important to maintain his African culture.

Immigrants' generational Status. Generational status was manipulated by describing the immigrant's origins; he introduced himself as born in Africa (first generation) or in Italy (second generation); in both cases he specified that his parents were from Africa. In the second generation condition he said he had always lived and worked in Italy; in the first generation condition he said he had been living and working in Italy for ten years.

The dependent measures were:

Intergroup evaluations. Participants' evaluations of African immigrants were assessed with nine semantic differentials (i.e. nice-awful, pleasant-unpleasant, enjoyable-unenjoyable, useful-useless, positive-negative, beneficial-harmful, desirable-undesirable, wise-foolish, appreciable-unappreciable), measuring on 7-point scales what participants thought that people such as the central figure in the interview were like ($\alpha=.95$). The resulting scale was scored in a positive direction.

Intergroup emotions. Participants were asked to express their feelings towards people like the central figure in the scenario; they were presented with a list of 8 positive emotionally-laden terms (i.e., sympathy, happiness, admiration, curiosity, attractiveness, friendliness, solidarity and thrust) already used by Kosic et al. (2005) ($\alpha=.95$). Emotions were measured on a 7-point scale (1=not at all, 7=very much).

As the two measures were substantially correlated ($r=.71$), an overall index of intergroup attitudes was created by averaging the scores on the separate scales.

Results

Univariate Analysis of variance with intergroup attitude as the dependent variable was performed. Mean scores are displayed in table 1.

There were main effects of both Contact, $F(1,212) = 99.27, p < .001, \eta^2 = .32$, and

Maintenance, $F(1,212) = 9.05$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$. However, the latter was qualified by an interaction between Contact and Maintenance, $F(1,212) = 15.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$ (see Figure 1). Simple effects analyses revealed, as predicted, that immigrants who did not consider it valuable to have contact with Italians were the object of less positive attitudes, whatever their desire for heritage culture maintenance ($M = 3.12$) or refusal ($M = 3.26$), $F(1,212) = .48$, ns. On the other hand, if they considered it important to have intergroup contact, they were reacted to more positively if they also saw it valuable to maintain their ethnic culture ($M = 5.15$) than if they did not ($M = 4.13$), $F(1,212) = 25.26$, $p < .001$. Note that the simple effects of Contact were both highly significant, irrespective of Maintenance (Maintenance_{high}, $F(1,212) = 94.93$, $p < .001$; Maintenance_{low}, $F(1,212) = 18.28$, $p < .001$).

The ANOVA also revealed a significant Status X Maintenance interaction, $F(1,212) = 7.73$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Simple effects analyses revealed that Maintenance had a significant effect only with regard to second generation immigrants; for immigrants who were seen as belonging to the first generation, host members' attitudes did not vary according to immigrants' desire for heritage culture maintenance ($M = 4.04$) or rejection ($M = 4.01$), $F(1,212) = .03$, ns. However, if they belonged to the second generation, they were responded to more positively if they saw it valuable to maintain their ethnic culture ($M = 4.25$) rather than if they did not ($M = 3.40$), $F(1,212) = 16.64$, $p < .001$. Note that the simple effects of Status were significant only when culture maintenance was not appreciated by immigrants (Generation_{first} = 4.01, Generation_{second} = 3.40, $F(1,212) = 9.35$, $p < .01$), and not when it was desired (Generation_{first} = 4.04, Generation_{second} = 4.23, $F(1,212) = .82$, ns) (see Figure 2).

Discussion

In accordance with Hypothesis 1, immigrants' desire for intergroup contact was found to have the most powerful effect on host majority's attitudes towards them, explaining some eight times more variance than any other effect in the analysis. Supporting Hypothesis 2, perceived

cultural maintenance only elicited favourable intergroup attitudes if it was simultaneously accompanied by a desire for intergroup contact. Hypothesis 3, relating to immigrants' generational status and their desire for culture maintenance, was also confirmed: when the target immigrant belonged to the second generation, host members' attitudes were more positive if he also saw it valuable to maintain his ethnic culture rather than if he did not.

We can conclude, then, that host members' attitudes were affected by what they perceived the immigrant's acculturation strategy to be, especially in regard to his desire for intergroup contact. Nevertheless, when he appeared to be endorsing a wish to integrate (high on both dimensions), he stimulated the most favourable intergroup attitudes of all. In addition, as we had suspected, only the cultural maintenance preferences of the *second* generation protagonist were influential, eliciting more favourable attitudes when he endorsed cultural maintenance than when he did not. The same effect was not visible in the first generation conditions.

Study 2

In Study 1 we have obtained three key findings: first, an immigrant who is seen to want contact with the majority elicits much more favourable intergroup attitudes than when he is seen not to desire such contact. Second, if he also is seen to wish to maintain his cultural heritage, this elicits favourable attitudes only when this is combined with a perceived desire for contact. Third, that same perceived desire for cultural maintenance evokes favourable attitudes mainly in the second generation immigrant condition. In Study 2 we aimed to uncover the underlying psychological mechanisms that might help to explain these effects.

First, we focused on the role of both perceived threat and metaperceptions in mediating the observed significant relationship between immigrants' desire for contact and host members' attitudes towards them.

With regard to perceived threat, some research has already shown that immigrants' acculturation strategies, besides affecting host members' attitudes, can also stimulate feelings of

threat in majority group members (Piontkowski et al., 2002; Rohmann, Florack, & Piontkowski, 2006; Rohmann et al., 2008; Tip et al., in press). However, the relative importance of the two acculturation dimensions has not been clearly demonstrated in these studies. Moreover, the potential role of perceived threat in mediating the relationship between immigrants' acculturation preferences and host majority's attitudes remains to be established. Following Stephan and Stephan (2000), we distinguish between realistic and symbolic threats, focusing our attention particularly on the latter. While realistic threats refer to threats to the material interests or even the very existence of the ingroup, symbolic threats involve perceived group differences in values, standards and lifestyles which seem to jeopardize the worldview of the ingroup. In several studies, Stephan and his colleagues have shown that feelings of symbolic threat are associated with negative intergroup relations (Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan & Martin, 2005; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). Some previous research showed that contact discordance was related to symbolic threat, but not to realistic threat (Rohmann et al., 2006). In line with these findings, we suggest that immigrants' perceived (lack of) desire for Contact will be regarded as particularly threatening to the worldview of the ingroup because it carries with it the possible implication that immigrants are 'rejecting' the majority's culture and all that it stands for. If perceived (lack of) Contact is associated with threat, which in turn is associated with anti-immigrant attitudes, it is plausible to predict that symbolic threat mediates, at least partially, the significant relationship between immigrants' perceived desire for intergroup contact and host members' attitudes towards them.

Drawing on recent work on metaperceptions (e.g., Frey & Tropp, 2006; Méndez, Gómez, & Tropp, 2007; Vorauer, 2003), we considered the possible mediational role of metastereotypes in explaining the observed relation between perceived contact and attitudes towards immigrants. Host society members might believe that immigrants who are seen to be uninterested in intergroup contact could make them (the host society) appear to other people as intolerant. Outside observers

might conclude that the refusal of contact on the part of immigrants is a consequence of a discriminatory orientation endorsed by the host population. Negative metastereotypes would then arise, as host members would perceive they are seen as closed-minded and intolerant by others. This would impact negatively on host members' attitudes towards those immigrants, who might be seen as being responsible for those negative attitudes held by external people (i.e., other immigrants) towards Italians. Following this line of argument, we hypothesized that both perceived symbolic threat and metastereotypes could be partially responsible for the observed relation between immigrants' desire for contact and host members' attitudes.

The *second* objective of Study 2 concerned the generational Status X Culture Maintenance interaction. There are two different possible explanations of this. As already noted, it might be that second generation immigrants may be perceived by host members to be somewhat similar to their own ingroup. As noted earlier, such perceived similarity could lead to more positive perceptions, but it could also stimulate differentiation needs (Brown, 1984a; Jetten et al., 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In other words, second generation immigrants could represent a threat to the distinctiveness of the ingroup. Immigrants' desire for maintaining their heritage culture, according to this argument, may constitute a reassuring element for the Italian majority group, since their distinctive Italian culture is not threatened. The same process may not apply to first generation immigrants since they are more obviously definable as a distinctive outgroup from the outset.

But metaperceptions could also be implicated in the Status X Maintenance interaction. Just as immigrants' lack of desire for contact might affect metastereotypes, so too might the combined effect of immigrants' generational status and desire for culture maintenance influence host members' metastereotypes, which in turn could affect attitudes towards immigrants. As speculated in relation to intergroup contact, host members may believe that immigrants refusing their heritage culture could make them appear as closed-minded and insensitive. However, in contrast to our hypothesis for contact, which seemed to be considered as indispensable with regard to *all*

immigrants, this metaperception might be generated especially by *second generation immigrants*, for whom culture maintenance appears to be particularly appreciated (see Study 1).

Third, we set out to understand the psychological processes that might underlie the interaction between Culture Maintenance and Contact. We suggest that this interaction occurs because immigrants seen to be favouring both culture maintenance and intergroup contact will be perceived to be facilitating multiculturalism, a policy which is generally favoured in Italy, as we noted earlier (Matera & Stefanile, 2008; Pintus & Giovannini, 2006). Immigrants favouring integration (high on both dimensions) will be viewed favourably by Italians since such a preference contributes to the cultural enrichment of their country, providing a vitality to it (Deaux, 2006). Here, then, we predict that the evocation of favourable intergroup attitudes by an immigrant's desire for both contact and cultural maintenance is mediated by an implied endorsement of multiculturalism.

In summary, then, we propose the following three new mediational hypotheses:

[H4] The relationship between perceived (lack of) desire for Contact and intergroup attitudes is mediated by feelings of symbolic threat and by metastereotypes.

[H5] The Status X Maintenance interaction effect on intergroup attitudes is mediated by perceived threats to the distinctiveness of the ingroup and by metastereotypes.

[H6] Endorsement of multiculturalism ideals mediates the interactive effect of Contact and Maintenance on intergroup attitudes.

In examining the effects of these mediator variables (perceived threats, metastereotypes and support for multiculturalism) we thought it prudent to control for participants' initial levels of prejudice. Vorauer (2003) noted how metastereotyping is affected by individuals' dispositional prejudice. In Stephan and Stephan's (2000) Integrated Threat Theory there is assumed to be a direct link between symbolic threats and prejudice. It is likely, too, that any distinctiveness threats felt by ingroup members will be exacerbated by prior prejudice since those of higher prejudice will be more concerned about ingroup distinctiveness (Blascovich, Wyer, Swart, & Kibler, 1997). Finally,

support for multiculturalism is also usually associated with prejudice (Berry & Kalin, 1995, 2000). For all these reasons, we first controlled for participants' prejudice in testing our mediational hypotheses.

In order to account for multiple mediators and avoid over- or under-estimation of the influence of the supposed predictors, all the variables considered were included in a model simultaneously (see Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Method

Design

The study used the same 2 X 2 X 2 between Ps design as in Study 1: Perceived desire for intergroup Contact (high vs. low) X perceived desire for Culture Maintenance (high vs. low) X generational Status (1st vs. 2nd).

Participants

Participants were 135 university students. All of them were Italians, as were their parents. Most of them were female (F=78.5%, M=21.5%) and their mean age was 24.58 years (SD=2.38). Most of the participants were born in Tuscany and lived in this region. Participation was voluntary. Participants were assigned randomly to the different experimental conditions. First and second generation immigrants were not included in the sample.

Measures and procedure

A modified version of the questionnaire used in Study 1 was employed. The same interview used in Study 1 was presented, so that the same variables could be manipulated (perceived desire for intergroup Contact, perceived desire for Culture Maintenance, generational Status). Furthermore, in order to test our mediational hypotheses we had to assess also participants' levels of prejudice.

Prejudice. Respondents' prejudice was measured computing the difference between the evaluation expressed towards Italians and African immigrants on an attitude thermometer, which

corresponds to participants' ingroup bias (0=completely unfavourable; 100=completely favourable). This measure was presented before the vignette through which the other independent variables were manipulated.

After the vignette, the following dependent measures were presented.

Intergroup evaluations ($\alpha = .93$) and emotions ($\alpha = .91$) were assessed as in Study 1 and an overall index was created after observing once again that the two measures were substantially correlated ($r = .73$).

Perceived symbolic threats. Perception of symbolic threat was measured with 3 items (e.g., "Values of people like the one described in the vignette are too different from the ones of Italians"; "People like the one described in the vignette do not understand Italians' world vision") (1=not at all; 7=very much; $\alpha=.77$).

Metastereotypes. Participants were told that the same interview they were presented with had been previously presented also to an African immigrant called Malik, who had been in Italy for a short time. They were told that Malik was asked to describe Italian people on the basis of the interview he had read. Participants were then asked to think how Malik could have described Italian people on the basis of Hassan's declaration. Four semantic differentials (intolerant-tolerant, arrogant-kind, closed-open mind, insensitive-sensitive), measured on 7-point scales what Malik thought of Italians ($\alpha=.88$). The purpose of this measure was to gauge the attributions *other people* might make for the target person's (Hassan) responses.

Distinctiveness threat. Threat to the distinctiveness of the ingroup was measured through two items on 7-point rating scales (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree): "Habits of people like Hassan are too similar to Italians" and "I don't think that people like Hassan can be confused with Italians" (reverse-scored) ($r=-.31, p<.001$).

Multiculturalism. Multiculturalism was measured through 4 items on 7-point rating scales (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree): "The presence of people like Hassan in Italy improves our

country making it rich with different cultures”; “Cultural diversity is guaranteed by people like Hassan”; “Thanks to people like Hassan we can live in a multicultural society”; “People like Hassan facilitate multiculturalism in Italy” ($\alpha=.91$).

Results

Univariate Analysis of variance with intergroup attitudes as the dependent variable was performed. Mean scores are displayed in table 2.

Main effects of both desire for intergroup Contact, $F(1,127) = 43.80, p < .001, \eta^2 = .26$, and generational Status, $F(1,127) = 4.52, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$, emerged. Replicating Study 1, the ANOVA also revealed a significant Contact X Maintenance interaction effect, $F(1,127) = 5.86, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$. Simple effects analyses revealed that culture maintenance had a significant effect only when contact was highly desired. When the immigrant target did not consider it valuable to have contact with Italians (low contact), this elicited less positive attitudes, independently of perceived desire for culture maintenance ($M = 3.80$) or refusal ($M = 4.03$), $F(1,127) = 1.26, ns$; but if the target considered it important to have intergroup contact (high contact), this aroused more positive intergroup attitudes if he was seen to regard it as valuable to maintain his ethnic culture ($M = 5.13$) rather than if he did not ($M = 4.65$), $F(1,127) = 5.29, p < .05$. Note that the simple effects of Contact were both significant, irrespective of Maintenance (Maintenance_{high}, $F(1,127) = 43.11, p < .001$; Maintenance_{low}, $F(1,127) = 8.37, p < .01$). This interaction closely replicates what we found in Study 1 and supports Hypothesis 2 yet again.

Once more, a significant Maintenance X Status interaction was observed, $F(1,127) = 5.22, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$. Immigrants refusing their heritage culture were seen more unfavourably when they belonged to the second ($M = 4.01$) rather than the first generation ($M = 4.66$), $F(1,127) = 9.24, p < .01$. No difference was found in the high culture maintenance condition with regard to first ($M = 4.45$) and second generation immigrants ($M = 4.47$), $F(1,127) = .01, ns$. No significant differences emerged with respect to culture maintenance or refusal on the part of first generation immigrants

(first generation, $M_s = 4.45, 4.66, F(1,127) = 1.05, ns$); instead, a significant difference was found in the second generation condition ($M_s = 4.47$ vs. $4.01, F(1,127) = 4.89, p < .05$). Thus, as predicted by Hypothesis 3, culture refusal elicited less favourable attitudes when endorsed by second rather than first generation immigrants.

Mediational hypotheses

The effect of Contact on intergroup attitudes was supposed to be mediated by Symbolic Threat and Metastereotypes (Hypothesis 4). We predicted that the Status X Maintenance interaction had an impact on Metastereotypes and Distinctiveness Threat, which in turn might affect attitudes (Hypothesis 5). The Contact X Maintenance term was supposed to influence intergroup attitudes via multiculturalism (Hypothesis 6). Prejudice was predicted to affect symbolic threat, metastereotypes and multiculturalism.

In order to test our mediational hypotheses, first some ANCOVAs with prejudice as the covariate were conducted. In each of these, the dependent measure was the hypothesised mediator.

With regard to symbolic threat, the ANCOVA revealed a main effect of host intergroup Contact $F(1,126) = 12.82, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$. Symbolic threat was higher when immigrants did not want to have contact with Italians ($M = 3.49$) rather than when they positively valued intergroup contact ($M = 2.76$). There was no effect due to Culture Maintenance. A significant covariate effect of prejudice was also found, $F(1,126) = 25.47, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$.

With respect to the metastereotyping hypotheses, the ANCOVA revealed main effects of Intergroup Contact, $F(1,126) = 21.00, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$, and Prejudice, $F(1,126) = 19.11, p < .001, \eta^2 = .13$. Furthermore, as expected, a significant Maintenance X Status interaction also emerged, $F(1,126) = 4.18, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$. Simple effects analyses revealed that metastereotypes were more positive when second generation immigrants desired to maintain ($M = 4.11$) rather than abandon ($M = 3.30$) their heritage culture, $F(1,126) = 7.93, p < .01$. No difference between first generation immigrants maintaining ($M = 3.82$) or abandoning ($M = 3.84$) their heritage culture emerged,

$F(1,126) = .01$, ns.

With regard to distinctiveness threat, the ANCOVA revealed a main effect of both generational status, $F(1,126) = 6.08$ $p < .05$ $\eta^2 = .05$, and Culture Maintenance $F(1,126) = 7.94$ $p < .01$ $\eta^2 = .06$. Distinctiveness threat was higher for second ($M = 3.57$) than first generation immigrants ($M = 3.10$) and was higher when immigrants were seen as abandoning their heritage culture ($M = 3.60$) than conserving it ($M = 3.07$). Also a significant Contact X Maintenance interaction emerged, $F(1,126) = 5.77$ $p < .05$ $\eta^2 = .04$. Simple effect analyses showed that immigrants who wanted to maintain their heritage culture were perceived as more threatening to the distinctiveness of the ingroup when they also appreciated intergroup contact ($M = 3.43$) than when they did not desire it ($M = 2.71$), $F(1,126) = 7.88$, $p < .01$; moreover, higher threat was perceived when immigrants who did not appreciate contact appeared to desire culture refusal ($M = 3.69$) rather than culture maintenance ($M = 2.71$), $F(1,126) = 13.65$, $p < .001$. A significant covariate effect of prejudice was also found, $F(1,126) = 12.52$ $p < .01$ $\eta^2 = .09$. However, *contrary to* the mediational hypothesis, there was no Maintenance X Status interaction on this distinctiveness variable, $F(1,126) = .003$, ns. Thus, it is unlikely that distinctiveness concerns underlie that interaction.

With regard to the multiculturalism hypothesis, a significant Maintenance X Contact interaction was found, in line with our hypothesis, $F(1,126) = 6.90$ $p < .05$ $\eta^2 = .05$; simple effect analyses showed that immigrants appreciating contact were perceived as favouring multiculturalism more when they wanted to conserve their heritage culture ($M = 5.21$) than when they desired to relinquish it ($M = 4.08$), $F(1,126) = 13.15$, $p < .001$. When contact was not appreciated, no difference was found between immigrants desiring culture maintenance ($M = 4.68$) or relinquishment ($M = 4.71$), $F(1,126) = .01$, ns. The prejudice covariate effect was significant here too, $F(1,126) = 8.32$ $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .06$.

Taken all together, these findings provide the first evidence for our mediational hypotheses.

We then tested our hypotheses concerning the effects of perceived threats, metastereotypes

and multiculturalism through path analysis, employing the AMOS software, Version 7. Parameter estimates were derived using the maximum likelihood procedure. Intercorrelations between all variables are shown in Table 3. All variables included in the path analysis were observed variables. A model was tested in which Contact, generational Status, Culture Maintenance, the two Contact X Maintenance and Status X Maintenance interaction terms and Prejudice were all entered as predictors of Symbolic Threat, Metastereotypes, Multiculturalism and attitudes. Then, Symbolic Threat, Metastereotypes, Multiculturalism variables were posited as predictors of attitudes. Distinctiveness threat was not included in the model as no significant effect of the Status X Maintenance interaction on this variable was found though previous analyses.

Figure 3 shows the standardized regression coefficients of the final model. This represented a very good fit to the data according to conventional criteria ($\chi^2=24.63$, $p=.26$; $\chi^2/\text{df}=1.17$; $\text{RMSEA}=.04$; $\text{SRMR}=.05$; $\text{CFI}=.99$; $\text{TLI}=.98$).

In line with the results from the ANCOVAs, prejudice showed a direct significant path to the three mediators included in the model. As predicted by Hypothesis 4, both Symbolic threat and metastereotypes partially mediated the relationship between immigrants' desire for contact and host members' attitudes towards them. Supporting Hypothesis 5, metastereotypes were found to mediate the relationship between Status X Maintenance and attitudes towards immigrants. In line with Hypothesis 6, the relationship between the Contact X Maintenance interaction and attitudes appeared to be completely mediated by multiculturalism. A direct path between generational status and multiculturalism was also found.

The model accounted for 49% of the variance in attitudes towards immigrants.

Discussion

We can note, first of all, that the three key findings of Study 1 were replicated: the strong Contact main effect, the Status X Maintenance interaction and the Contact X Maintenance interaction. Importantly, we were now able to furnish evidence for what might mediate each of

these effects: the Contact main effect was partially mediated by symbolic threat and metastereotypes, as predicted by Hypothesis 4; the Contact X Maintenance interaction was fully mediated by endorsement of multiculturalism, as predicted by Hypothesis 6; and, finally, for the Status X Maintenance interaction, perhaps one of the most novel and initially counterintuitive findings of this programme of work, we are now able to offer an explanation. As predicted by Hypothesis 5, metastereotypes mediated the relationship between the Generational Status X Culture Maintenance effect and intergroup attitudes. Host members seem to like second generation immigrants less when they appear to abandon their heritage culture because they think that doing so they may make host members appear intolerant at others' eyes, which could both threaten their self-concept and give them grounds for concern about the likely development of non-harmonious intercultural relations. Notably, and contrary to Hypothesis 5, there was little support for distinctiveness threat playing a part in explaining this same interaction. The role of prejudice in affecting perceptions of threat, metastereotypes, and support for multiculturalism was confirmed.

General discussion

Two independent studies generated support for the powerful role of immigrants' perceived acculturation attitudes and generational status in affecting host society attitudes towards them. Although other research has begun to document the importance of the outgroup's perceived acculturation preferences (Kosic et al., 2005; van Oudenhoven et al., 1998; Zagefka et al., 2007), we believe that this research breaks new ground in showing for the first time that these perceptions directly impact on generalised intergroup attitudes, and in providing insight into why such effects occur. Moreover, the discovery that the presumed generational status of the immigrant group can play a key role in moderating those attitudes also opens up new avenues for future research.

Our consistent findings from these two studies underlined the importance of taking into account the two dimensions of acculturation separately, confirming that they play quite different roles in influencing intergroup perceptions. Such different roles could be observed thanks to their

independent and dimensional operationalizations, in line with recent recommendations (Brown & Zagefka, in press; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Rudmin, 2003; Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Moreover, the fact that both studies used a randomised experimental design, a comparative rarity in the acculturation literature (for exceptions, see Kosic et al., 2005; Rohmann et al., 2008, van Oudenhoven et al., 1998), gives us considerable confidence, not just in the empirical robustness of the results, but also in the direction of the relevant causal processes at work.

In spite of the consistent and mostly conclusive results obtained, some issues remain to be better understood through further investigations. In our research, acculturation strategies were considered as general orientations without referring to specific life domains. But recent studies showed that acculturation preferences may vary depending on the domain considered (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003). Future work could then attempt to analyse potential effects caused by perceived acculturation attitudes of minority groups expressing various preferences in both private and public domains. This could be particularly interesting for an in-depth examination of the role of culture maintenance with regard to immigrants' generational status. Future research could investigate with respect to which domains culture maintenance is particularly appreciated for second generation immigrants. Moreover, the effects of culture maintenance, in interaction with both immigrants' generational status and desire for intergroup contact, should be analysed with reference to different immigrant groups and also in different cultural contexts, where multiculturalism is less generally endorsed by host members. The impact of the majority's preferences, as perceived by minority, could be analysed too (cf., Zagefka, Tip, González, Brown, & Cinnirella, under review).

These findings also have applied implications as they suggest that perceived support for intergroup contact among immigrants can lead to more positive attitudes among majority members, through the reduction of perceived threat and negative metastereotypes. We can therefore suggest that interventions aimed at reducing prejudice should encourage intergroup contact among

immigrants, as this can produce beneficial effects for the social cohesion of society as a whole. Moreover, facilitating contacts between immigrants and host members could lead the majority group to appreciate even culture maintenance on the part of those immigrants, which could improve their intercultural adjustment in both psychological and sociocultural terms.

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Appendix A

An example vignette: First generation, high desire for intergroup contact, high desire for culture maintenance

Interviewee: My name is Hassan and I am 30 years old. I was born in Africa as were my parents. I have been living in Italy for ten years.

Interviewer: Have you got clear ideas about the way of living the relationship between the African and the Italian culture?

Interviewee: Yes, I have got clear ideas about that.

Interviewer: Do you think it is important for you to maintain your heritage culture?

Interviewee: Yes, I think it is important to conserve costumes and traditions characterizing my culture of origin.

Interviewer: Do you think that it is valuable to have contacts with Italian people?

Interviewee: Yes, I think it is very important to establish and maintain relationships with Italians.

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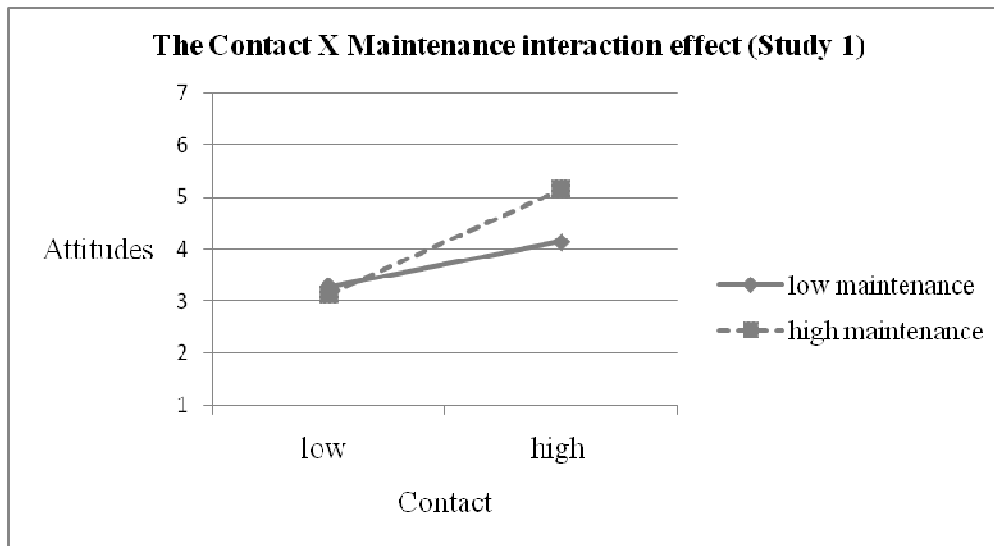
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Figure 1.



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Figure 2.

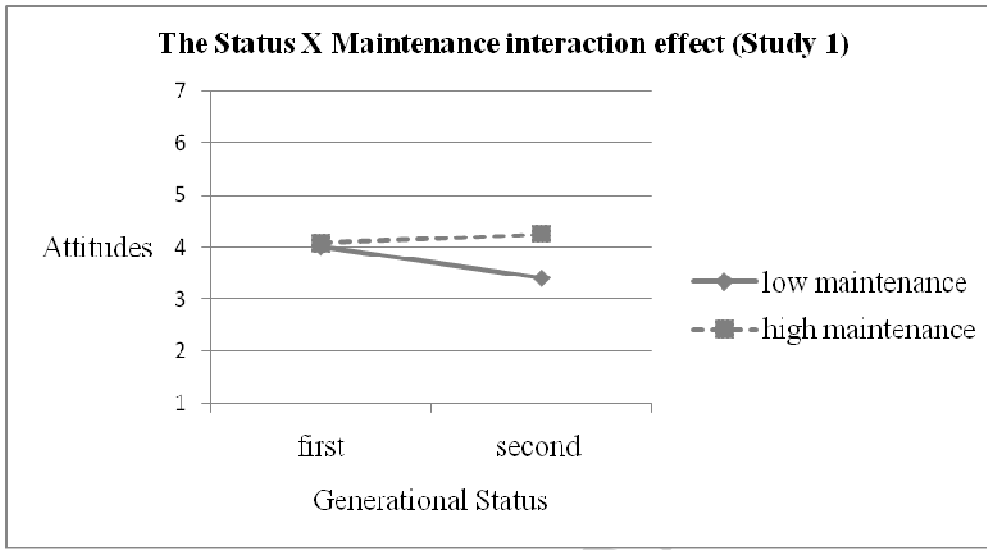
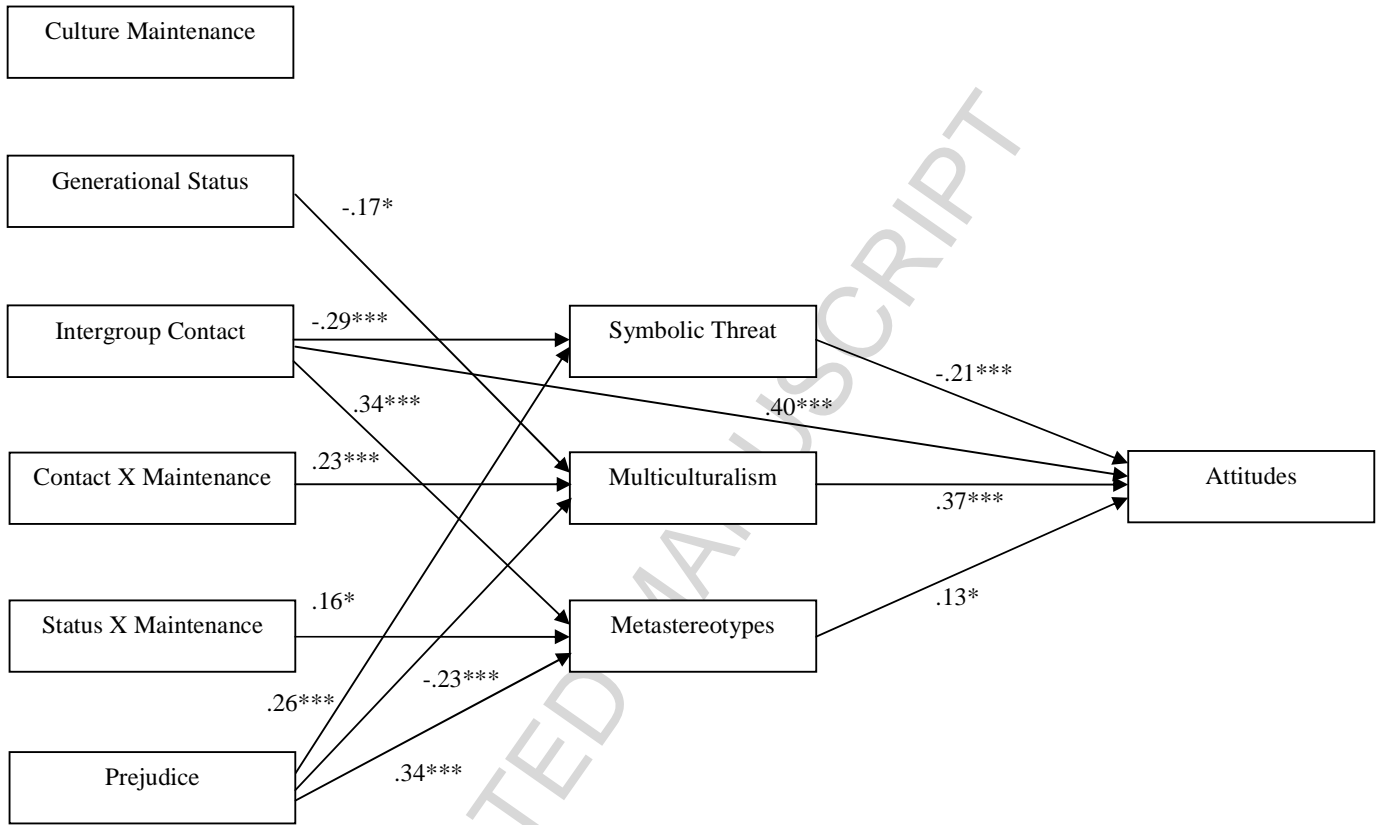


Figure 3. Path diagram (path coefficients are standardized regression weights)



Note: * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 1.

Means (SDs) of intergroup attitudes by immigrants' perceived generational status, desire for culture maintenance and intergroup contact (study 1)

Generational status	Heritage culture Maintenance	Intergroup contact	Attitudes
First generation	Unfavourable	Unfavourable	3.57 (1.02)
		Favourable	4.44 (1.14)
	Favourable	Unfavourable	3.03 (1.05)
		Favourable	5.04 (1.03)
Second generation	Unfavourable	Unfavourable	2.95 (1.36)
		Favourable	3.82 (1.10)
	Favourable	Unfavourable	3.20 (.97)
		Favourable	5.25 (.90)

Table 2.

Means (SDs) of intergroup attitudes, symbolic threat, metastereotypes, distinctiveness threat and guarantee for multiculturalism by immigrants' perceived generational status, desire for culture maintenance and intergroup contact (study 2)

Generational status	Heritage culture Maintenance	Intergroup contact	Attitudes	Symbolic threat	Metastereotypes	Distinctiveness threat	Guarantee for Multiculturalism
First generation	Unfavourable	Unfavourable	4.50 (.84)	3.20 (.87)	3.72 (1.27)	3.67 (1.29)	4.98 (1.48)
		Favourable	4.82 (.86)	2.88 (.85)	3.89 (1.02)	3.14 (.94)	4.39 (1.39)
Second generation	Favourable	Unfavourable	3.85 (.88)	3.75 (1.38)	3.26 (1.53)	2.53 (1.01)	5.12 (0.98)
		Favourable	5.05 (.77)	2.94 (.80)	4.32 (1.39)	3.18 (1.16)	5.25 (0.89)
	Unfavourable	Unfavourable	3.56 (.80)	3.67 (1.00)	2.53 (.98)	3.66 (1.12)	4.39 (1.72)
		Favourable	4.47 (.72)	3.19 (1.34)	4.23 (1.64)	3.87 (1.25)	3.75 (1.48)
	Favourable	Unfavourable	3.74 (.92)	3.65 (1.14)	3.66 (1.06)	2.95 (1.11)	4.31 (1.27)
		Favourable	5.20 (.97)	3.07 (1.44)	4.59 (1.18)	3.65 (1.20)	5.13 (1.18)

Table 3.

Intercorrelations between variables in Study 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Generational Status								
2. Heritage culture maintenance	.04							
3. Intergroup contact	-.05	-.04						
4. Symbolic threat	.07	.06	-.27***					
5. Distinctiveness threat	.16	-.21*	.11	-.39***				
6. Multiculturalism	-.19*	.20*	-.01	-.27***	.08			
7. Metastereotypes	-.02	.13	.34***	-.01	.00	-.02		
8. Attitudes	-.17	.04	.50***	-.42***	.13	.43***	.26***	
9. Prejudice	.09	-.02	.02	.36***	-.21*	-.23***	.36***	-.10

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$